CSE 333
Lecture 11 - constructor insanity

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Administrivia

Exercises:

- New exercise out today, due Monday morning
- Yet another exercise on 2nd half of this material out Monday, due before class Wednesday

How’s HW2 going?
Administrivia (Monday)

Next exercise out today, due Wednesday morning

- This one is a variation on the one due today. Feel free to adapt/adopt ideas from that sample solution if useful.

HW2: good progress over the weekend? Questions?
Today’s goals

More details on constructors, destructors, operators

Walk through complex_example/

- pretty hairy and complex
- a lesson on why using a subset of C++ is often better

new / delete / delete[]

- str/ example
Constructors

A constructor initializes a newly instantiated object

- a class can have multiple constructors
  ‣ they differ in the arguments that they accept
  ‣ which one is invoked depends on how the object is instantiated

You can write constructors for your object

- but if you don’t write any, C++ might automatically synthesize a default constructor for you
  ‣ the default constructor is one that takes no arguments and that calls default constructors on all non-POD* member variables (*POD = “Plain Old Data”)
  ‣ C++ does this iff your class has no const or reference data members, and no other user-defined constructors
Example of synthesis

see SimplePoint.cc, SimplePoint.h
Constructors, continued

You might choose to define multiple constructors:

```cpp
class Point {  
public:  
    Point() {  
        x_ = 0;  
        y_ = 0;  
    }  
    Point(const int x, const int y) {  
        x_ = x;  
        y_ = y;  
    }  

    void foo() {  
        Point x;  // invokes the default (argument-less) constructor  
        Point a[3]; // invokes the default constructor 3 times  
        Point y(1,2); // invokes the two-int-arguments constructor  
    }  
};
```
Constructors, continued

You might choose to define only one:

```cpp
Point::Point(const int x, const int y) {
  x_ = x;
  y_ = y;
}

void foo() {
  // Compiler error; if you define any constructors, C++ will
  // not automatically synthesize a default constructor for you.
  Point x;

  // Works.
  Point y(1, 2); // invokes the two-int-arguments constructor
}
```
Initialization lists

Optionally, C++ lets you declare an initialization list as part of your constructor declaration

- initializes fields according to parameters in the list

- the following two are (nearly) equivalent:

```cpp
Point::Point(const int x, const int y) : x_(x), y_(y) {
    std::cout << "Point constructed: (" << x_ << ",";
    std::cout << y_ << ")" << std::endl;
}
```

```cpp
Point::Point(const int x, const int y) {
    x_ = x;
    y_ = y;
    std::cout << "Point constructed: (" << x_ << ",";
    std::cout << y_ << ")" << std::endl;
}
```
Initialization vs. construction

```cpp
#ifndef _POINT_H_
#define _POINT_H_

class Point {
    public:
        Point(const int x, const int y, const int z)
            : x_(x), y_(y) {
            z_ = z;
        }

    private:
        int x_, y_, z_; // class Point
};
#endif // _POINT_H_
```
Initialization vs. construction

```cpp
#ifndef _POINT_H_
#define _POINT_H_

class Point {
public:
    Point(const int x, const int y, const int z) :
        x_(x), y_(y) {
        z_ = z;
    }

private:
    int x_, y_, z_;  
};  // class Point

#endif  // _POINT_H_
```

first, initialization list is applied
Initialization vs. construction

```cpp
#ifndef __POINT_H__
#define __POINT_H__

class Point {
    public:
        Point(const int x, const int y, const int z) :
            x_(x), y_(y) {
            z_ = z;
        }

    private:
        int x_, y_, z_;  // class Point

#endif // __POINT_H__
```
Initialization vs. construction

When a new object is created using some constructor:

- first, the initialization list is applied to members
  - in the order that those members appear within the class definition, not the order in the initialization list (!)
- next, the constructor is invoked, and any statements within it are executed

Prefer initialization to assignment

- An object must already be initialized by a constructor before it can be (re-)assigned - initializer avoids two separate steps
Copy constructors

C++ has the notion of a **copy constructor**

- used to **create a new object** as a copy of an existing object

```cpp
Point::Point(const int x, const int y) : x_(x), y_(y) { }
Point::Point(const Point &copyme) {   // copy constructor
    x_ = copyme.x_;  
    y_ = copyme.y_;  
}
void foo() {
    // invokes the two-int-arguments constructor
    Point x(1,2);

    // invokes the copy constructor to construct y as a copy of x
    Point y(x);   // could also write as "Point y = x;"
}
```
When do copies happen?

