

Hilbert C*-modules

Introductory lecture: rough notes

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Motivating Examples ¹

Example 1 Consider $E = M_{23}(\mathbb{C})$. It is a Banach space (with the norm that a matrix x has as an operator $x : \mathbb{C}^3 \rightarrow \mathbb{C}^2$) but the product xy makes no sense. What does make sense is the product x^*y , but this does not lie in $M_{23}(\mathbb{C})$; it lies in $A = M_{33}(\mathbb{C})$.

Thus we have a sesquilinear map $E \times E \rightarrow A : (x, y) \rightarrow x^*y$. Note that we can recover the norm on E from the norm of A via this map: $\|x\|_E = \|x^*x\|_A^{1/2}$.

Also, A acts on E on the right: we have a map $E \times A \rightarrow E : (x, a) \rightarrow xa$.

Example 2 let E be the space of continuous functions $x = (x_1, x_2) : [0, 1] \rightarrow \mathbb{C}^2$ and let A be the algebra $C([0, 1])$. We may define a sesquilinear map $E \times E \rightarrow A : (x, y) \rightarrow \langle x, y \rangle$ where $\langle x, y \rangle(t) = \bar{x}_1(t)y_1(t) + \bar{x}_2(t)y_2(t)$. This time we define the norm on E from the norm of A via this map: $\|x\|_E = \|\langle x, x \rangle\|_\infty^{1/2}$.

Also, A acts on E by pointwise multiplication: we have a map $E \times A \rightarrow E : (x, a) \rightarrow xa$ (where $(xa)(t) = (x_1(t)a(t), x_2(t)a(t))$).

Roughly speaking, a Hilbert C*-module E over a C* algebra A is a right A -module equipped with an A -valued ‘inner product’ which is compatible with the action of A on E and which is used to define a complete norm on E .

Definition 1 (a) A Banach algebra is a complex algebra A equipped with a complete such that $\|ab\| \leq \|a\| \|b\|$ for all $a, b \in A$.

(b) A C*-algebra A is a Banach algebra A equipped with an involution² $a \rightarrow a^*$ satisfying the C*-condition

$$\|a^*a\| = \|a\|^2 \quad \text{for all } a \in A.$$

The basic example is the algebra $\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$ of all bounded operators on a Hilbert space \mathcal{H} equipped with the operator norm

$$\|a\| = \sup\{\|a\xi\|_{\mathcal{H}} : \xi \in \mathcal{H}, \|\xi\|_{\mathcal{H}} = 1\}$$

¹hmod, October 15, 2012

²that is, a map $A \rightarrow A$ such that $(a + \lambda b)^* = a^* + \bar{\lambda}b^*$, $(ab)^* = b^*a^*$, $a^{**} = a$ for all $a, b \in A$ and $\lambda \in \mathbb{C}$

where the involution is defined by $\langle a^* \xi, \eta \rangle = \langle \xi, a \eta \rangle$.

Any C*-algebra can be considered as ³ a closed subalgebra of $\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$ for some Hilbert space \mathcal{H} (the Gelfand - Naimark theorem).

Any *abelian* C*-algebra is isometrically *-isomorphic to an algebra of the form $C_0(X)$, the continuous complex-valued functions on a locally compact Hausdorff space X , equipped with pointwise operations and the supremum norm.

An element $a \in A$ is called *positive* if $\langle a \xi, \xi \rangle \geq 0$ for all $\xi \in \mathcal{H}$ (here A is considered to be a subalgebra of $\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$) ⁴. An element $a \in A$ is positive if and only if it is of the form $a = b^* b$ for some $b \in A$. In particular, a positive element a is selfadjoint, i.e. $a = a^*$. An element $a \in C_0(X)$ is positive if and only if $a(t) \in \mathbb{R}_+$ for all $t \in X$.

The set A_+ of positive elements of a C*-algebra A is a closed convex cone, and the norm is monotone on A_+ : if $0 \leq a \leq b$ (meaning that $b - a \in A_+$) then $\|a\| \leq \|b\|$. ⁵

Definition 2 Let A be a C*-algebra. An **inner product A-module** is a complex vector space E such that

(a) E is a right A -module, i.e. there is a bilinear map

$$E \times A \rightarrow A : (x, a) \rightarrow x \cdot a$$

satisfying $(x \cdot a) \cdot b = x \cdot (ab)$ and $(\lambda x) \cdot a = x \cdot (\lambda a)$ (and $x \cdot \mathbf{1} = x$ when A has a unit $\mathbf{1}$).

