Programming Languages: Imperative Program Construction 1. Hoare Logic and Weakest Precondition: Non-Looping Constructs

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Hoare Logic

In this course we will talk about program construction using Dijkstra's calculus. Most of the materials are from Kaldewaij.

- A program computing the greatest common divisor:

$$
\begin{array}{l}
\textbf{con}\ A, B : \mathit{Int} \\
\textbf{var}\ \ x, y : \mathit{Int} \\
x, y := A, B \\
\textbf{do}\ y < x \rightarrow x := x - y \\
\ \ |\ \ \ x < y \rightarrow y := y - x \\
\textbf{od}
\end{array}
$$

.

- **do** denotes loops with guarded bodies.

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\mathbf{var}\ \ x, y : Int \\
x, y := A, B \\
\mathbf{do}\ y < x \rightarrow x := x - y \\
\mid\ \ \ x < y \rightarrow y := y - x \\
\mathbf{od} \\
\{x = y = gcd\ (A, B)\}\ \ .
\end{array}
$$

- **do** denotes loops with guarded bodies.
- Assertions delimited in curly brackets.

- Given a program statement S and predicates P and Q, the *Hoare triple* $\{P\}\,S\,\{Q\}$ is a Boolean value.
- Operationally, $\{P\}\,S\,\{Q\}$ is $True$ iff. the statement S, when executed in a state satisfying P, *terminates* in a state satisfying Q.

- $\{x \geqslant 0 \land y \geqslant 0\}\, S\, \{r = x \times y\}$ is *True* iff. S is a program that, given non-negative x and y, terminates and stores $x \times y$ in r.

- $\{x \geqslant 0 \wedge y \geqslant 0\}\, S\, \{r = x \times y\}$ is *True* iff. S is a program that, given non-negative x and y, terminates and stores $x \times y$ in r.
  - Nothing is said about values of x and y upon termination.
  - When $x \geqslant 0 \wedge y \geqslant 0$ does not hold, S may do anything — including looping forever.

Examples

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- $\{z \geqslant 0\}\, S\, \{x \times y = z\}$ is *True* iff. S, given non-negative z, computes a factorization of z, and terminates.

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- $\{z \geqslant 0\}\, S\, \{x \times y = z\}$ is *True* iff. S, given non-negative z, computes a factorization of z, and terminates.
- $\{x > 0\}\, S\, \{\mathit{True}\}$ is *True* iff. S is any program that terminates, provided that $x > 0$.

Some Properties

- $\{P\}\,S\,\{Q\}$ and $P_0 \Rightarrow P$ implies $\{P_0\}\,S\,\{Q\}$.
- $\{P\}\,S\,\{Q\}$ and $Q \Rightarrow Q_0$ implies $\{P\}\,S\,\{Q_0\}$.
- $\{P\}\,S\,\{Q\}$ and $\{P\}\,S\,\{R\}$ equivales $\{P\}\,S\,\{Q \wedge R\}$.
- $\{P\}\,S\,\{Q\}$ and $\{R\}\,S\,\{Q\}$ equivales $\{P \vee R\}\,S\,\{Q\}$.
- **Note**: "A equivales B" is another way to say "A if and only if B", also denoted by $A \equiv B$.

The No-Op Statement

- Perhaps the simplest statement: $\{P\}\, \mathit{skip}\, \{Q\}$ iff. $P \Rightarrow Q$.
  - E.g. $\{x > 0 \wedge y > 0\}\, \mathit{skip}\, \{x \geqslant 0\}$.
  - Note that the annotations need not be "exact."
- Operationally, *skip* is a statement that does nothing.
  - Why do we need a program that does nothing?
  - It is like why we need a number 0 that represents "nothing". It can be very useful sometimes.