The copy constructor is invoked if:

- you pass an object as a parameter to a call-by-value function

```cpp
void foo(Point x) { ... }
Point y; // default cons.
foo(y);   // copy cons.
```

- you return an object from a function

```cpp
Point foo() {
    Point y; // default cons.
    return y; // copy cons.
}
```

- you initialize an object from another object of the same type

```cpp
Point x; // default cons.
Point y(x); // copy cons.
Point z = y; // copy cons.
```
But...the compiler is smart...

It sometimes uses a "return by value optimization" to eliminate unnecessary copies

- sometimes you might not see a constructor get invoked when you might expect it

```cpp
Point foo() {
    Point y; // default constructor.
    return y; // copy constructor? optimized?
}
Point x(1,2); // two-ints-argument constructor.
Point y = x; // copy constructor.
Point z = foo(); // copy constructor? optimized?
```
Synthesized copy constructor

If you don’t define your own copy constructor, C++ will synthesize one for you

- it will do a shallow copy of all of the fields (i.e., member variables) of your class
- sometimes the right thing, sometimes the wrong thing

see SimplePoint.cc, SimplePoint.h
The “=” operator is the assignment operator
- assigns values to an existing, already constructed object
- you can overload the “=” operator
Overloading the “=” operator

You can choose to overload the “=” operator
- but there are some rules you should follow

```cpp
Point &Point::operator=(const Point& rhs) {
    if (this != &rhs) { // always check against this
        x_ = rhs.x_;  
        y_ = rhs.y_;  
    }
    return *this;  // always return *this from =
}
```

Point a;  // default constructor
a = b = c;  // works because “=” returns *this
a = (b = c);  // equiv to above, as “=” is right-associative
(a = b) = c;  // works because “=” returns a non-const
Synthesized assignment oper.

If you don’t overload the assignment operator, C++ will synthesize one for you

- it will do a shallow copy of all of the fields (i.e., member variables) of your class
- sometimes the right thing, sometimes the wrong thing

see SimplePoint.cc, SimplePoint.h
Destructors

C++ has the notion of a destructor

- invoked automatically when a class instance is deleted / goes out of scope, etc., even via exceptions or other causes
- place to put cleanup code - free any dynamic storage or other resources owned by the object
- standard C++ idiom for managing dynamic resources
  - Slogan: “Resource Acquisition Is Initialization” (RAII)

```cpp
Point::~Point() {  // destructor
    // do any cleanup needed when a Point object goes away
    // (nothing to do here since we have no dynamic resources)
}
```
see complex_example/*
Rule of Three

If you define any of:

1. Destructor
2. Copy Constructor
3. Assignment (operator=)

Then you should normally define all three
Dealing with the insanity

C++ style guide tip

- if possible, disable the copy constr. and assignment operator

  ‣ not possible if you want to store objects of your class in an STL container, unfortunately

```cpp
class Point {
public:
  Point(int x, int y) : x_(x), y_(y) { }

private:
  // disable copy cons. and "=" by declaring but not defining
  Point(Point &copyme);
  Point &operator=(Point &rhs);
};

Point w;       // compiler error
Point x(1,2);  // OK
Point y = x;   // compiler error
x = w;         // compiler error
```
Disabling copy ctr/= in C++11

C++11 adds new syntax to do this directly

- better choice in C++11 code

```cpp
class Point {
    public:
        Point(int x, int y) : x_(x), y_(y) { }

        // declare copy cons. and "=" as deleted (C++11)
        Point(Point &copyme) = delete;
        Point &operator=(Point &rhs) = delete;
    }

    Point w;       // compiler error
    Point x(1,2);  // OK
    Point y = x;   // compiler error
    x = w;         // compiler error
```
Dealing with the insanity