(b) There is a map

$$E \times E \rightarrow A : (x, y) \rightarrow \langle x, y \rangle$$

satisfying

1. $\langle x, \lambda y + z \rangle = \lambda \langle x, y \rangle + \langle x, z \rangle$
2. $\langle x, y \cdot a \rangle = \langle x, y \rangle a$
3. $\langle x, y \rangle^* = \langle y, x \rangle$
4. $\langle x, x \rangle \in A_+$
5. $\langle x, x \rangle = 0 \Rightarrow x = 0$ ($x, y, z \in E, a \in A, \lambda \in \mathbb{C}$).

If only conditions (1) to (4) hold, E is called a **semi-inner product A-module**.

We prove the Cauchy - Schwarz inequality. We will need the simple observation that $\langle xa, y \rangle = (\langle y, xa \rangle)^* = (\langle y, x \rangle a)^* = a^* \langle x, y \rangle$.

³more accurately, is isometrically *-isomorphic to

⁴this is not the original definition of positivity, but it is equivalent to it

⁵Indeed if $a = c^* c$ and $b = d^* d$ the inequality $a \leq b$ gives $\|c \xi\| \leq \|d \xi\|$ for all $\xi \in \mathcal{H}$ and so $\|c\| \leq \|d\|$ hence $\|a\| \leq \|b\|$.

Proposition 3 *In a semi-inner product A -module E , for all $x, y \in E$,*

$$\begin{aligned} \langle y, x \rangle \langle x, y \rangle &\leq \| \langle x, x \rangle \|_A \langle y, y \rangle \\ \text{hence} \quad \| \langle x, y \rangle \|_A^2 &\leq \| \langle x, x \rangle \|_A \| \langle y, y \rangle \|_A \end{aligned}$$

Proof. For $a = \langle x, y \rangle \in A$ and all $t \in \mathbb{R}$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} 0 &\leq \langle xa - ty, xa - ty \rangle = \langle xa, xa \rangle - t \langle xa, y \rangle - t \langle y, xa \rangle + t^2 \langle y, y \rangle \\ &= a^* \langle x, x \rangle a - ta^* a - ta^* a + t^2 \langle y, y \rangle \\ \text{hence} \quad 2ta^* a &\leq a^* \| \langle x, x \rangle \|_A a + t^2 \langle y, y \rangle \end{aligned} \quad (*)$$

(we have used the inequality $a^*ba \leq a^* \|b\| a$, for $b \geq 0$).⁶ If $\langle x, x \rangle = 0$, the previous inequality gives, for all $t > 0$

$$0 \leq 2ta^* a \leq t^2 \langle y, y \rangle \quad \Rightarrow \quad 0 \leq 2a^* a \leq t \langle y, y \rangle.$$

Letting $t \rightarrow 0$, this forces $a^*a = 0$ and the Cauchy- Schwarz inequality holds. If $\langle x, x \rangle \neq 0$, setting $t = \| \langle x, x \rangle \|_A$, we get from (*)

$$ta^* a \leq t^2 \langle y, y \rangle \quad \text{or} \quad a^* a \leq \| \langle x, x \rangle \|_A \langle y, y \rangle$$

which is the required first inequality.

For the second inequality, since $0 \leq \langle y, x \rangle \langle x, y \rangle \leq \| \langle x, x \rangle \|_A \langle y, y \rangle$, monotonicity of the norm on A_+ gives

$$\begin{aligned} \| \langle x, y \rangle^* \langle x, y \rangle \|_A &\leq \| \| \langle x, x \rangle \|_A \langle y, y \rangle \|_A \\ \text{so} \quad \| \langle x, y \rangle \|_A^2 &\leq \| \langle x, x \rangle \|_A \| \langle y, y \rangle \|_A. \quad \square \end{aligned}$$

Definition 3 *If E is a semi-inner product A -module, we write*

$$\|x\|_E := \| \langle x, x \rangle \|_A^{1/2} \quad (x \in E).$$

This is a seminorm on E ;⁷ it is a norm iff E is an inner product A -module.

