C++ Inheritance I
CSE 333 Spring 2023

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Relevant Course Information

- Exercise 9 released this afternoon
  - C++ smart pointers and inheritance

- Homework 3 is due next Thursday (5/18)
  - Get started early!
  - Videos for overview and demo and file debugging

- Midterm grading will take a while
  - Lots of acceptable answers for reflection questions
Overview of Next Two Lectures

❖ C++ inheritance
  ▪ **Review of basic idea** (pretty much the same as in Java)
  ▪ What’s different in C++ (compared to Java)
    • Static vs. dynamic dispatch – virtual functions and vtables (optional)
    • Pure virtual functions, abstract classes, why no Java “interfaces”
    • Assignment slicing, using class hierarchies with STL
  ▪ Casts in C++ (bonus material in this week’s section)

❖ Reference: *C++ Primer*, Chapter 15
Lecture Outline

❖ Inheritance motivation & C++ Syntax
❖ Polymorphism & Dynamic Dispatch
❖ Virtual Tables & Virtual Table Pointers
Stock Portfolio Example

- A portfolio represents a person’s financial investments
  - Each *asset* has a cost (*i.e.*, how much was paid for it) and a market value (*i.e.*, how much it is worth)
    - The difference between the cost and market value is the *profit* (or loss)
  - Different assets compute market value in different ways
    - A *stock* that you own has a ticker symbol (*e.g.*, “GOOG”), a number of shares, share price paid, and current share price
    - A *dividend stock* is a stock that also has dividend payments
    - *Cash* is an asset that never incurs a profit or loss

(Credit: thanks to Marty Stepp for this example)
Design Without Inheritance

- One class per asset type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stock</th>
<th>DividendStock</th>
<th>Cash</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>symbol_</td>
<td>symbol_</td>
<td>amount_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total_shares_</td>
<td>total_shares_</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total_cost_</td>
<td>total_cost_</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>current_price_</td>
<td>current_price_</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GetMarketValue()</td>
<td>GetMarketValue()</td>
<td>GetMarketValue()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GetProfit()</td>
<td>GetProfit()</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GetCost()</td>
<td>GetCost()</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dividents_</td>
<td>GetMarketValue()</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Redundant!
- Cannot treat multiple investments together
  - *e.g.*, can’t have an array or vector of different assets

- See sample code in `initial/` directory
Inheritance

❖ A parent-child “is-a” relationship between classes
  ▪ A child (derived class) extends a parent (base class)

❖ Terminology:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Java</th>
<th>C++</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superclass</td>
<td>Base Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subclass</td>
<td>Derived Class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

▪ Mean the same things. You’ll hear both.
Inheritance

❖ A parent-child “is-a” relationship between classes
  ▪ A child (derived class) extends a parent (base class)

❖ Benefits:
  ▪ Code reuse
    • Children can automatically inherit code from parents
  ▪ Polymorphism
    • Ability to redefine existing behavior but preserve the interface
    • Children can override the behavior of the parent
    • Others can make calls on objects without knowing which part of the inheritance tree it is in
  ▪ Extensibility
    • Children can add behavior
Design With Inheritance

**Asset (abstract)**

- GetMarketValue()
- GetProfit()
- GetCost()

**Stock**

- symbol_
- total_shares_
- total_cost_
- current_price_

- GetMarketValue()
- GetProfit()
- GetCost()

**Cash**

- amount_

- GetMarketValue()

**DividendStock**

- symbol_
- total_shares_
- total_cost_
- current_price_
- dividends_

- GetMarketValue()
- GetProfit()
- GetCost()
Like Java: Access Modifiers

- **public:** visible to all other classes
- **protected:** visible to current class and its *derived* classes
- **private:** visible only to the current class

**Use protected for class members only when**
- Class is designed to be extended by derived classes
- Derived classes must have access but clients should not be allowed
Class Derivation List

❖ Comma-separated list of classes to inherit from:

```cpp
#include "BaseClass.h"

class Name : public BaseClass {
    ...
};
```