Assignments

- $P[x \backslash E]$: substituting *free* occurrences of x in P for E.
- We do so in mathematics all the time. A formal definition of substitution, however, is rather tedious.
- For this lecture we will only appeal to "common sense":
  - E.g. $(x \leqslant 3)[x \backslash x - 1] \equiv x - 1 \leqslant 3 \equiv x \leqslant 4$.
  - $$\begin{aligned} & (\langle \exists y : y \in \mathbb{N} : x < y \rangle \wedge y < x)[y \backslash y + 1] \\ \equiv\; & \langle \exists y : y \in \mathbb{N} : x < y \rangle \wedge y + 1 < x. \end{aligned}$$
  - $$\begin{aligned} & \langle \exists y : y \in \mathbb{N} : x < y \rangle [x \backslash y] \\ \equiv\; & \langle \exists z : z \in \mathbb{N} : y < z \rangle. \end{aligned}$$

- The notation $[x \backslash E]$ hints at "divide by x and multiply by E."
  - We have $x[x \backslash E] = E$. Nice!
- Just in case you may see different notations in other papers…
  - Many papers use the notation $[E/x]$. Either way, x is the denominator.
  - Kaldewaij actually wrote $[x := E]$, since substitution is closely related to assignments.
  - Some papers write P_E^x for $P[x \backslash E]$.

- Which is correct:
  1. $\{P\}\, x := E\, \{P[x\backslash E]\}$, or
  2. $\{P[x\backslash E]\}\, x := E\, \{P\}$?

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  1. $\{P\}\, x := E\, \{P[x \backslash E]\}$, or
  2. $\{P[x \backslash E]\}\, x := E\, \{P\}$?
- Answer: 2! For example:

$$
\begin{aligned}
&\{(x \leqslant 3)[x \backslash x + 1]\}\, x := x + 1\, \{x \leqslant 3\} \\
\equiv\ &\{x + 1 \leqslant 3\}\, x := x + 1\, \{x \leqslant 3\} \\
\equiv\ &\{x \leqslant 2\}\, x := x + 1\, \{x \leqslant 3\}.
\end{aligned}
$$

Sequencing

- $\{P\}\ S; T\ \{Q\}$ equivals that there exists R such that $\{P\}\ S\ \{R\}$ and $\{R\}\ T\ \{Q\}$.
- Verify:

$$
\begin{array}{l}
\textbf{var}\ x, y : Int \\
\{x = A \wedge y = B\} \\
x := x - y \\
\\
y := x + y \\
\\
x := y - x \\
\{x = B \wedge y = A\}
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- Verify:

$$\mathbf{var}\ x, y : Int$$
$$\{x = A \wedge y = B\}$$
$$x := x - y$$
$$\{x + y - x = B \wedge x + y = A\}$$
$$y := x + y$$
$$\{y - x = B \wedge y = A\}$$
$$x := y - x$$
$$\{x = B \wedge y = A\}$$

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\begin{array}{l}
\textbf{var}\ x, y : Int \\
\{x = A \wedge y = B\} \\
x := x - y \\
\{y = B \wedge x + y = A\} \ \Rightarrow \{x + y - x = B \wedge x + y = A\} \\
y := x + y \\
\{y - x = B \wedge y = A\} \\
x := y - x \\
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- Verify:

$$
\begin{array}{l}
\textbf{var}\ x, y : Int \\
\{x = A \land y = B\} \Rightarrow \{y = B \land x - y + y = A\} \\
x := x - y \\
\{y = B \land x + y = A\} \\
y := x + y \\
\{y - x = B \land y = A\} \\
x := y - x \\
\{x = B \land y = A\}
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x := x - y \\
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\{y - x = B \land y = A\} \\
x := y - x \\
\{x = B \land y = A\}
\end{array}$$

Selection

- Selection takes the form **if** $B_0 \rightarrow S_0$ | ... | $Bn \rightarrow Sn$ **fi**.
- Each B_i is called a *guard*; $B_i \rightarrow S_i$ is a *guarded command*.
- If none of the guards $B_0 \ldots B_n$ evaluate to true, the program aborts. Otherwise, one of the command with a true guard is chosen *non-deterministically* and executed.

To annotate an **if** statement:

$$
\begin{array}{l}
\{P\} \\
\textbf{if } B_0 \rightarrow \{P \wedge B_0\}\, S_0\, \{Q, \mathrm{Pf}_0\} \\
\;\mid\; B_1 \rightarrow \{P \wedge B_1\}\, S_1\, \{Q, \mathrm{Pf}_1\} \\
\textbf{fi} \\
\{Q, \mathrm{Pf}_2\} \quad ,
\end{array}
$$

where Pf_0, Pf_1, Pf_2 are labels referring to proofs.

- Pf_0 refers to a proof of $\{P \wedge B_0\}\, S_0\, \{Q\}$;
- Pf_1 refers to a proof of $\{P \wedge B_1\}\, S_1\, \{Q\}$;
- Pf_2 refers to a proof of $P \Rightarrow B_0 \vee B_1$.
- The proofs and labels are sometimes omitted if they are trivial.