A Hilbert \mathbf{C}^* -module over A *is an inner product A -module such that $(E, \| \cdot \|_E)$ is complete.*

Remark 4 *If E is a semi-inner A -module, then by the last Proposition the set $N = \{x \in E : \|x\|_E = 0\}$ is a closed subspace and an A -submodule (if $x \in N$ then $x \cdot a \in N$) and so the quotient E/N becomes an inner product A -module in the induced operations.*

⁶ Proof: assuming $A \subseteq \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$, for all $\xi \in \mathcal{H}$ we have $(a^*ba\xi, \xi) = (b(a\xi), (a\xi)) \geq 0$ and so $(a^*ba\xi, \xi) = (b(a\xi), (a\xi)) \leq \|b\| \|a\xi\|^2 = \|b\| (a\xi, a\xi) = (a^* \|b\| a\xi, \xi)$.

⁷ $\| \langle x + y, x + y \rangle \|_A \leq \| \langle x, x \rangle \|_A + \| \langle x, y \rangle \|_A + \| \langle y, x \rangle \|_A + \| \langle y, y \rangle \|_A \leq \| \langle x, x \rangle \|_A + 2\sqrt{\| \langle x, x \rangle \|_A \| \langle y, y \rangle \|_A} + \| \langle y, y \rangle \|_A$

Corollary 5 *If E is an inner product A -module, the map $E \times A \rightarrow E : (x, a) \rightarrow x \cdot a$ is continuous; in fact*

$$\|x \cdot a\|_E \leq \|x\|_E \|a\|_A.$$

It follows that for each $a \in A$ the map $R_a : E \rightarrow E : x \rightarrow x \cdot a$ is bounded with $\|R_a\| \leq \|a\|_A$. Thus the map $R : a \rightarrow R_a$ is a contractive anti-homomorphism of the Banach algebra A into the Banach algebra $\mathcal{B}(E)$.

Proposition 6 *The closed linear span \overline{EA} of the set $\{x \cdot a : x \in E, a \in A\}$ is the whole of E . We say that E is a non-degenerate A -module.*

Proof. If A contains a unit $\mathbf{1}$, this is obvious from the relation $x \cdot \mathbf{1} = x$: in fact $E = EA$ in this case. For the general case, we use the fact that every C^* -algebra contains a *positive contractive approximate identity*, i.s. a net of contractions (e_i) in A_+ such that for all $a \in A$ we have $\lim_i \|ae_i - a\| = 0$ (hence also $\lim_i \|e_i a - a\| = 0$). Thus every $x \in E$ can be approximated by $x e_i \in EA$. Indeed,

$$\begin{aligned} \|x - x e_i\|_E^2 &= \|\langle x - x e_i, x - x e_i \rangle\|_A = \|\langle x, x \rangle - \langle x, x e_i \rangle + \langle x e_i, x e_i \rangle - \langle x e_i, x \rangle\|_A \\ &= \|\langle x, x \rangle - \langle x, x \rangle e_i + e_i \langle x, x \rangle e_i - e_i \langle x, x \rangle\|_A \\ &\leq \|\langle x, x \rangle - \langle x, x \rangle e_i\|_A + \|e_i(\langle x, x \rangle e_i - \langle x, x \rangle)\|_A \\ &\leq \|\langle x, x \rangle - \langle x, x \rangle e_i\|_A + \|\langle x, x \rangle e_i - \langle x, x \rangle\|_A \rightarrow 0. \quad \square \end{aligned}$$