❖ Focus on single inheritance, but multiple inheritance possible

❖ Almost always you will want public inheritance

❖ Acts like extends does in Java

❖ Any member that is non-private in the base class is the same in the derived class; both interface and implementation inheritance
  • Except that constructors, destructors, copy constructor, and assignment operator are never inherited
## Back to Stocks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stock</th>
<th>DividendStock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>symbol_, total_shares_, total_cost_, current_price_</td>
<td>symbol_, total_shares_, total_cost_, current_price_, dividends_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GetMarketValue()</td>
<td>GetMarketValue()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GetProfit()</td>
<td>GetProfit()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GetCost()</td>
<td>GetCost()</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BASE**

**DERIVED**
A derived class:

- **Inherits** the behavior and state (specification) of the base class
- **Overrides** some of the base class’ member functions (opt.)
- **Extends** the base class with new member functions, variables (opt.)
Lecture Outline

- Inheritance motivation & C++ Syntax
- Polymorphism & Dynamic Dispatch
- Virtual Tables & Virtual Table Pointers
Polymorphism in C++

- **In Java:** `PromisedType var = new ActualType();`
  - `var` is a reference (different term than C++ reference) to an object of `ActualType` on the Heap
  - `ActualType` must be the same class or a subclass of `PromisedType`

- **In C++:** `PromisedType* var_p = new ActualType();`
  - `var_p` is a *pointer* to an object of `ActualType` on the Heap
  - `ActualType` must be the same or a derived class of `PromisedType`
  - (also works with references)
  - `PromisedType` defines the *interface* (*i.e.*, what can be called on `var_p`), but `ActualType` may determine which *version* gets invoked
Dynamic Dispatch (like Java)

- Usually, when a derived function is available for an object, we want the derived function to be invoked
  - This requires a run time decision of what code to invoke

- A member function invoked on an object should be the most-derived function accessible to the object’s visible type
  - Can determine what to invoke from the object itself

Example:
- `void PrintStock(Stock* s) { s->Print(); }`
- Calls the appropriate `Print()` without knowing the actual type of `*s`, other than it is some sort of `Stock`
Dynamic Dispatch Example

❖ When a member function is invoked on an object:
  ▪ The *most-derived function* accessible to the object’s visible type is invoked (decided at *run time* based on actual type of the object)

```cpp
double DividendStock::GetMarketValue() const {
    return get_shares() * get_share_price() + dividends_;
}

double "DividendStock"::GetProfit() const {
    // inherited
    return GetMarketValue() - GetCost();
}
```

```cpp
double Stock::GetMarketValue() const {
    return get_shares() * get_share_price();
}

double Stock::GetProfit() const {
    return GetMarketValue() - GetCost();
}
```
Dynamic Dispatch Example

```cpp
#include "Stock.h"
#include "DividendStock.h"

DividendStock dividend();
DividendStock* ds = &dividend;
Stock* s = &dividend;  // why is this allowed?

// Invokes DividendStock::GetMarketValue()
ds->GetMarketValue();

// Invokes DividendStock::GetMarketValue()
s->GetMarketValue();

// invokes Stock::GetProfit(), since that method is inherited.
// Stock::GetProfit() invokes DividendStock::GetMarketValue(),
// since that is the most-derived accessible function.
s->GetProfit();
```
Requesting Dynamic Dispatch (C++)

- Prefix the member function declaration with the `virtual` keyword
  - Derived/child functions don’t need to repeat `virtual`, but was traditionally good style to do so
  - This is how method calls work in Java (no virtual keyword needed)
  - You almost always want functions to be virtual

- `override` keyword (C++11)
  - Tells compiler this method should be overriding an inherited virtual function – always use if available
  - Prevents overloading vs. overriding bugs

