# Lecture 16 – First-Class Continuations

COSE212: Programming Languages

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#### Recall



- We will learn about continuations with the following topics:
  - Continuations (Lecture 14 & 15)
  - First-Class Continuations (Lecture 16)
  - Compiling with continuations (Lecture 17)
- A continuation represents the rest of the computation.
  - Continuation Passing Style (CPS)
  - Interpreter of FAE in CPS
  - Small-step operational (reduction) semantics of FAE

#### Recall



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- In this lecture, let's learn first-class continuations.

#### Recall



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  - First-Class Continuations (Lecture 16)
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  - Interpreter of FAE in CPS
  - Small-step operational (reduction) semantics of FAE
- In this lecture, let's learn first-class continuations.
- KFAE FAE with first-class continuations
  - Interpreter and Reduction semantics

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## Recall: First-Class Citizen



In a programming language, an entity is said to be **first-class citizen** if it is treated as a **value**.

## Recall: First-Class Citizen



In a programming language, an entity is said to be **first-class citizen** if it is treated as a **value**. In other words, it can be

- 1 assigned to a variable,
- 2 passed as an argument to a function, and
- g returned from a function.





In a programming language, an entity is said to be **first-class citizen** if it is treated as a **value**. In other words, it can be

- 1 assigned to a variable,
- 2 passed as an argument to a function, and
- 3 returned from a function.

For example, Scala supports first-class functions.



Similarly, a **first-class continuation** means that a continuation is treated as a **value**.



Similarly, a **first-class continuation** means that a continuation is treated as a **value**.

For example, **Racket** supports let/cc to create a first-class continuation.

```
; infix notation
(* 2 (+ 3 5)) ; 2 * (3 + 5) = 16
```

- 1 Evaluate 2. (Result: 2)
- 2 Evaluate 3. (Result: 3)
- 3 Evaluate 5. (Result: 5)
- 4 Add the results of step 2 and 3. (Result: 3 + 5 = 8)
- **6** Multiply the results of step (1) and (2) (4). (Result: 2 \* 8 = 16)



For example, Racket supports let/cc to create a first-class continuation.

- Evaluate 2.
- 2 Let k be the continuation of (2) (6).
- Secondary Evaluate 3.
- Evaluate 5.
- **5** Apply the result of step **4** to k.
- **6** Add the results of step **3** and  $\mathbf{4} \mathbf{5}$ .
- $\mathbf{0}$  Multiply the results of step  $\mathbf{0}$  and  $\mathbf{0}$   $\mathbf{6}$ .

- (Result: 2)
- (k is  $\lambda x.(2+x)$ )
- (Result: 3)
- (Result: 5)
- (Result of **2 6**: 5)
- (Unreachable)
- (Result: 2 \* 5 = 10)



For example, Racket supports let/cc to create a first-class continuation.

- Evaluate 2.
- 2 Let k be the continuation of (2) (6).
- 3 Evaluate 3.
- 4 Evaluate 5.
- **5** Apply the result of step **4** to k.
- 6 Add the results of step 3 and 4 5.
- Multiply the results of step (1) and (2) (6). (Result: 2 \* 5 = 10)
- The step 2 defines the continuation of 2 6 as a value in k.
- The step  $\bigcirc$  changes the control flow using k with the result of  $\bigcirc$  .

(Result: 2)

(Result: 3)

(Result: 5)

(Unreachable)

(k is  $\lambda x.(2+x)$ )

(Result of  $\mathbf{Q} - \mathbf{6}$ : 5)



Some functional languages support first-class continuations.

Rakcet

```
(* 2 (let/cc k (+ 3 (k 5)))) ; 2 * 5 = 10
```

• Ruby

```
2 * (callcc { |k| 3 + k.call(5)}) # 2 * 5 = 10
```

• Haskell

```
do
  x <- callCC $ \k -> do
  y <- k 5
  return $ 3 + y
  return $ 2 * x</pre>
-- 2 * 5 = 10
```

•

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## KFAE – FAE with First-Class Continuations



Now, let's extend FAE into KFAE to support **first-class continuations**. (Assume that val is supported in FAE as syntactic sugar.)

```
/* KFAE */
2 * { vcc k; 3 + k(5) } // 2 * 5 = 10
```





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```
/* KFAE */
2 * { vcc k; 3 + k(5) } // 2 * 5 = 10
```

```
/* KFAE */
{
   vcc done;
   val f = { vcc exit; 2 * done(1 + { vcc k; exit(k) }) };
   f(3) * 5
}
// 1 + 3
```





Now, let's extend FAE into KFAE to support **first-class continuations**. (Assume that val is supported in FAE as syntactic sugar.)

