CS61B Lecture #8: Object-Oriented Mechanisms

Today:

- New in this lecture: the bare mechanics of “object-oriented programming.”
- The general topic is: Writing software that operates on many kinds of data.
Overloading

**Problem:** How to get `System.out.print(x)` to print `x`, regardless of type of `x`?

- In Scheme or Python, one function can take an argument of any type, and then test the type (if needed).
- In Java, methods specify a single type of argument.
- Partial solution: **overloading**—multiple method definitions with the same name and different numbers or types of arguments.
- E.g., `System.out` has type `java.io.PrintStream`, which defines

  ```java
  void println()  Prints new line.
  void println(String s)  Prints S.
  void println(boolean b)  Prints "true" or "false"
  void println(char c)  Prints single character
  void println(int i)  Prints I in decimal
  etc.
  ```

- Each of these is a different function. Compiler decides which to call on the basis of arguments’ types.
**Generic Data Structures**

**Problem:** How to get a “list of anything” or “array of anything”?

- Again, no problem in Scheme or Python.
- But in Java, lists (such as `IntList`) and arrays have a single type of element.
- First, the short answer: any *reference* value can be converted to type `java.lang.Object` and back, so can use `Object` as the “generic (reference) type”:

```java
Object[] things = new Object[2];
things[0] = new IntList(3, null);
things[1] = "Stuff";
// Now ((IntList) things[0]).head == 3;
// and ((String) things[1]).startsWith("St") is true
// things[0].head Illegal
// things[1].startsWith("St") Illegal
```
And Primitive Values?

- Primitive values (ints, longs, bytes, shorts, floats, doubles, chars, and booleans) are not really convertible to Object.

- Presents a problem for “list of anything.”

- So Java introduced a set of wrapper types, one for each primitive type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>byte</td>
<td>Byte</td>
<td>short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td>char</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>float</td>
<td>Float</td>
<td>double</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>int</td>
<td>Integer</td>
<td>boolean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boolean</td>
<td>Character</td>
<td>Double</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- One can create new wrapper objects for any value (boxing):

  ```java
  Integer Three = new Integer(3);
  Object ThreeObj = Three;
  ```

  and vice-versa (unboxing):

  ```java
  int three = Three.intValue();
  ```
Autoboxing

In recent versions, boxing and unboxing is automatic (in many cases):

```java
Integer Three = 3;
int three = Three;
int six = Three + 3;

Integer[] someInts = { 1, 2, 3 };
for (int x : someInts) {
    System.out.println(x);
}

System.out.println(someInts[0]); // Prints 3, but NOT unboxed.
```
Dynamic vs. Static Types

- Every value has a type—its **dynamic type**.
- Every *container* (variable, component, parameter), literal, function call, and operator expression (e.g. \(x+y\)) has a type—its **static type**.
- Therefore, every *expression* has a static type.

```java
Object[] things = new Object[2];
things[0] = new IntList(3, null);
things[1] = "Stuff";
```
Type Hierarchies

- A container with (static) type T may contain a certain value only if that value “is a” T—that is, if the (dynamic) type of the value is a subtype of T. Likewise, a function with return type T may return only values that are subtypes of T.
- All types are subtypes of themselves (& that’s all for primitive types)
- Reference types form a type hierarchy; some are subtypes of others. null’s type is a subtype of all reference types.
- All reference types are subtypes of Object.
The Basic Static Type Rule

• Java is designed so that any expression of (static) type \( T \) always yields a value that “is a” \( T \).

• Static types are “known to the compiler,” because you declare them, as in

```java
String x;      // Static type of field
int f(Object s) { // Static type of call to f, and of parameter
    int y;      // Static type of local variable
}
```

or they are pre-declared by the language (like 3).

• Compiler insists that in an assignment, \( L = E \), or function call, \( f(E) \), where

```java
void f(SomeType L) { ... },
```

\( E \)'s static type must be subtype of \( L \)'s static type.

• Similar rules apply to \( E[i] \) (static type of \( E \) must be an array) and other built-in operations.
Coercions

• The values of type `short`, for example, are a subset of those of `int` (`shorts` are representable as 16-bit integers, `ints` as 32-bit integer).

• But we *don’t* say that `short` is a subtype of `int`, because they don’t quite behave the same.

• Instead, we say that values of type `short` can be *coerced* (converted) to a value of type `int`.

• Leads to a slight fudge: compiler will silently coerce “smaller” integer types to larger ones, `float` to `double`, and (as just seen) between primitive types and their wrapper types.