- Both of these are technically `optional` in derived classes
  - Be consistent and follow local conventions (Google Style Guide says no `virtual` if `override`)
Most-Derived

```cpp
class A {
public:
    // Foo will use dynamic dispatch
    virtual void Foo();
};

class B : public A {
public:
    // B::Foo overrides A::Foo
    virtual void Foo();
};

class C : public B {
    // C inherits B::Foo()
};

void Bar() {
    A* a_ptr;
    C c;
    a_ptr = &c;
    // Whose Foo() is called?
    a_ptr->Foo();
}
```
Whose `Foo()` is called?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>We’re lost…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

```cpp
class A {
    public:
        virtual void Foo();
};
class B : public A {
    public:
        virtual void Foo();
};
class C : public B {
};
class D : public C {
    public:
        virtual void Foo();
};
class E : public C {
};

void Bar() {
    A* a_ptr;
    C c;
    E e;

    // Q1:
    a_ptr = &c;
    a_ptr->Foo();

    // Q2:
    a_ptr = &e;
    a_ptr->Foo();
}
```
Lecture Outline

❖ Inheritance motivation & C++ Syntax
❖ Polymorphism & Dynamic Dispatch
❖ Virtual Tables & Virtual Table Pointers
How Can This Possibly Work?

- The compiler produces `Stock.o` from `just Stock.cc`
  - It doesn’t know that `DividendStock` exists during this process
  - So then how does the emitted code know to call `Stock::GetMarketValue()` or `DividendStock::GetMarketValue()` or something else that might not exist yet?
    - *Function pointers!!!*

```cpp
// Stock.h
virtual double Stock::GetMarketValue() const;
virtual double Stock::GetProfit() const;

// Stock.cc
double Stock::GetMarketValue() const {
    return get_shares() * get_share_price();
}

double Stock::GetProfit() const {
    return GetMarketValue() - GetCost();
}
```
vtables and the vptr

- If a class contains *any* virtual methods, the compiler emits:
  - A (single) virtual function table (**vtable**) for *the class*
    - Contains a function pointer for each virtual method in the class
    - The pointers in the vtable point to the most-derived function for that class
  - A virtual table pointer (**vptr**) for *each object instance*
    - A pointer to a virtual table as a “hidden” member variable
    - When the object’s constructor is invoked, the vptr is initialized to point to the vtable for the object’s class
    - Thus, the vptr “remembers” what class the object is
351 Throwback: Dynamic Dispatch

Java:

```java
Point p = ???;
return p.samePlace(q);
```

C pseudo-translation:

```c
// works regardless of what p is
return p->vtable[1](p, q);
```
vtable/vptr Example

class Base {
    public:
    virtual void F1();
    virtual void F2();
};

class Der1 : public Base {
    public:
    virtual void F1();
};

class Der2 : public Base {
    public:
    virtual void F2();
};

Base b;
Der1 d1;
Der2 d2;

Base* b0ptr = &b;
Base* b1ptr = &d1;
Base* b2ptr = &d2;

b0ptr->F1();  //
b0ptr->F2();  //

b1ptr->F1();  //
b1ptr->F2();  //

b2ptr->F1();  //
b2ptr->F2();  //

d2.F1();      //
vtable/vptr Example

```cpp
Base b;
Der1 d1;
Der2 d2;

Base* b2ptr = &d2;

b2ptr->F1();
// b2ptr -->
// d2.vptr -->
// Der2.vtable.F1 -->
// Base::F1()

d2.F1();
// d2.vptr -->
// Der2.vtable.F1 -->
// Base::F1()
```
Let’s Look at Some Actual Code

- Let’s examine the following code using `objdump`
  - `g++ -Wall -g -std=c++17 -o vtable vtable.cc`
  - `objdump -CDS vtable > vtable.d`

```
class Base {
    public:
        virtual void f1();
        virtual void f2();
    }

class Der1 : public Base {
    public:
        virtual void f1();
    }

int main(int argc, char** argv) {
    Der1 d1;
    Base* bptr = &d1;
    bptr->f1();
    d1.f1();
}
```