C++ Constructor Insanity
CSE 333 Summer 2018

Instructor: Hal Perkins

Teaching Assistants:
Renshu Gu       William Kim       Soumya Vasisht
Administrivia

- Exercise 10 released today, due Monday
  - Write a substantive class in C++! (but no dynamic allocation – yet)
  - Refer to Complex.h/Complex.cc

- Homework 2 due next Thursday (7/19)
  - File system crawler, indexer, and search engine
  - **Note**: `libhw1.a` (yours or ours) and the `.h` files from hw1 need to be in right directory (`~yourgit/hw1/`)
  - **Note**: use Ctrl-D to exit `searchshell`, test on directory of small self-made files
Lecture Outline

- **Constructors**
- Copy Constructors
- Assignment
- Destructors
- An extended example
Constructors

- A constructor (ctor) initializes a newly-instantiated object
  - A class can have multiple constructors that differ in parameters
    - Which one is invoked depends on how the object is instantiated

- Written with the class name as the method name:

  ```
  Point(const int x, const int y);
  ```

  - C++ will automatically create a synthesized default constructor if you have no user-defined constructors
    - Takes no arguments and calls the default ctor on all non-“plain old data” (non-POD) member variables
    - Synthesized default ctor will fail if you have non-initialized const or reference data members
Synthesized Default Constructor

class SimplePoint {
public:
    // no constructors declared!
    int get_x() const { return x_; }    // inline member function
    int get_y() const { return y_; }    // inline member function
    double Distance(const SimplePoint& p) const;
    void SetLocation(const int x, const int y);

private:
    int x_;    // data member
    int y_;    // data member
};    // class SimplePoint

#include "SimplePoint.h"

... // definitions for Distance() and SetLocation()

int main(int argc, char** argv) {
    SimplePoint x;    // invokes synthesized default constructor
    return 0;
}
Synthesized Default Constructor

- If you define any constructors, C++ assumes you have defined all the ones you intend to be available and will not add any others

```cpp
#include "SimplePoint.h"

// defining a constructor with two arguments
SimplePoint::SimplePoint(const int x, const int y) {
    x_ = x;
    y_ = y;
}

void foo() {
    SimplePoint x;  // compiler error: if you define any ctors, C++ will NOT synthesize a default constructor for you.

    SimplePoint y(1, 2);  // works: invokes the 2-int-arguments constructor
}
```
# Multiple Constructors

```cpp
#include "SimplePoint.h"

// default constructor
SimplePoint::SimplePoint() {
    x_ = 0;
    y_ = 0;
}

// constructor with two arguments
SimplePoint::SimplePoint(const int x, const int y) {
    x_ = x;
    y_ = y;
}

void foo() {
    SimplePoint x;       // invokes the default constructor
    SimplePoint a[3];    // invokes the default ctor 3 times
    SimplePoint y(1, 2); // invokes the 2-int-arguments ctor
}
Initialization Lists

- C++ lets you *optionally* declare an **initialization list** as part of your constructor definition
  - Initializes fields according to parameters in the list
  - The following two are (nearly) identical:

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

```cpp
// constructor with an initialization list
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

Data members in initializer list are initialized in the order they are defined in the class, not by the initialization list ordering (!)

- Data members that don’t appear in the initialization list are default initialized/constructed before body is executed

- Initialization preferred to assignment to avoid extra steps
Lecture Outline

- Constructors
- **Copy Constructors**
- Assignment
- Destructor
- An extended example
Copy Constructors

- C++ has the notion of a copy constructor (cctor)
  - 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) { }

// copy constructor
Point::Point(const Point& copyme) {
  x_ = copyme.x_;  
  y_ = copyme.y_; 
}

void foo() {
  Point x(1, 2); // invokes the 2-int-arguments constructor
  Point y(x);    // invokes the copy constructor
  // could also be written as "Point y = x;"
}
```

- Initializer lists can also be used in copy constructors (preferred)
When Do Copies Happen?

- The copy constructor is invoked if:
  - You *initialize* an object from another object of the same type:
  
  ```
  Point x;      // default ctor
  Point y(x);   // copy ctor
  Point z = y;  // copy ctor
  ```
  - You pass a non-reference object as a value parameter to a function:
  
  ```
  void foo(Point x) { ... }
  Point y;       // default ctor
  foo(y);        // copy ctor
  ```
  - You return a non-reference object value from a function:
  
  ```
  Point foo() {
    Point y;    // default ctor
    return y;   // copy ctor
  }
  ```
Compiler Optimization

- The compiler sometimes uses a “return by value optimization” or “move semantics” to eliminate unnecessary copies
  - Sometimes you might not see a constructor get invoked when you might expect it

```cpp
Point foo() {  
  Point y;  // default ctor  
  return y;  // copy ctor? optimized?  
}

Point x(1, 2);  // two-ints-argument ctor  
Point y = x;  // copy ctor  
Point z = foo();  // copy ctor? 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

```cpp
#include "SimplePoint.h"
...
// definitions for Distance() and SetLocation()

int main(int argc, char** argv) {
    SimplePoint x;
    SimplePoint y(x); // invokes synthesized copy constructor
    ...
    return 0;
}
```
Lecture Outline

- Constructors
- Copy Constructors
- **Assignment**
- destructors
- An extended example
Assignment != Construction

- “=” is the assignment operator
  - Assigns values to an existing, already constructed object

```cpp
Point w; // default ctor
Point x(1, 2); // two-ints-argument ctor
Point y(x); // copy ctor
Point z = w; // copy ctor
y = x; // assignment 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) {  // (1) always check against this
        x_ = rhs.x_;  
        y_ = rhs.y_;  
    }
    return *this;  // (2) always return *this from op=
}
```

```cpp
Point a;  // default constructor  
a = b = c;  // works because = return *this  
a = (b = c);  // equiv. to above (= is right-associative)  
(a = b) = c;  // "works" because = returns a non-const
```
Synthesized Assignment Operator

- 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

```cpp
#include "SimplePoint.h"

... // definitions for Distance() and SetLocation()

int main(int argc, char** argv) {
    SimplePoint x;
    SimplePoint y(x);
    y = x; // invokes synthesized assignment operator
    return 0;
}
```
Lecture Outline

- Constructors
- Copy Constructors
- Assignment
- **Destructors**
- An extended example
Destructors

- C++ has the notion of a destructor \((\text{dtor})\)
  - Invoked automatically when a class instance is deleted, goes out of scope, etc. (even via exceptions or other causes!)
  - Place to put your 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)
}
```
Lecture Outline

- Constructors
- Copy Constructors
- Assignment
- Destructors
- An extended example
Complex Example Walkthrough

See:

Complex.h
Complex.cc
testcomplex.cc

- (Some details like friend functions and namespaces are explained in more detail next lecture, but ideas should make sense from looking at the code and explanations in *C++ Primer*)
Extra Exercise #1

Modify your Point3D class from Lec 10 Extra #1

- Disable the copy constructor and assignment operator
- Attempt to use copy & assignment in code and see what error the compiler generates
- Write a `CopyFrom()` member function and try using it instead
  - (See details about `CopyFrom()` in next lecture)
Extra 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-separated 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