• So,

  ```
  short x = 3002;
  int y = x;
  ```

  works without complaint.
Consequences of Compiler’s “Sanity Checks”

• This is a conservative rule. The last line of the following, which you might think is perfectly sensible, is illegal:

```java
int[] A = new int[2];
Object x = A; // All references are Objects
A[i] = 0; // Static type of A is array...
x[i+1] = 1; // But not of x: ERROR
```

Compiler figures that not every Object is an array.

• Q: Don’t we know that x contains array value!?

• A: Yes, but still must tell the compiler, like this:

```java
((int[]) x)[i+1] = 1;
```

• Defn: Static type of cast (T) E is T.

• Q: What if x isn’t an array value, or is null?

• A: For that we have runtime errors—exceptions.
Overriding and Extension

- Notation so far is clumsy.
- Q: If I know `Object` variable `x` contains a `String`, why can’t I write, `x.startsWith("this")`?
  - A: `startsWith` is only defined on `Strings`, not on all `Objects`, so the compiler isn’t sure it makes sense, unless you cast.
  - But, if an operation were defined on all `Objects`, then you wouldn’t need clumsy casting.
- Example: `.toString()` is defined on all `Objects`. You can always say `x.toString()` if `x` has a reference type.
- The default `.toString()` function is not very useful; on an `IntList`, would produce string like "IntList@2f6684"
- But for any subtype of `Object`, you may override the default definition.
Overriding toString

- For example, if \( s \) is a String, \( s.toString() \) is the identity function (fortunately).

- For any type you define, you may supply your own definition. For example, in \( \text{IntList} \), could add

```java
public String toString() {
    StringBuffer b = new StringBuffer();
    b.append("[");
    for (IntList L = this; L != null; L = L.tail)
        b.append(" " + L.head);
    b.append("]");
    return b.toString();
}
```

- If \( x = \text{new IntList}(3, \text{new IntList}(4, \text{null})) \), then \( x.toString() \) is "[3 4]."

- Conveniently, the "+" operator on Strings calls .toString when asked to append an Object, and so does the "%s" formatter for printf.

- With this trick, you can supply an output function for any type you define.
Extending a Class

• To say that class B is a direct subtype of class A (or A is a direct superclass of B), write

```java
class B extends A { ... }
```

• By default, class ... extends java.lang.Object.

• The subtype inherits all fields and methods of its superclass (and passes them along to any of its subtypes).

• In class B, you may override an instance method (not a static method), by providing a new definition with same signature (name, return type, argument types).

• I'll say that a method and all its overridings form a dynamic method set.

• **The Point:** If \( f(\ldots) \) is an instance method, then the call \( x.f(\ldots) \) calls whatever overriding of \( f \) applies to the dynamic type of \( x \), regardless of the static type of \( x \).
Illustration

class Worker {
    void work() {
        collectPay();
    }
}

class Prof extends Worker {
    // Inherits work()
}

class TA extends Worker {
    void work() {
        while (true) {
            doLab(); discuss(); officeHour();
        }
    }
}

Prof paul = new Prof(); // paul.work() ==> collectPay();
TA daniel = new TA(); // daniel.work() ==> doLab(); discuss(); ...
Worker wPaul = paul, wDaniel = daniel; // wPaul.work() ==> collectPay();
                                      // wDaniel.work() ==> doLab(); discuss(); ...

Lesson: For instance methods (only), select method based on dynamic type. Simple to state, but we'll see it has profound consequences.
What About Fields and Static Methods?

```java
class Parent {
    int x = 0;
    static int y = 1;
    static void f() {
        System.out.printf("Ahem!%n");
    }
    static int f(int x) {
        return x+1;
    }
}
class Child extends Parent {
    String x = "no";
    static String y = "way";
    static void f() {
        System.out.printf("I wanna!%n");
    }
}
Child tom = new Child();
Parent pTom = tom;
```

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tom.x</th>
<th>no</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pTom.x</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tom.y</td>
<td>way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pTom.y</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tom.f()</td>
<td>I wanna!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pTom.f()</td>
<td>Ahem!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tom.f(1)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pTom.f(1)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lesson:** Fields *hide* inherited fields of same name; static methods *hide* methods of the same signature.

**Real Lesson:** Hiding causes confusion; so understand it, but don't do it!
What's the Point?

- The mechanism described here allows us to define a kind of *generic* method.
- A superclass can define a set of operations (methods) that are common to many different classes.
- Subclasses can then provide different implementations of these common methods, each specialized in some way.
- All subclasses will have at least the methods listed by the superclass.
- So when we write methods that operate on the superclass, they will automatically work for all subclasses with no extra work.