Binary Maximum

- Goal: to assign $x \uparrow y$ to z. By definition,
  $z = x \uparrow y \quad \equiv \quad (z = x \ \vee \ z = y) \ \wedge \ x \leqslant z \ \wedge \ y \leqslant z.$

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- Try $z := x$. We reason:

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\begin{aligned}
& ((z = x \ \vee \ z = y) \ \wedge \ x \leqslant z \ \wedge \ y \leqslant z)[z \backslash x] \\
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  which hinted at using a guarded command: $y \leqslant x \rightarrow z := x$.
- Indeed:

$$
\begin{array}{l}
\{True\} \\
\mathbf{if}\ y \leqslant x \rightarrow \{y \leqslant x\}\, z := x\, \{z = x \uparrow y\} \\
\ \mid x \leqslant y \rightarrow \{x \leqslant y\}\, z := y\, \{z = x \uparrow y\} \\
\mathbf{fi} \\
\{z = x \uparrow y\} \quad .
\end{array}
$$

- There are two ways to understand the program below:

$$\begin{array}{l} \textbf{if}\ B_{00} \to S_{00} \ \mid\ B_{01} \to S_{01}\ \textbf{fi} \\ \textbf{if}\ B_{10} \to S_{10} \ \mid\ B_{11} \to S_{11}\ \textbf{fi} \\ \qquad \vdots \\ \textbf{if}\ B_{n0} \to S_{n0} \ \mid\ B_{n1} \to S_{n1}\ \textbf{fi}. \end{array}$$

- One takes effort exponential to n; the other is linear.
- Dijkstra: "...if we ever want to be able to compose really large programs reliably, we need a programming discipline such that the intellectual effort needed to understand a program does not grow more rapidly than in proportion to the program length."

Weakest Precondition

More precisely speaking...

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- The *state space* of a program is the states of all its variables.
    - E.g. state space for the GCD program, which has two variables x and y, is $(Int \times Int)$.
- An expression having free variables can be seen as a function.
    - E.g. $x \leqslant y$ is a predicate (a function) with type $(Int \times Int) \rightarrow Bool$ that yields $True$ for, e.g. $(x, y) = (3, 4)$ and $False$ for $(x, y) = (4, 3)$.

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In a Hoare Triple...

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  - The part $z \geqslant 0$ shall be understood as a predicate that takes x, y, and z, and returns *True* iff. $z \geqslant 0$.
  - The part $x \times y = z$ shall be understood as a predicate that takes x, y, and z, and returns *True* iff. $x \times y = z$.
- *True* in a Hoare triple can be understood as a predicate that returns *True* for any input; similarly with *False*.

- Let S be a program having variables x, y, z. That $\{P\}\, S\, \{Q\}$ being $True$ means that if S starts running in a state such that $P\,(x, y, z) = True$, it terminates and yields a state such that $Q\,(x, y, z) = True$.

- Given propositions P and Q, if $P \Rightarrow Q$, we say that Q is the *weaker* one, and P is the *stronger* one.

Stronger? Weaker?

- Given propositions P and Q, if $P \Rightarrow Q$, we say that Q is the *weaker* one, and P is the *stronger* one.
- Precisely speaking, P is *no weaker than* Q and Q is *no stronger than* P. But let's be a bit sloppy to avoid confusion...

- The convention extends to predicates. If $P\,x \Rightarrow Q\,x$ for every x, Q is the *weaker* one, while P is the *stronger* one.

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- Example: P can be weaker than $P \wedge Q$ (since $(P \wedge Q) \Rightarrow P$); $P \vee Q$ can be weaker than P (since $P \Rightarrow (P \vee Q)$).

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    - Intuition: for first-order values, the set of values satisfying a weaker predicate is *larger* than that satisfying a stronger predicate.
- Example: P can be weaker than $P \land Q$ (since $(P \land Q) \Rightarrow P$); $P \lor Q$ can be weaker than P (since $P \Rightarrow (P \lor Q)$).
- Intuition: a weaker predicate enforces less restriction, is more tolerant, and allows more inputs/states to be True.

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- $P \Rightarrow Q$ iff. $P \subseteq Q$.
  - A weaker predicate is a bigger set!
- $P \wedge Q$ corresponds to $P \cap Q$; $P \vee Q$ corresponds to $P \cup Q$.