Examples

- Any C^* -algebra A is a Hilbert C^* -module over A with $\langle a, b \rangle = a^* b$ and $a \cdot b = ab$.
- Any closed right ideal J of A is an A -submodule, hence a Hilbert C^* -module over A .
- Any Hilbert space \mathcal{H} is a Hilbert C^* -module over \mathbb{C} .
- But \mathcal{H} it is also a Hilbert C^* -module E over $\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$. It is clearer to see this for $\mathcal{H} = \ell^2$: We identify each $x \in \ell^2$ with the $1 \times \infty$ matrix $[x_1, x_2, \dots]$, i.e. with the linear operator $f_x : \eta \rightarrow (\sum_n x_n \eta_n) : \mathcal{H} \rightarrow \mathbb{C}$. The module action is given by matrix multiplication: for $a = [a_{ij}] \in \mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$, the element $x \cdot a$ is the row matrix $[\sum_i x_i a_{i1}, \sum_i x_i a_{i2}, \dots]$. Finally, the $\mathcal{B}(\mathcal{H})$ -valued inner product is $\langle x, y \rangle = [\bar{x}_i y_j]$. The Hilbert C^* -module norm $\|x\|_E$ actually coincides with the ℓ^2 norm of x .⁸
- The *direct sum* $\bigoplus_{k=1}^n E_k$ of finitely many Hilbert C^* -modules over *the same* C^* -algebra A is the vector space direct sum equipped with coordinate-wise inner product and module action:

$$\langle (x_k), (y_k) \rangle_E := \sum_{k=1}^n \langle x(k), y(k) \rangle_{E_k} \quad \text{and} \quad (x_k) \cdot a := (x_k \cdot a).$$

Example 7 *The direct sum $\bigoplus E_k$ of a sequence of Hilbert C^* -modules over a fixed C^* -algebra A is defined to be*

$$E = \bigoplus E_k := \{x = (x(k)) \in \prod_k E_k : \sum_k \langle x(k), x(k) \rangle_{E_k} \text{ converges in the norm of } A\}.$$

⁸ This can be thought as a $1 \times \infty$ version of the 2×3 example 1.

We prove that E has the properties of a Hilbert C^* -modules over A :

Linear space structure Suppose $(x(k)), (y(k)) \in E$; we show that $(x(k) + y(k)) \in E$: Let

$$a_n = \sum_{k \leq n} \langle x(k), x(k) \rangle, \quad b_n = \sum_{k \leq n} \langle y(k), y(k) \rangle, \quad c_n = \sum_{k \leq n} \langle x(k) + y(k), x(k) + y(k) \rangle$$

these are in A_+ . Since

$$0 \leq \langle x + y, x + y \rangle \leq \langle x + y, x + y \rangle + \langle x - y, x - y \rangle = 2\langle x, x \rangle + 2\langle y, y \rangle$$

when $n \geq m$ the differences $c_n - c_m$ etc. are finite sums of such terms and hence

$$0 \leq c_n - c_m \leq 2(a_n - a_m) + 2(b_n - b_m) \quad \Rightarrow \quad \|c_n - c_m\|_A \leq 2\|(a_n - a_m) + (b_n - b_m)\|_A$$

(monotonicity of norm). Since $(x(k))$ and $(y(k))$ are in E , the sequences (a_n) and (b_n) converge in A ; hence (c_n) is Cauchy in A , showing that $(x(k) + y(k))$ belongs to E .

Module action Define $(x(k)) \cdot a := (x(k)a)$. This maps E to E because

$$\sum_{k=m}^n \langle x(k)a, x(k)a \rangle = \sum_{k=m}^n a^* \langle x(k), x(k) \rangle a = a^* \left(\sum_{k=m}^n \langle x(k), x(k) \rangle \right) a$$

which shows that when $\sum_k \langle x(k), x(k) \rangle$ converges in A , so does $\sum_k \langle x(k)a, x(k)a \rangle$.

A -valued product

$$\text{Define} \quad \langle (x(k)), (y(k)) \rangle_E := \sum_k \langle x(k), y(k) \rangle_{E_k}$$

This series converges in A by polarization: we have

$$\begin{aligned} 4 \sum_k \langle x(k), y(k) \rangle &= \sum_k \langle x(k) + y(k), x(k) + y(k) \rangle - \sum_k \langle x(k) - y(k), x(k) - y(k) \rangle \\ &\quad + i \sum_k \langle x(k) + iy(k), x(k) + iy(k) \rangle - i \sum_k \langle x(k) - iy(k), x(k) - iy(k) \rangle \end{aligned}$$

and since $x + i^m y \in E$ ($m = 0, 1, 2, 3$), the four series on the right converge in A , hence so does the one on the left.