```
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For KFAE, we need to extend expressions of FAE with

1 first-class continuations (vcc)

# Concrete/Abstract Syntax



```
// expressions
<expr> ::= ...
| "vcc" <id>";" <expr>
```

For KFAE, we need to extend expressions of FAE with

first-class continuations (vcc)

# Concrete/Abstract Syntax



```
// expressions
<expr> ::= ...
| "vcc" <id>";" <expr>
```

For KFAE, we need to extend **expressions** of FAE with

first-class continuations (vcc)

Let's define the **abstract syntax** of KFAE in BNF:

```
Expressions \mathbb{E} \ni e ::= \dots | vcc x; e (Vcc)
```

```
enum Expr:
...
// first-class continuations
case Vcc(name: String, body: Expr)
```

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# Recall: Interpreter and Reduction Sem. for FAE



In the previous lecture, we have defined the **first-order representation** of **continuations** with **value stack**:

```
enum Cont:
   case EmptyK
   case EvalK(env: Env, expr: Expr, k: Cont)
   case AddK(k: Cont)
   case MulK(k: Cont)
   case AppK(k: Cont)

type Stack = List[Value]
```

```
Continuations \mathbb{K} \ni \kappa ::= \square (EmptyK)  \mid (\sigma \vdash e) :: \kappa \quad (\text{EvalK})   \mid (+) :: \kappa \quad (\text{AddK})   \mid (\times) :: \kappa \quad (\text{MulK})   \mid (@) :: \kappa \quad (\text{AppK})  Value Stacks \mathbb{S} \ni s ::= \blacksquare \mid v :: s \quad (\text{List[Value]})
```

# Recall: Interpreter and Reduction Sem. for FAE



Then, we have defined the **reduction relation**  $\to \in (\mathbb{K} \times \mathbb{S}) \times (\mathbb{K} \times \mathbb{S})$  between **states** consisting of pairs of **continuations** and **value stacks**:

$$\langle \kappa \mid \mid s \rangle \rightarrow \langle \kappa' \mid \mid s' \rangle$$





Then, we have defined the **reduction relation**  $\to \in (\mathbb{K} \times \mathbb{S}) \times (\mathbb{K} \times \mathbb{S})$  between **states** consisting of pairs of **continuations** and **value stacks**:

```
def reduce(k: Cont, s: Stack): (Cont, Stack) = ???
```

$$\langle \kappa \mid \mid s \rangle \rightarrow \langle \kappa' \mid \mid s' \rangle$$

And the eval function **iteratively reduces** the state until it reaches the empty continuation  $\square$  and returns the single value in the value stack:

```
def eval(str: String): String =
  import Cont.*
  def aux(k: Cont, s: Stack): Value = reduce(k, s) match
    case (EmptyK, List(v)) => v
    case (k, s) => aux(k, s)
  aux(EvalK(Map.empty, Expr(str), EmptyK), List.empty).str
```

$$\langle (\varnothing \vdash e) :: \Box \mid \mid \blacksquare \rangle \rightarrow^* \langle \Box \mid \mid v :: \blacksquare \rangle$$

# Interpreter and Reduction Semantics for KFAE



Now, let's extend the interpreter and reduction semantics for FAE to KFAE by adding the **first-class continuations**.

First, we need to extend the values of FAE with **continuation values** consisting of pairs of continuations and value stacks:

```
// values
enum Value:
   case NumV(number: BigInt)
   case CloV(param: String, body: Expr, env: Env)
   case ContV(cont: Cont, stack: Stack)
```

```
Values \mathbb{V} \ni v ::= n (NumV)
 \mid \langle \lambda x.e, \sigma \rangle (CloV)
 \mid \langle \kappa \mid \mid s \rangle (ContV)
```

Then, let's fill out the missing cases in the reduce function and reduction rules for  $\rightarrow$  in the reduction semantics of KFAE.



```
def reduce(k: Cont, s: Stack): (Cont, Stack) = (k, s) match
  case (EvalK(env, expr, k), s) => expr match
   ...
  case Vcc(x, b) => (EvalK(env + (x -> ContV(k, s)), b, k), s)
```

$$\langle \kappa \mid \mid s \rangle \rightarrow \langle \kappa \mid \mid s \rangle$$

$$\forall \mathtt{cc} \quad \langle (\sigma \vdash \mathtt{vcc} \; x; \; e) :: \kappa \mid\mid s \rangle \quad \rightarrow \quad \langle (\sigma[x \mapsto \langle \kappa \mid\mid s \rangle] \vdash e) :: \kappa \mid\mid s \rangle$$

It defines a new immutable binding x in the environment  $\sigma$  that maps to a **continuation value**  $\langle \kappa \mid \mid s \rangle$ , and then evaluates the body expression e in the extended environment  $\sigma[x \mapsto \langle \kappa \mid \mid s \rangle]$ .

