CSE341: Programming Languages

Lecture 26
Course Victory Lap

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Final Exam

As also indicated in class-list email:

• Next Monday, 8:30-10:20
• Intention is to focus primarily on material since the midterm
  – Including topics on homeworks and not on homeworks
  – May also have a little ML, just like the course has had
• You will need to write code and English
Victory Lap

A victory lap is an extra trip around the track

– By the exhausted victors (us)

Review course goals

– Slides from Introduction and Course-Motivation

Some big themes and perspectives

– Stuff for five years from now more than for the final

Do your course evaluations!!!
Thank you!

• **Huge** thank-you to your TAs
  – Great team effort
  – Deep understanding of material despite all having different 341 instructors
  – Great sections, timely grading, etc., etc.
Thank you!

• And a huge thank you to all of you
  – Great attitude about a very different view of software
  – Good class attendance and questions
  – Occasionally laughed at stuff 😊

• Computer science ought to be challenging and fun!
Many essential concepts relevant in any programming language
  – And how these pieces fit together

Use ML, Racket, and Ruby languages:
  – They let many of the concepts “shine”
  – Using multiple languages shows how the same concept can “look different” or actually be slightly different
  – In many ways simpler than Java

Big focus on functional programming
  – Not using mutation (assignment statements) (!)
  – Using first-class functions (can’t explain that yet)
  – But many other topics too
Learning to think about software in this “PL” way will make you a better programmer even if/when you go back to old ways.

It will also give you the mental tools and experience you need for a lifetime of confidently picking up new languages and ideas.

[From Lecture 1]
[From Course Motivation]

• No such thing as a “best” PL

• Fundamental concepts easier to teach in some (multiple) PLs

• A good PL is a relevant, elegant interface for writing software
  – There is no substitute for precise understanding of PL semantics

• Functional languages have been on the leading edge for decades
  – Ideas have been absorbed by the mainstream, but very slowly
  – First-class functions and avoiding mutation increasingly essential
  – Meanwhile, use the ideas to be a better C/Java/PHP hacker

• Many great alternatives to ML, Racket, and Ruby, but each was chosen for a reason and for how they complement each other
[From Course Motivation]

SML, Racket, and Ruby are a useful *combination* for us.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>dynamically typed</th>
<th>statically typed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>functional</td>
<td>Racket</td>
<td>SML</td>
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<tr>
<td>object-oriented</td>
<td>Ruby</td>
<td>Java</td>
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*ML*: polymorphic types, pattern-matching, abstract types & modules
*Racket*: dynamic typing, “good” macros, minimalist syntax, eval
*Ruby*: classes but not types, very OOP, mixins
  [and much more]

Really wish we had more time:
*Haskell*: laziness, purity, type classes, monads
*Prolog*: unification and backtracking
[and much more]
Benefits of No Mutation

[An incomplete list]

1. Can freely alias or copy values/objects: Unit 1
2. More functions/modules are equivalent: Unit 4
3. No need to make local copies of data: Unit 5
4. Depth subtyping is sound: Unit 8

State updates are appropriate when you are modeling a phenomenon that is inherently state-based
   – A fold over a collection (e.g., summing a list) is not!
Some other highlights

• Function closures are really powerful and convenient…
  – … and implementing them is not magic

• Datatypes and pattern-matching are really convenient…
  – … and exactly the opposite of OOP decomposition

• Sound static typing prevents certain errors…
  – … and is inherently approximate

• Subtyping and generics allow different kinds of code reuse…
  – … and combine synergistically

• Modularity is really important; languages can help
Successful course participants will:

- Internalize an accurate understanding of what functional and object-oriented programs mean
- Develop the skills necessary to learn new programming languages quickly
- Master specific language concepts such that they can recognize them in strange guises
- Learn to evaluate the power and elegance of programming languages and their constructs
- Attain reasonable proficiency in the ML, Racket, and Ruby languages and, as a by-product, become more proficient in languages they already know
The End

This really is my favorite course and it probably always will be

Don’t be a stranger!

Time for ask-me-anything questions?