Norm This is of course given by

$$\|(x(k))\|_E^2 = \|\langle (x(k)), (x(k)) \rangle_E\|_A = \left\| \sum_k \langle x(k), y(k) \rangle_{E_k} \right\|_A.$$

To prove completeness, we need a simple observation:

Remark If $(x(k)) \in E$ then for each k , since

$$0 \leq \langle x(k), x(k) \rangle \leq \sum_m \langle x(m), x(m) \rangle \quad \text{in } A_+$$

$$\text{we have} \quad \|x(k)\|_{E_k}^2 = \|\langle x(k), x(k) \rangle\|_A \leq \left\| \sum_m \langle x(m), x(m) \rangle \right\|_A = \|(x(k))\|_E^2$$

by monotonicity of the norm. It follows that the coordinate projection $Q_k : E \rightarrow E_k$ which is clearly an A -module map, is contractive.

Completeness Suppose (x_n) is a $\|\cdot\|_E$ -Cauchy sequence, where each $x_n = (x_n(k))$ with $x_n(k) \in E_k$. By the last remark, for each fixed k , the sequence $(x_n(k))_n$ is Cauchy in E_k , hence convergent. Thus there exists $y(k) \in E_k$ with $\lim_n \|y(k) - x_n(k)\|_{E_k} = 0$.

Let $y = (y(k)) \in \prod E_k$. We need to prove two things:

(a) that $y \in E$ and

(b) that $\lim_n \|y - x_n\|_E = 0$.

(a) **Proof that $y \in E$** , i.e. that $\sum_k \langle y(k), y(k) \rangle$ converges in A .

Since A is complete, we need to show that this series satisfies the Cauchy criterion: given $\varepsilon > 0$ we need to prove that there exists $P \in \mathbb{N}$ such that

$$m \geq n \geq P \implies \left\| \sum_{k=n}^m \langle y(k), y(k) \rangle \right\|_A \leq \varepsilon^2. \quad (1)$$

Let us use the notation

$$\|z\|_{n,m} := \left\| \sum_{k=n}^m \langle z(k), z(k) \rangle \right\|_A^{1/2}$$

for all $z = (z(k)) \in \prod E_k$ and $m \geq n$.

Since (x_n) is Cauchy, given $\varepsilon > 0$ there exists $N \in \mathbb{N}$ such that

$$k \geq l \geq N \implies \|x_k - x_l\|_E < \varepsilon/3. \quad (2)$$

Now $x_N \in E$, so $\sum_i \langle x_N(i), x_N(i) \rangle$ converges in A ; hence we can choose $P \geq N$ such that

$$\left\| \sum_{i=P}^{\infty} \langle x_N(i), x_N(i) \rangle \right\|_A^{1/2} < \varepsilon/3. \quad (3)$$

Now for each $k \in \mathbb{N}$ we have $y(k) = \lim_M x_M(k)$ in E_k , i.e. $\lim_M \|\langle y(k) - x_M(k), y(k) - x_M(k) \rangle\|_A = 0$. Hence for each $m \geq n$ we have

$$\|y - x_M\|_{n,m}^2 = \left\| \sum_{k=n}^m \langle y(k) - x_M(k), y(k) - x_M(k) \rangle \right\|_A \leq \sum_{k=n}^m \|\langle y(k) - x_M(k), y(k) - x_M(k) \rangle\|_A \xrightarrow{M \rightarrow \infty} 0$$

and therefore we may choose $M \geq P$ (depending on m, n) such that

$$\|y - x_M\|_{n,m} < \varepsilon/3. \quad (4)$$

Thus if $m \geq n \geq P$ we have

$$\begin{aligned} \|y\|_{n,m} &\leq \|y - x_M\|_{n,m} + \|x_M - x_N\|_{n,m} + \|x_N\|_{n,m} \\ &\leq \|y - x_M\|_{n,m} + \|x_M - x_N\|_E + \left\| \sum_{i=n}^m \langle x_N(i), x_N(i) \rangle \right\|_A^{1/2} \end{aligned}$$

where we have used the inequality $\|x_M - x_N\|_{n,m} \leq \|x_M - x_N\|_E$.⁹ The first term is $< \varepsilon/3$ by (4); the second is $< \varepsilon/3$ by (2) because $M \geq N$; and the third term is $< \varepsilon/3$ by (3) because $n \geq P$. Therefore

$$\|y\|_{n,m} < \varepsilon$$

which proves (1). Hence $y \in E$.