# **Function Application**



```
def reduce(k: Cont, s: Stack): (Cont, Stack) = (k, s) match
    case (EvalK(env, expr, k), s) => expr match
    ...
    case App(f, e) => (EvalK(env, f, EvalK(env, e, AppK(k))), s)
    ...
    case (AppK(k), a :: f :: s) => f match
        case CloV(p, b, fenv) => (EvalK(fenv + (p -> a), b, k), s)
        case ContV(k1, s1) => (k1, a :: s1)
        case v => error(s"not a function: ${v.str}")
```

$$\boxed{\langle \kappa \mid\mid s \rangle \rightarrow \langle \kappa \mid\mid s \rangle}$$

The new  $\mathrm{App}_{2,\kappa}$  rule handles when the function expression evaluates to a continuation value  $\langle \kappa' \mid \mid s' \rangle$ . It changes the control flow to the continuation  $\kappa'$  with the given argument value  $v_2$  and the value stack s'.





$$\langle (\varnothing \vdash 2 \times (\text{vcc } k; (3 + k(5)))) :: \Box$$







$$\begin{array}{c} (\operatorname{Mul}_{1}) \\ \stackrel{(\operatorname{Mul}_{1})}{\to} \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \stackrel{(\operatorname{Num})}{\to} \end{array} \\ \left\langle \left( \varnothing \vdash 2 \right) :: \left( \varnothing \vdash (\operatorname{vcc} k; \ (3 + k(5))) \right) :: (\times) :: \square \quad || \quad \blacksquare \quad \rangle \\ \left\langle \left( \varnothing \vdash (\operatorname{vcc} k; \ (3 + k(5))) \right) :: (\times) :: \square \quad || \quad \square \quad \rangle \\ \end{array} \right)$$



$$\begin{array}{c} (\operatorname{Mul}_1) \\ \xrightarrow{\longrightarrow} \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \xrightarrow{\longrightarrow} \\ (\operatorname{Vcc}) \\ \xrightarrow{\longrightarrow} \\ \end{array} \begin{array}{c} (\varnothing \vdash 2 \times (\operatorname{vcc} k; \ (3+k(5)))) :: (\times) :: \square \\ & \parallel \blacksquare \\ & \searrow \\ ((\varnothing \vdash (\operatorname{vcc} k; \ (3+k(5)))) :: (\times) :: \square \\ & \parallel 2 :: \blacksquare \\ & \searrow \\ \end{array}$$

where 
$$\begin{cases} \sigma_0 = [k \mapsto \langle \kappa_0 \mid | s_0 \rangle] \\ \kappa_0 = (\times) :: \Box \\ s_0 = 2 :: \blacksquare \end{cases}$$



$$\begin{array}{c} (\operatorname{Mul}_1) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Vcc}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Add}_1) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{do}_0 \vdash 3) :: (\sigma_0 \vdash k(5)) :: (\times) :: \square \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Add}_1) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{O}_0 \vdash 3) :: (\sigma_0 \vdash k(5)) :: (+) :: (\times) :: \square \\ \end{array} \right. \begin{array}{c} || \blacksquare \\ || \square \\ |$$

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$$(\operatorname{Mul}_{1}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Nom}) \\ (\operatorname{Nom}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Nom}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Nom}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Nom}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{N$$

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$$(\operatorname{Mul}_{1}) \rightarrow ((\varnothing \vdash 2 \times (\operatorname{vcc} k; (3 + k(5)))) :: \Box \qquad || \blacksquare \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \rightarrow ((\varnothing \vdash 2) :: (\varnothing \vdash (\operatorname{vcc} k; (3 + k(5)))) :: (\times) :: \Box \qquad || \square \\ (\operatorname{Vcc}) \rightarrow ((\operatorname{Vcc} k; (3 + k(5)))) :: (\times) :: \Box \qquad || \square \\ (\operatorname{Add}_{1}) \rightarrow ((\operatorname{Add}_{1}) \rightarrow ((\operatorname{Ad}_{1}) \rightarrow (\operatorname{Ad}_{2}) \rightarrow ((\operatorname{Ad}_{2}) \rightarrow (\operatorname{Ad}_{2}) \rightarrow ((\operatorname{Ad}_{2}) \rightarrow (\operatorname{Ad}_{2}) \rightarrow ((\operatorname{Ad}_{2}) \rightarrow (\operatorname{Add}_{2}) \rightarrow ((\operatorname{Ad}_{2}) \rightarrow (\operatorname{Add}_{2}) \rightarrow ((\operatorname{Ad}_{2}) \rightarrow (\operatorname{Add}_{2}) \rightarrow ((\operatorname{Add}_{2}) \rightarrow (\operatorname{Add}_{2}) \rightarrow (\operatorname{Add}_{2}$$

