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**Announcements**    3.6 #64 due Wednesday  
                                  Monday no class

**Recap**            ID  $\Leftarrow$  UFD  $\Leftarrow$  PID  $\Leftarrow$  ER  
                                   $\nRightarrow$       $\nRightarrow$       $\nRightarrow$

## 6.1 Prime Ideals and Maximal Ideals

**Definition** Let  $R$  be a commutative ring and  $I$  an ideal in  $R$ .  
 (1)  $I$  is a *prime ideal* if  $I$  is proper and whenever  $ab \in I$ , we have that  $a \in I$  or  $b \in I$ .  
 (2)  $I$  is a *maximal ideal* if  $I$  is proper and whenever  $I \subseteq J$ ,  $J$  an ideal we have that  $I = J$  or  $J = R$ .

**Example**         $(4) \subseteq \mathbb{Z}$  is not prime as  $2 \cdot 2 \in (4)$  but  $2 \notin (4)$   
                                  and is not maximal as  $(4) \subset (2)$ .

**Example**         $(x) \subseteq \mathbb{Z}[x]$  is prime but is not maximal (as  $(x) \subset (x, 2)$ ).

**Note**             If  $I = (a) \neq (0)$ , then  $I$  is a prime ideal  $\Leftrightarrow a$  is a prime element.

**Example**         $(0)$  is a maximal ideal in a field.  
                                   $(0)$  is a prime ideal in an integral domain.

**Theorem** Let  $R$  be a commutative ring with unity.  
Then  $I$  is a prime ideal in  $R \Leftrightarrow R/I$  is an integral domain.

**Proof:**  
Assume  $I$  is a prime ideal. Let  $a, b \in R$  such that  $(a + I)(b + I) = 0 + I$ .  
Then  $ab + I = 0 + I$ . Thus  $ab \in I$ . Since  $I$  is prime, then  $a \in I$  or  $b \in I$ .  
Thus,  $a + I = 0 + I$  or  $b + I = 0 + I$ .  
 $\therefore R/I$  is an integral domain.  
Conversely, Assume  $R/I$  is an integral domain.  
Let  $ab \in I, a, b \in R$ . Then  $ab + I = 0 + I$ . So  $(a + I)(b + I) = 0 + I$ .  
Since  $R/I$  is an integral domain, then  $a + I = 0 + I$  or  $b + I = 0 + I$ .  
Thus,  $a \in I$  or  $b \in I$ . So  $I$  is a prime ideal.

**Theorem** Let  $R$  be a commutative ring with unity.  
Then  $I$  is a maximal ideal in  $R \Leftrightarrow R/I$  is a field.

**Proof:**  
Assume  $I$  is maximal. Let  $a + I \in R/I$  such that  $a + I \neq 0 + I$ .  
Let  $J = \{m + ar \mid m \in I, r \in R\}$ . Note that  $J \subseteq R$ .  
It's a quick check that  $J$  is an ideal in  $R$ .  
Since  $I$  is maximal and  $I \subseteq J$ , then  $I = J$  or  $J = R$ .  
Since  $a + I \neq 0 + I$ , then  $a \notin I$ . So  $I \neq J$ .  $\therefore J = R$ .  
So  $1 \in J$ . So  $1 = m_0 + ar_0$  for some  $m_0 \in I, r_0 \in R$ .  
 $(a + I)(r_0 + I) = ar_0 + I = ar_0 + m_0 + I = 1 + I$ .  
Thus  $(a + I)^{-1} = r_0 + I$ .  
Conversely, assume  $R/I$  is a field.  
Let  $J$  be an ideal such that  $I \subseteq J$ .  
Suppose  $I \neq J$ . Let  $a \in J$  such that  $a \notin I$ .  
Then  $a + I \neq 0 + I$ . Since  $R/I$  is a field,  $\exists b \in R$  such that  
 $(a + I)(b + I) = 1 + I$ .  
So  $ab - 1 \in I \subseteq J$ . But  $ab \in J$  since  $a \in J$ . Thus  $1 \in J$ . So  $R = J$ .

