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CS 444/644 COURSE NOTES

COMPILER CONSTRUCTION

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Abstract

These notes are intended as a resource for myself; past, present, or future students of this course, and anyone interested in the material. The goal is to provide an end-to-end resource that covers all material discussed in the course displayed in an organized manner. These notes are my interpretation and transcription of the content covered in lectures. The instructor has not verified or confirmed the accuracy of these notes, and any discrepancies, misunderstandings, typos, etc. as these notes relate to course's content is not the responsibility of the instructor. If you spot any errors or would like to contribute, please contact me directly.

1 January 7, 2019

1.1 Basic overview of a compiler

A **compiler** takes a source language and translates it to a target language. The source language could be, for example, C, Java, or JVM bytecode and the target language could be, for example, machine language or JVM bytecode.

A compiler could be divided into two parts:

Front-end analysis Front-end could be further divided into two parts: the first being scanning and parsing (assignment 1) and the second being context-sensitive analysis (assignment 2,3,4).

Some refer to context-sensitive analysis as “middle-end”.

Back-end synthesis The backend could also be divided into two parts: the first being optimization (CS 744) and the second being code generation (assignment 5).

1.2 Overview of front-end analysis

Goal: is the input a valid program? An auxiliary step is to also generate information about the program for use in synthesis later on.

There are several steps in the front-end:

Scanning Split sequence of characters into sequence of tokens. Each token consists of its lexeme (actual characters) and its kind.

There are tools for generating the DFA expressions from a regular language e.g. lex.