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$$\begin{array}{c} (\operatorname{Mul}_1) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Vcc}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Vac}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Add}_1) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Add}_1) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Ad$$

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Let's interpret the expression  $2 \times (\text{vcc } k; (3 + k(5)))$ :

$$\begin{array}{c} (\operatorname{Mul}_1) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Vec}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Add}_1) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{O}_0 \vdash k(5)) :: (+) :: (\times) :: \square \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{O}_0 \vdash k) :: (\operatorname{O}_0 \vdash b) :: (\operatorname{O}) :: (+) :: (\times) :: \square \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{O}_0 \vdash k) :: (\operatorname{O}) :: (+) :: (\times) :: \square \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{O}_0 \vdash k) :: (\operatorname{O}) :: (+) :: (\times) :: \square \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{O}_0 \vdash k) :: (\operatorname{O}) :: (+) :: (\times) :: \square \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{O}_0 \vdash k) :: (\operatorname{O}) :: (+) :: (\times) :: \square \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{O}_0 \vdash k) :: (\operatorname{O}) :: (+) :: (\times) :: \square \\ (\operatorname{O}_0 \vdash k) :: (\operatorname{O}_1 :: (+) :: (\times) :: \square \\ (\operatorname{Num}_1) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{O}_0 \vdash k) :: (\operatorname{O}_1 :: (+) :: (\times) :: \square \\ (\operatorname{O}_1 :: (+) :: (\times) :: (\times$$

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Let's interpret the expression  $2 \times (\text{vcc } k; (3 + k(5)))$ :

$$(\operatorname{Mul}_{1}) \rightarrow (\operatorname{Mul}_{1}) \rightarrow (\operatorname{Mul}_{2}) \rightarrow (\operatorname{M$$

where 
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Let's interpret the expression  $(\lambda x.(\text{vcc }r;\ r(x+1)\times 2))(3)$ :

$$\langle (\varnothing \vdash (\lambda x.(\mathsf{vcc}\ r;\ r(x+1) \times 2))(3)) :: \Box \qquad || \blacksquare$$

where {



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$$(\operatorname{App}_1) \begin{array}{c} \langle \ (\varnothing \vdash (\lambda x.(\operatorname{vcc} r; \ r(x+1) \times 2))(3)) :: \Box & || \blacksquare \\ \rightarrow \\ \langle \ (\varnothing \vdash (\lambda x.(\operatorname{vcc} r; \ r(x+1) \times 2))) :: (\varnothing \vdash 3) :: (@) :: \Box & || \blacksquare \\ \end{pmatrix}$$

where  $\left\{ \right.$ 



where 
$$\begin{cases} e_0 = vcc r; r(x+1) \times 2 \end{cases}$$



$$\begin{array}{c} (\operatorname{App}_1) \\ (\operatorname{Fun}) \\ \to \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ \to \\ \to \\ \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \langle \ (\varnothing \vdash (\lambda x.(\operatorname{vcc} r; \ r(x+1) \times 2))(3)) :: \square \\ ( (\varnothing \vdash (\lambda x.(\operatorname{vcc} r; \ r(x+1) \times 2))) :: (\varnothing \vdash 3) :: (@) :: \square \\ ( (\varnothing \vdash 3) :: (@) :: \square \\ \to \\ \to \\ \end{array} \begin{array}{c} | \ ( (\varnothing \vdash 3) :: (@) :: \square \\ ( (@) :: \square \\ \end{array} \begin{array}{c} | \ ( (\varnothing \vdash 3) :: (@) :: \square \\ ( (@) :: \square \\ \end{array} \right)$$

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$$\begin{array}{c} (\operatorname{App}_1) \\ (\operatorname{App}_1) \\ (\operatorname{Fun}) \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ (\operatorname{App}_2, \lambda) \\ (\operatorname{App}_2, \lambda) \\ (\operatorname{Vec}) \\$$

where 
$$\begin{cases} e_0 = \text{vcc } r; \ r(x+1) \times 2 \\ \sigma_0 = [x \mapsto 3] \\ \sigma_1 = \sigma_0[r \mapsto \langle \Box || \blacksquare \rangle] \end{cases}$$