**Example**  $(x) \subseteq \mathbb{Z}[x]$  and  $\mathbb{Z}[x]/(x) \cong \mathbb{Z}$ , an integral domain, but not a field.  
So  $(x)$  is prime but not maximal.

**Note**  $I$  is maximal  $\Rightarrow R/I$  is a field  $\Rightarrow R/I$  is an integral domain  $\Rightarrow I$  is prime.

**Corollary** In a commutative ring with unity, maximal  $\Rightarrow$  prime.

**Example**  $(4) \subseteq \mathbb{E}$  (Even integers).  $(4)$  is not prime, but  $(4)$  is maximal.  
This is because  $\mathbb{E}$  has no unity.

**Note** In  $\mathbb{Z}[x]$  we don't have a division algorithm and is not a PID.  
In  $k[x]$ ,  $k$  a field, we do have a division algorithm.

**Theorem** If  $R$  is a PID and  $I$  is a non-zero prime ideal, then  $I$  is maximal.

**Proof:**

Assume  $I \neq \{0\}$  and is a prime ideal in  $R$ .

Suppose  $I \subseteq J$  where  $J$  is an ideal in  $R$ .

Since  $R$  is a PID, then  $\exists b \in R$  such that  $J = (b)$ .

Similarly  $\exists a \in R$  such that  $I = (a)$ .

And  $(a) = I \subseteq J = (b) \Rightarrow b|a$ . So  $a = bq$  for some  $q \in R$ .

Thus  $bq \in I$ , hence  $b \in I$  or  $q \in I$ .

If  $b \in I$ , then  $J \subseteq I$  (as  $a|b \Rightarrow (b) \subseteq (a)$ ). Hence  $J = I$ .

If  $q \in I$ , then  $q = as$ , for some  $s \in R$ . So  $a = bq = bas$ .

Thus  $1 = bs \in J$ . So  $J = R$ .

**Corollary**  $R$  is a commutative ring with unity. If  $R[x]$  is a PID then  $R$  is a field.

**Proof:**

$R[x]$  is a PID  $\Rightarrow R[x]$  has no zero divisors.

$\Rightarrow R$  has no zero divisors.

$\Rightarrow R$  is an integral domain.

$R[x]/(x) \cong R$ , so  $(x)$  is a prime ideal, so  $(x)$  is maximal.

And since  $(x)$  is maximal,  $R[x]/(x) \cong R$  is a field.

**Theorem** If  $R$  is a PID,  $I = (a)$ , and  $a \neq 0$ , then  $I$  is maximal  $\Leftrightarrow a$  is irreducible.

**Proof:**

Assume  $I$  is maximal in  $R$  and  $I = (a)$ .

Suppose  $a = bc$  for some  $b, c \in R$ . Then  $b|a$ , hence  $a \in (b)$ .

So  $I \subseteq (b)$ . Since  $I$  is maximal, then  $I = (b)$  or  $(b) = R$ .

If  $(b) = R$ , then  $1 = bx, x \in R$ . So  $b \in U(R)$ .

If  $I = (b)$ , then  $a$  and  $b$  are associates.

$\therefore a = bu, u \in U(R)$ . So  $bc = bu$ , hence  $c = u$ . So  $c \in U(R)$ .

Thus,  $a$  is irreducible.

Conversely, assume  $a$  is irreducible.

Suppose  $I \subseteq J$  where  $J$  is an ideal in  $R$ .

Since  $R$  is a PID, then  $J = (b), b \in R$ .

$a \in J$ , so  $b|a$ . Thus,  $a = bq, q \in R$ .

Since  $a$  is irreducible,  $b \in U(R)$  or  $q \in U(R)$ .

If  $b \in U(R)$ , then  $J = R$ .

If  $q \in U(R)$ , then  $a$  and  $b$  are associates, hence  $I = J$ .

**Example**  $(x) \subseteq \mathbb{Z}[x]$ ,  $(x)$  is not maximal, but  $x$  is irreducible.

**Note** In  $k[x]$ , maximal ideals are those generated by irreducible polynomials.