C++ style guide tip

- if you disable them, then you should instead probably have an explicit “CopyFrom” function
new

To allocate on the heap using C++, you use the “new” keyword instead of the “malloc()” stdlib.h function

- you can use new to allocate an object
- you can use new to allocate a primitive type

To deallocate a heap-allocated object or primitive, use the “delete” keyword instead of the “free()” stdlib.h function

- if you’re using a legacy C code library or module in C++
  ‣ if C code returns you a malloc()’d pointer, use free() to deallocate it
  ‣ never free() something allocated with new
  ‣ never delete something allocated with malloc( )
new / delete

see heappoint.cc
C++11 nullptr

C and C++ have long used NULL as a pointer value that references nothing

C++11 introduced a new literal for this: nullptr

- New reserved word

- Interchangeable with NULL for all practical purposes
  ‣ But it has type T* for any/every T, and is not an integer value
    • Avoids funny edge cases (see C++ references for details)
    • Still can convert to/from integer 0 for tests, assignment, etc.

- Advice: prefer nullptr in C++11 code (but NULL will also be around for a long, long time)
Dynamically allocated arrays

To dynamically allocate an array
- use "type *name = new type[size];"

To dynamically deallocate an array
- use "delete[] name;"
- it is an error to use "delete name;" on an array
  › the compiler probably won’t catch this, though!!!
  › it can’t tell if it was allocated with "new type[size];" or "new type;"

see arrays.cc
### malloc vs. new

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>malloc( )</th>
<th>new</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>what is it</strong></td>
<td>a function</td>
<td>an operator and keyword</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>how often used in C</strong></td>
<td>often</td>
<td>never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>how often used in C++</strong></td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td>often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>allocates memory for</strong></td>
<td>anything</td>
<td>arrays, structs, objects, primitives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>returns</strong></td>
<td>a (void *) (needs a cast)</td>
<td>appropriate pointer type (doesn’t need a cast)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>when out of memory</strong></td>
<td>returns NULL</td>
<td>throws an exception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>deallocating</strong></td>
<td>free</td>
<td>delete or delete[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overloading the “=” operator

Remember the rules we should follow?

- here’s why; hugely subtle bug

```cpp
Foo::Foo(int val) { Init(val); }
Foo::~Foo() { delete foo_ptr_; }

void Foo::Init(int val) { foo_ptr_ = new int; *foo_ptr_ = val; }

Foo &Foo::operator=(const Foo& rhs) {
    // bug...we forgot our "if (self == &rhs) { ... }" guard
    delete foo_ptr_;
    Init(*((rhs.foo_ptr_)));  // might crash here (see below)
    return *this;  // always return *this from =
}

void bar() {
    Foo a(10);  // default constructor
    Foo b(20);  // default constructor
    a = a;  // crash above; dereference delete’d pointer!!
}
```
Overloading the “==” operator

Remember the rules we should follow?

*This is yet another reason for disabling the assignment operator, when possible*
see str/*
Exercise 1

Modify your 3D Point class from lec10 exercise 1

- disable the copy constructor and assignment operator
- attempt to use copy & assign in code, and see what error the compiler generates
- write a CopyFrom() member function, and try using it instead
Exercise 2

Write a C++ class that:

- is given the name of a file as a constructor argument
- has a “GetNextWord()” method that returns the next whitespace or newline-separate word from the file as a copy of a “string” object, or an empty string once you hit EOF.
- has a destructor that cleans up anything that needs cleaning up
Exercise 3

Write a C++ function that:

- uses new to dynamically allocate an array of strings
  ‣ and uses delete[] to free it
- uses new to dynamically allocate an array of pointers to strings
  ‣ and then iterates through the array to use new to allocate a string for each array entry and to assign to each array element a pointer to the associated allocated string
  ‣ and then uses delete to delete each allocated string
  ‣ and then uses delete[] to delete the string pointer array
  ‣ (whew!)
See you on Wednesday!