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$$\begin{array}{c} (\operatorname{App}_1) \\ (\operatorname{App}_1) \\ (\operatorname{CP}_1) \\ (\operatorname{CP}_1) \\ (\operatorname{Fun}) \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ (\operatorname{Num}) \\ (\operatorname{App}_2, \lambda) \\ (\operatorname{CP}_1) \\ (\operatorname{CP}_2, \lambda) \\ (\operatorname{CP}_1) \\ (\operatorname{CP}_2) \\ (\operatorname{CP}_1) \\ (\operatorname{CP}_2) \\ (\operatorname{CP}_1) \\ (\operatorname{C$$

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$$(\lambda x.(\text{vcc }r;\ r(x+1)\times 2))(3)$$
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where 
$$\begin{cases} e_0 &= \text{ vcc } r; \ r(x+1) \times 2 \\ \sigma_0 &= [x \mapsto 3] \\ \sigma_1 &= \sigma_0[r \mapsto \langle \square \mid \mid \blacksquare \rangle] \end{cases}$$



Let's interpret the expression 
$$(\lambda x.(\text{vcc }r;\ r(x+1)\times 2))(3)$$
:

$$(\text{App}_1) \\ (\text{App}_1) \\ (\text{Constant } (\emptyset \vdash (\lambda x.(\text{vcc }r;\ r(x+1)\times 2))(3)) :: \square \qquad || \square \qquad ||$$

$$\text{where} \left\{ \begin{array}{lcl} e_0 & = & \text{vcc } r; \ r(x+1) \times 2 \\ \sigma_0 & = & [x \mapsto 3] \\ \sigma_1 & = & \sigma_0[r \mapsto \langle \square \mid | \blacksquare \rangle] \end{array} \right.$$

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- 4. Control Statements



Many real-world programming languages support **control statements** to change the **control-flow** of a program.



Many real-world programming languages support **control statements** to change the **control-flow** of a program.

For example, C++ supports break, continue, and return statements:

```
int sumEvenUntilZero(int xs[], int len) {
  if (len <= 0) return 0;  // directly return 0 if len <= 0</pre>
  int sum = 0:
 for (int i = 0; i < len; i++) {</pre>
   if (xs[i] == 0) break;  // stop the loop if xs[i] == 0
   if (xs[i] % 2 == 1) continue; // skip the rest if xs[i] is odd
   sum += xs[i]:
  return sum;
                                  // finally return the sum
int xs[] = \{4, 1, 3, 2, 0, 6, 5, 8\};
sumEvenUntilZero(xs, 8); //4 + 2 = 6
```

Let's represent them using first-class continuations!



• return statement:



#### • return statement:

```
x => body
```

#### means

```
x => { vcc return;
  body // return(e) directly returns e to the caller
}
```



return statement:

```
x => body
```

means

```
x => { vcc return;
body // return(e) directly returns e to the caller
}
```

• break and continue statements:

```
while (cond) body
```



return statement:

```
x => body
```

means

```
x => { vcc return;
body // return(e) directly returns e to the caller
}
```

• break and continue statements:

```
while (cond) body
```

means

```
{ vcc break;
  while (cond) { vcc continue;
    body // continue(e)/break(e) jumps to the next/end of the loop
  }
}
```



We can represent other control statements similarly, but think for yourself!

exception in Python

```
try:
    x = y / z
except ZeroDivisionError:
    x = 0
```

• generator in JavaScript

```
const foo = function* () { yield 'a'; yield 'b'; yield 'c'; };
let str = '';
for (const c of foo()) { str = str + c; }
str // 'abc'
```

- coroutines in Kotlin
- async/await in C#
- •

# Summary



#### 1. First-Class Continuations

# 2. KFAE – FAE with First-Class Continuations Concrete/Abstract Syntax

## 3. Interpreter and Reduction Semantics for KFAE

Recall: Interpreter and Reduction Semantics for FAE Interpreter and Reduction Semantics for KFAE First-Class Continuations
Function Application
Example 1
Example 2

#### 4. Control Statements

# Exercise #9



- Please see this document<sup>1</sup> on GitHub.
  - Implement reduce function.
- It is just an exercise, and you don't need to submit anything.
- However, some exam questions might be related to this exercise.

<sup>1</sup>https://github.com/ku-plrg-classroom/docs/tree/main/cose212/kfae.

#### Next Lecture



• Compiling with Continuations

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