

ESSENTIAL SPECTRA OF STURM-LIOUVILLE OPERATORS

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ABSTRACT. We develop relative oscillation theory for general Sturm-Liouville differential expressions of the form

$$\frac{1}{r} \left(-\frac{d}{dx} p \frac{d}{dx} + q \right)$$

and prove perturbation results and invariance of essential spectra in terms of the real coefficients p , q , r . The novelty here is that we also allow perturbations of the weight function r in which case the unperturbed and the perturbed operator act in different Hilbert spaces. Moreover, we extend the classical Kneser result.

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