(b) Proof that $\lim_n \|y - x_n\|_E = 0$.

Given $\varepsilon > 0$, let $n_0 \in \mathbb{N}$ be such that

$$n, m \geq n_0 \implies \|x_n - x_m\|_E < \varepsilon.$$

Then, if $n, m \geq n_0$, we have for all $N \in \mathbb{N}$

$$\left\| \sum_{k=1}^N \langle x_n(k) - x_m(k), x_n(k) - x_m(k) \rangle \right\|_A < \varepsilon^2.$$

Letting $m \rightarrow \infty$, since each $x_m(k) \rightarrow y(k)$ in E_k and there are finitely many terms, we obtain

$$\left\| \sum_{k=1}^N \langle x_n(k) - y(k), x_n(k) - y(k) \rangle \right\|_A \leq \varepsilon^2$$

for all $n \geq n_0$. But now we know from part (a) that $x_n - y \in E$ and so the series

$$\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \langle x_n(k) - y(k), x_n(k) - y(k) \rangle$$

converges in A_+ . Thus if we set

$$a_N = \sum_{k=1}^N \langle x_n(k) - y(k), x_n(k) - y(k) \rangle \quad \text{and} \quad a = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \langle x_n(k) - y(k), x_n(k) - y(k) \rangle$$

then $\|a_N - a\|_A = 0$ and so $\|a\|_A = \lim_N \|a_N\|_A$. Since each $\|a_N\|_A \leq \varepsilon^2$, it follows that $\|a\|_A \leq \varepsilon^2$. But this says precisely that $\|y - x_n\|_E \leq \varepsilon$ for all $n \geq n_0$, as required. \square

Remark 8 *On the defining condition for the norm of $x = (x(k))$:*

$$\|(x(k))\|_E^2 = \|\langle (x(k)), (x(k)) \rangle_E\|_A = \left\| \sum_k \langle x(k), y(k) \rangle_{E_k} \right\|_A.$$

⁹ Indeed for all $z \in E$ we have

$$0 \leq \sum_{k=n}^m \langle z(k), z(k) \rangle \leq \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \langle z(k), z(k) \rangle \quad \text{in } A_+, \quad \text{hence} \quad \|z\|_{n,m}^2 \leq \|z\|_E^2$$

by monotonicity of the norm.

Since the partial sums $a_n = \sum_{k \leq n} \langle x(k), y(k) \rangle_{E_k}$ form an increasing sequence in A_+ such that $\lim_n \|a_n - a\|_A = 0$ where $a = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \langle x(k), y(k) \rangle_{E_k}$, we have

$$\|(x(k))\|_E^2 = \|a\|_A = \lim_n \|a_n\|_A = \lim_n \left\| \sum_{k \leq n} \langle x(k), y(k) \rangle \right\|_A$$

Note that IF the series converges *absolutely*, i.e. if we require that $\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \|\langle x(k), y(k) \rangle\|_A < \infty$, then certainly $(x(k)) \in E$; but this is too strong a condition. ¹⁰

On the other hand, if we merely assume that the partial sums $\sum_{k \leq n} \langle x(k), y(k) \rangle$ are bounded above, then the series *need not converge in the norm of A* although it does converge strongly (but its limit need not be in A); for example we may take each $E_k = A =$ the compact operators, and $(x(k))$ to be a sequence of orthogonal rank one projections: the sum is not compact.

A special case of the direct sum is particularly important for the theory.

Definition 4 *The standard C^* -module over a C^* -algebra A , sometimes denoted \mathcal{H}_A , is the direct sum $\bigoplus E_k$, where each E_k equals the Hilbert C^* -module A . Thus*

$$\mathcal{H}_A := \{x = (x(k)) : \text{each } x(k) \in A \text{ and } \sum_k x(k)^* x(k) \text{ converges in the norm of } A\}.$$

Thus, in case $A = \mathbb{C}$, the standard module is just $\ell^2(\mathbb{N})$.

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¹⁰ Exercise: Find a sequence (f_k) of elements of $A = c_0$ such that $\sum_k |f_k|^2$ converges in the norm of A , but $\sum_k \|f_k\|_{c_0}^2 = +\infty$. Can you do the same in the algebra $C([0, 1])$?