

Introduction to Object-Oriented Programming

Lambda Expressions

Christopher Simpkins

`chris.simpkins@gatech.edu`

Inner Classes

Recall from [SuperTroopers.java](#) the `MustacheComparator` class:

```
static class MustacheComparator implements Comparator<Trooper> {  
  
    public int compare(Trooper a, Trooper b) {  
        if (a.hasMustache() && !b.hasMustache()) {  
            return 1;  
        } else if (b.hasMustache() && !a.hasMustache()) {  
            return -1;  
        } else {  
            return a.getName().compareTo(b.getName());  
        }  
    }  
}
```

which we can use just like any other named class:

```
Collections.sort(troopers, new MustacheComparator());
```

Anonymous Inner Classes

We can subclass `Comparator` and make an instance of the subclass at the same time using an *anonymous inner class*. Here's a mustache comparator as an inner class:

```
Collections.sort(troopers, new Comparator<Trooper>() {  
    public int compare(Trooper a, Trooper b) {  
        if (a.hasMustache() && !b.hasMustache()) {  
            return 1;  
        } else if (b.hasMustache() && !a.hasMustache()) {  
            return -1;  
        } else {  
            return a.getName().compareTo(b.getName());  
        }  
    }  
});
```

The general syntax for defining an anonymous inner class is

`new SuperType < TypeArgument > () { class_body }`

Functional Interfaces

Any interface with a single abstract method is a functional interface. For example, `Comparator` is a functional interface:

```
public interface Comparator<T> {  
    int compare(T o1, T o2);  
}
```

As in the previous examples, we only need to implement the single abstract method `compare` to make an instantiable class that implements `Comparator`.

Note that there's an optional `@FunctionalInterface` annotation that is similar to the `@Override` annotation. Tagging an interface as a `@FunctionalInterface` prompts the compiler to check that the interface indeed contains a single abstract method and includes a statement in the interface's Javadoc that the interface is a functional interface.

Lambda Expressions

A *lambda expression* is a syntactic shortcut for defining the single abstract method of a functional interface and instantiating an anonymous class that implements the interface. The general syntax is

$$(T_1 \ p_1, \dots, T_n \ p_n) \rightarrow \{method_body\}$$

Where

- T_1, \dots, T_n are types and
- p_1, \dots, p_n are parameter names

just like in method definitions.

If *method_body* is a single expression, the curly braces can be omitted.

MustacheComparator as a Lambda Expression

Here's our mustache comparator from [SuperTroopers.java](#) as a lambda expression:

```
Collections.sort(troopers, (Trooper a, Trooper b) -> {  
    if (a.hasMustache() && !b.hasMustache()) {  
        return 1;  
    } else if (b.hasMustache() && !a.hasMustache()) {  
        return -1;  
    } else {  
        return a.getName().compareTo(b.getName());  
    }  
});
```

- Because `Collections.sort(List<T> l, Comparator<T> c)` takes a `Comparator<T>`, we way that `Comparator<T>` is the *target type* of the lambda expression passed to the `sort` method.
- The lambda expression creates an instance of an anonymous class that implements `Comparator<Trooper>` and passes this instance to `sort`

Target Types

```
static interface Bar {  
    int compare(Trooper a, Trooper b);  
}  
static void foo(Bar b) { ... }
```

Given the `Bar` interface, the call:

```
foo((Trooper a, Trooper b) -> {  
    if (a.hasMustache() && !b.hasMustache()) {  
        return 1;  
    } else if (b.hasMustache() && !a.hasMustache()) {  
        return -1;  
    } else {  
        return a.getName().compareTo(b.getName());  
    }  
});
```

creates an instance of the `Bar` interface using the same lambda expression.

- The type of object instantiated by a lambda expression is determined by the *target type* of the call in which the lambda expression appears.

Revisiting WordCount

Remember the rank comparator we defined for WordCount:

```
public class WordCount {  
  
    private Map<String, Integer> wordCounts;  
  
    public Set<String> getWordsRanked() {  
        Comparator<String> rankComparator = new Comparator<String>() {  
            public int compare(String k1, String k2) {  
                return wordCounts.get(k2) - wordCounts.get(k1);  
            }  
        };  
        TreeSet<String> rankedWords = new TreeSet<>(rankComparator);  
        rankedWords.addAll(wordCounts.keySet());  
        return rankedWords;  
    }  
}
```


WordCount's Comparator as a Lambda Expression

We can replace the anonymous inner class definition with a lambda expression:

```
public Set<String> getWordsRanked() {  
    Comparator<String> rankComparator =  
        (String k1, String k2) -> wordCounts.get(k2) -  
        wordCounts.get(k1);  
    TreeSet<String> rankedWords = new TreeSet<>(rankComparator);  
    rankedWords.addAll(wordCounts.keySet());  
    return rankedWords;  
}
```

Notice that since the body of the lambda expression is a single expression, we leave off the curly braces and `return` keyword.

Free and Bound Variables

```
public class WordCount {  
    private Map<String, Integer> wordCounts;  
  
    public Set<String> getWordsRanked() {  
        Comparator<String> rankComparator =  
            (String k1, String k2) -> wordCounts.get(k2) - wordCounts.get(k1);  
        TreeSet<String> rankedWords = new TreeSet<>(rankComparator);  
        rankedWords.addAll(wordCounts.keySet());  
        return rankedWords;  
    }  
}
```

In rankComparator:

- `k1` and `k2` are *bound variables*. They are defined in the parameter list or body of the lambda expression.
- `wordCounts` is a *free variable*. It is defined outside the lambda expression. Free variables must be *effectively final*.

We say that the lambda expression *captures* the `wordCount` variable. Such lambda expressions are called *closures*.

Method References

- A lambda expression is a compact notation for specifying the implementation of the abstract method in a functional interface.
- A method reference is a compact notation for a lambda expression that supplies the implementation of the abstract method in a functional interface from a compatible named method that has already been defined.

If a method already exists that fits the specification for a parameter that could take a lambda expression as an argument, you can use a method reference instead of a lambda expression.

Method References Example

Say we have a functional interface whose abstract method takes a single `Object` and returns `void`:

```
public interface Foo {  
    void bar(Object o);  
}
```

and a method that takes an instance of an object implementing this functional interface as a parameter

```
void doo(Foo f) {  
    f.bar("baz");  
}
```

We can supply a method reference to any method that is *lambda equivalent* to the `bar` method above (same parameter list and return type):

```
doo(System.out::println);
```

which is equivalent to:

```
doo(x -> System.out.println(x));
```

Method References

Three kinds of method references:

- *object::instanceMethod* - like `x -> object.instanceMethod(x)`
- *Class::staticMethod* - like `x -> Class.staticMethod(x)`

```
someList.forEach(System.out::println);
```

- *Class::instanceMethod* - like `(x, y) -> x.instanceMethod(y)`

```
Comparator<Trooper> byName =  
    Comparator.comparing(Trooper::getName);
```

Let's see some examples ...

Functional(ish) Composition

Remember how our mustache comparator ordered by mustache, then by name?

With lambdas we can make that even more concise and clear:

```
Comparator<Trooper> byMustacheThenName =  
    Comparator.comparing(Trooper::hasMustache)  
        .thenComparing(Trooper::getName);  
Collections.sort(troopers, byMustacheThenName);
```

Look at the [Comparator](#) API for details on these methods.