

PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES:

IMPERATIVE PROGRAM CONSTRUCTION

1. HOARE LOGIC AND WEAKEST PRECONDITION: NON-LOOPING CONSTRUCTS

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Sep. 2021

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HOARE LOGIC

THE GUARDED COMMAND LANGUAGE

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:

```
con A, B : Int
var x, y : Int
x, y := A, B
do y < x → x := x - y
|  x < y → y := y - x
od
.
```

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

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con  $A, B : \text{Int}$   $\{0 < A \wedge 0 < B\}$   
var  $x, y : \text{Int}$   
 $x, y := A, B$   
do  $y < x \rightarrow x := x - y$   
  |  $x < y \rightarrow y := y - x$   
od  
 $\{x = y = \text{gcd}(A, B)\}$  .
```

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

THE HOARE TRIPLE

- 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 .

EXAMPLES

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

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- $\{z \geq 0\} S \{x \times y = z\}$ is *True* iff. S , given non-negative z , computes a factorization of z , and terminates.
- $\{x > 0\} S \{\text{True}\}$ 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 $\{P\} S \{R\}$ equivaless $\{P\} S \{Q \wedge R\}$.
- $\{P\} S \{Q\}$ and $\{R\} S \{Q\}$ equivaless $\{P \vee R\} S \{Q\}$.
- **Note:** “ A equivaless 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: $\{P\} \text{ skip } \{Q\}$ iff. $P \Rightarrow Q$.
 - E.g. $\{x > 0 \wedge y > 0\} \text{ skip } \{x \geq 0\}$.
 - 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

SUBSTITUTION

- $P[x \backslash E]$: 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. $(x \leq 3)[x \backslash x - 1] \equiv x - 1 \leq 3 \equiv x \leq 4$.

$$\begin{aligned} & \langle \exists y : y \in \text{Nat} : x < y \rangle \wedge y < x [y \backslash y + 1] \\ \equiv & \langle \exists y : y \in \text{Nat} : x < y \rangle \wedge y + 1 < x. \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} & \langle \exists y : y \in \text{Nat} : x < y \rangle [x \backslash y] \\ \equiv & \langle \exists z : z \in \text{Nat} : y < z \rangle. \end{aligned}$$

- The notation $[x \setminus E]$ hints at “divide by x and multiply by E .”
 - We have $x[x \setminus E] = E$. 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 $P[x \setminus E]$.

SUBSTITUTION AND ASSIGNMENTS

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- Answer: 2! For example:

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

SEQUENCING

CATENATION

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

$\text{var } x, y : \text{Int}$

$\{x = A \wedge y = B\}$

$x := x - y$

$y := x + y$

$x := y - x$

$\{x = B \wedge y = A\}$

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$\{x + y - x = B \wedge x + y = A\}$

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$\{y = B \wedge x + y = A\} \Rightarrow \{x + y - x = B \wedge x + y = A\}$

$y := x + y$

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$\text{var } x, y : \text{Int}$

$\{x = A \wedge y = B\} \Rightarrow \{y = B \wedge x - y + y = A\}$

$x := x - y$

$\{y = B \wedge x + y = A\}$

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SELECTION

IF-CONDITIONALS

- Selection takes the form **if** $B_0 \rightarrow S_0 \mid \dots \mid B_n \rightarrow S_n$ **fi**.
- Each B_i is called a *guard*; $B_i \rightarrow S_i$ is a *guarded command*.
- If none of the guards $B_0 \dots B_n$ 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:

```
{P}  
if  $B_0 \rightarrow \{P \wedge B_0\} S_0 \{Q, \text{Pf}_0\}$   
  |  $B_1 \rightarrow \{P \wedge B_1\} S_1 \{Q, \text{Pf}_1\}$   
fi  
 $\{Q, \text{Pf}_2\}$  ,
```

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

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$$\begin{aligned} & ((z = x \vee z = y) \wedge x \leq z \wedge y \leq z)[z \backslash x] \\ & \equiv (x = x \vee x = y) \wedge x \leq x \wedge y \leq x \\ & \equiv y \leq x, \end{aligned}$$

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- Indeed:

```
{True}
if  $y \leq x \rightarrow \{y \leq x\} z := x \{z = x \uparrow y\}$ 
|  $x \leq y \rightarrow \{x \leq y\} z := y \{z = x \uparrow y\}$ 
fi
{ $z = x \uparrow y$ } .
```

ON UNDERSTANDING PROGRAMS

- There are two ways to understand the program below:

if $B_{00} \rightarrow S_{00} \mid B_{01} \rightarrow S_{01}$ **fi**
if $B_{10} \rightarrow S_{10} \mid B_{11} \rightarrow S_{11}$ **fi**
:
if $B_{n0} \rightarrow S_{n0} \mid B_{n1} \rightarrow S_{n1}$ **fi.**

- 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...

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

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 - The part $z \geq 0$ shall be understood as a predicate that takes x , y , and z , and returns *True* iff. $z \geq 0$.

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 - The part $z \geq 0$ shall be understood as a predicate that takes x , y , and z , and returns *True* iff. $z \geq 0$.
 - 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 $P(x, y, z) = \text{True}$, it terminates and yields a state such that $Q(x, y, z) = \text{True}$.

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- 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...

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- Intuition: a weaker predicate enforces less restriction, is more tolerant, and allows more inputs/states to be *True*.

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

WEAKEST PRECONDITION

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

$wp\ S$ 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 PRECONDITION: SKIP AND ASSIGNMENT

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

HOARE TRIPLE, REVISITED

- 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 $P \Rightarrow wp\ S\ Q$.

EXAMPLES

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

$$\begin{aligned} & wp \text{ skip } (x \geq 0) \\ \equiv & \{ \text{definition of } wp \} \\ & x \geq 0 \\ \Leftarrow & x > 0 . \end{aligned}$$

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

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

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

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.

PROPERTIES OF PREDICATE TRANSFORMERS

- *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.