- Recall that the predicates in a Hoare triple need not be exact.
  - $\{x \leqslant 2\}\, x := x + 1\, \{x \leqslant 3\}$ is a valid triple.
  - So is $\{0 < x \leqslant 2\}\, x := x + 1\, \{x \leqslant 3\}$. Note that $x \leqslant 2$ is weaker than $0 < x \leqslant 2$.
  - $x \leqslant 2$ is in fact the weakest (most tolerating) P such that $\{P\}\, x := x + 1\, \{x \leqslant 3\}$ holds.

- Defining weakest precondition in terms of Hoare triple....
- **Definition**: given a statement S, its *weakest precondition* with respect to Q, denoted $wp\ S\ Q$, is the weakest predicate such that $\{wp\ S\ Q\}\ S\ \{Q\}$ holds.

Predicate Transformer

wp S is a function from predicates to predicates.

- Also called a *predicate transformer*.
- I myself find it sometimes easier to think of a predicate transformer as a function from sets to sets.
- E.g. *wp S Q* gives you the *largest* set P such that for all $x \in P$, running S starting from initial state x gives you a final state in Q.

- Weakest preconditions for *skip* and *assignment*:
- $wp\ skip\ P = P$.
- $wp\ (x := E)\ P = P[x \backslash E]$.

- We can do it the other way round: specify *wp* for each program construct, and define Hoare triple in terms of *wp*.
- **Definition**: $\{P\}\ S\ \{Q\}$ if and only if $P \Rightarrow wp\ S\ Q$.

- $\{x > 0\}$ *skip* $\{x \geqslant 0\}$ is valid, because:

$$
\begin{array}{ll}
 & \mathit{wp}\ \mathit{skip}\ (x \geqslant 0) \\
\equiv & \quad \{\ \text{definition of } \mathit{wp}\ \} \\
 & x \geqslant 0 \\
\Leftarrow & x > 0 \quad .
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$$

- $\{0 < x < 2\}\ x := x + 1\ \{x \leqslant 3\}$ is valid, because

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \mathit{wp}\ (x := x + 1)\ (x \leqslant 3) \\
\equiv\ & \quad \{\ \text{definition of } \mathit{wp}\ \} \\
& (x \leqslant 3)[x \backslash x + 1] \\
\equiv\ & x + 1 \leqslant 3 \\
\Leftarrow\ & 0 < x < 2 \quad .
\end{aligned}
$$

Sequencing and Branching

- $wp\ (S; T)\ Q = wp\ S\ (wp\ T\ Q)$.
  - Or $wp\ (S; T) = wp\ S \cdot wp\ T$, where $(\cdot)$ denotes function composition.
- $wp\ (\mathbf{if}\ B_0 \to S_0 \mid B_1 \to S_1\ \mathbf{fi})\ Q =$ $(B_0 \Rightarrow wp\ S_0\ Q) \wedge (B_1 \Rightarrow wp\ S_1\ Q) \wedge (B_0 \vee B_1)$.

What does a program *mean*?

- **Denotational semantics**: what a program *is*. Mapping programs to mathematical objects.
- **Operational semantics**: what a program *does*. How one program term transforms to another.
- **Axiomatic semantics**: what a program *guarantees*.

- *Predicate transformer semantics* can be seen as a kind of denotational semantics, and axiomatic semantics.
- The meaning of a program is a *predicate transformer*: give it a post condition Q, it tells us what precondition is sufficient to guarantee Q.
- It is a "goal oriented" semantics that is more suitable for reasoning about and constructing imperative programs.

- wp must satisfy certain conditions.
- **Strictness**: $wp\ S\ False = False$.
- **Monotonicity**: $P \Rightarrow Q$ implies $wp\ S\ P \Rightarrow wp\ S\ Q$.
- **Distributivity over Conjunction**:
  $(wp\ S\ Q_0 \wedge wp\ S\ Q_1) \equiv wp\ S\ (Q_0 \wedge Q_1)$.

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- One can prove that $(wp\ S\ Q_0 \vee wp\ S\ Q_1) \Rightarrow wp\ S\ (Q_0 \vee Q_1)$.
- $(wp\ S\ Q_0 \vee wp\ S\ Q_1) \equiv wp\ S\ (Q_0 \vee Q_1)$ holds only for *deterministic* programs.