

Problem Wk.7.2.7: optOverLine

Given a function $f(x)$, how can we find a value x^* such that $f(x^*) \leq f(x)$ for all x ? If f is differentiable, then we can do this relatively easily by taking the derivative, setting it to 0 and solving for x . This gets tricky when the f is complicated and there may be multiple minima, and when we wish to extend to functions with multiple arguments. For functions that aren't differentiable (such as those involving *max* or *abs*), there is no straightforward mathematical approach at all. In one dimension, if we know a range of values of x that is likely to contain the minimum, we can plausibly sample different values of x , evaluate f at each of them, and return the sampled x for which $f(x)$ is minimized.

Implement the `optOverLine` function, which takes:

- `objective`: a function of one argument,
- `xmin`, `xmax`: a range of values for the argument,
- `numXsteps`: how many points to test within the range (starting with `xmin` to just below `xmax`),
- `compare`: an optional comparison function that defaults to be `operator.lt`, which is the less than, `<`, operator.

It should return a tuple `(bestObjValue, bestX)` with the best value of the objective and the x value that corresponds to it.

All of `xmin`, `xmax`, `numXsteps` could be integers.

The functions `floatRange` and `argopt` (from earlier problems) are already defined. You should use them in your solution.

```
def optOverLine(objective, xmin, xmax, numXsteps,
                compare = operator.lt):
    pass
```

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