CS 2710 Foundations of AI
Lecture 5

Informed (heuristic) search (cont).

Milos Hauskrecht
milos@cs.pitt.edu
5329 Sennott Square

Administration

- **PS–1 due today**
  - Report before the class begins
  - Programs through ftp
- **PS-2 is out**
  - due next week on Wednesday, September 21, 2005
    - Report
    - Programs

Evaluation-function driven search

- A search strategy can be defined in terms of **a node evaluation function**
- **Evaluation function**
  - Denoted $f(n)$
  - Defines the desirability of a node to be expanded next

- **Evaluation-function driven search: expand the node (state) with the best evaluation-function value**
- **Implementation: priority queue** with nodes in the decreasing order of their evaluation function value

Uniform cost search

- **Uniform cost search (Dijkstra's shortest path):**
  - A special case of the evaluation-function driven search

$$f(n) = g(n)$$

- **Path cost function** $g(n)$;
  - path cost from the initial state to n

- **Uniform-cost search:**
  - Can handle general minimum cost path-search problem:
  - **weights or costs** associated with operators (links).

- **Note:** Uniform cost search relies on the problem definition only
  - It is an uninformed search method

Best-first search

Best-first search

- incorporates a **heuristic function,** $h(n)$, into the evaluation function $f(n)$ to guide the search.

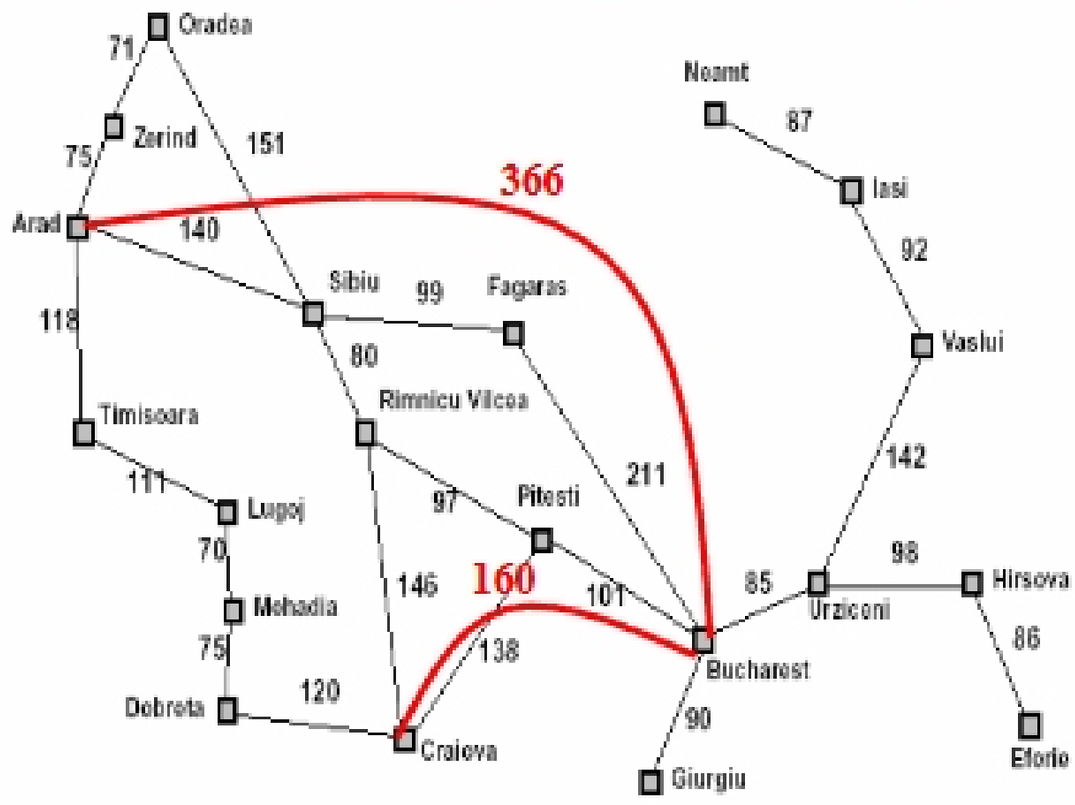
Heuristic function:

- Measures a potential of a state (node) to reach a goal
- Typically in terms of some distance to a goal estimate

Example of a heuristic function:

- Assume a shortest path problem with city distances on connections
- Straight-line distances between cities give additional information we can use to guide the search

Example: traveler problem with straight-line distance information



Straight-line distance to Bucharest	
Arad	366
Bucharest	0
Craiova	160
Dobreta	242
Eforie	161
Fagaras	178
Giurgiu	77
Hirsova	151
Iasi	226
Lugoj	244
Mehadia	241
Neamt	234
Oradea	380
Pitesti	98
Rimnicu Vilcea	193
Sibiu	253
Timisoara	329
Urziceni	80
Vaslui	199
Zerind	374

- **Straight-line distances** give an estimate of the cost of the path between the two cities