Foundations: Syntax, Semantics, and Graphs

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based on slides by Ruzica Pizkac, Claire Le Goues, Lin Tan, Marsha Chechik, and others



Foundations

Syntax

- Syntax and BNF Grammar
- Abstract Syntax Trees (AST)

Semantics

- Natural Operational Semantics (a.k.a. big step)
- Judgements and derivations

Graphs

- Graph, cyclic, acyclic
- Nodes, edges, paths
- Trees, sub-graphs, sub-paths, ...
- Control Flow Graph (CFG)



SYNTAX



WHILE: A Simple Imperative Language

We will use a simple imperative language called WHILE

the language is also sometimes called IMP

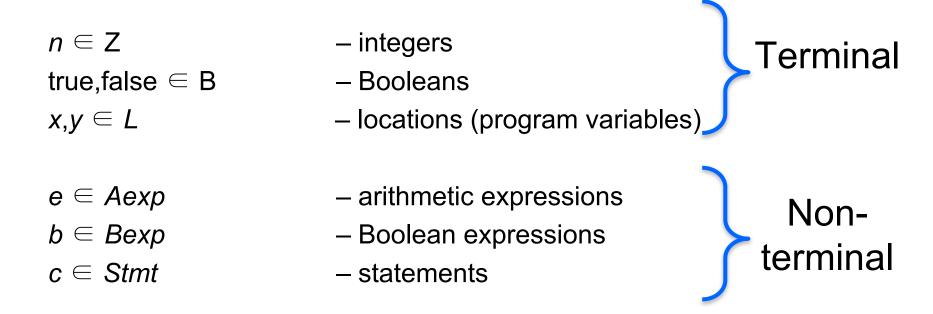
An example WHILE program:

```
{ p := 0; x := 1; n := 2 };
while x ≤ n do {
        x := x + 1;
        p := p + m
};
print_state
```

';' is a connective, not terminator as in C!



WHILE: Syntactic Entities



Terminals are atomic entities that are completely defined by their tokens

integers, Booleans, and locations are terminals

Non-Terminals are composed of one or more terminals

- determined by rules of the grammar
- Aexp, Bexp, and Stmt are non-terminals



WHILE: Syntax of Arithmetic Expressions

Arithmetic expressions (Aexp)

$$\begin{array}{lll} e ::= & n & \quad & \text{for } n \in Z \\ & \mid \text{-n} & \quad & \text{for } n \in Z \\ & \mid x & \quad & \text{for } x \in L \\ & \mid e_1 \text{ aop } e_2 \\ & \mid \text{'(' e ')'} \end{array}$$

BNF grammar rules

Notes:

- Variables are not declared before use
- All variables have integer type
- Expressions have no side-effects

BNF: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Backus%E2%80%93Naur_form



WHILE: Syntax of Boolean Expressions

```
Boolean expressions (Bexp) b ::= 'true' | 'false' | \neg b | e_1 rop e_2 | for e_1, e_2 \in Aexp | e_1 bop b_2 | for e_1, e_2 \in Bexp | '(' b ')' rop ::= '<' | '<=' | '=' | '>=' | '>' bop ::= 'and' | 'or'
```



Syntax of Statements

```
Statements
          skip
s ::=
         x := e
         | if b then s [ else s ]
         | while b do s
         | '{' slist '}'
         | print state
         assert b assume b havoc v1, ..., vN
slist ::= s ( ';' s )*
prog ::= slist
Notes:
```

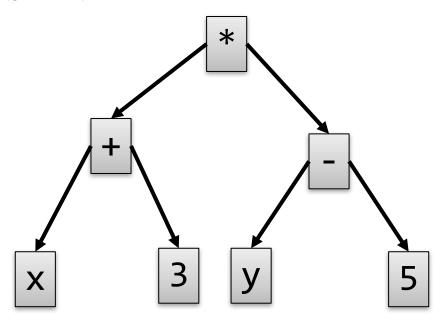
- 101001
- Semi-colon ';' is a statement composition, not statement terminator!!!
- Statements contain all the side-effects in the language
- Many usual features of a PL are missing: references, function calls, ...
 - the language is very very simple yet hard to analyze



Abstract Syntax Tree (AST)

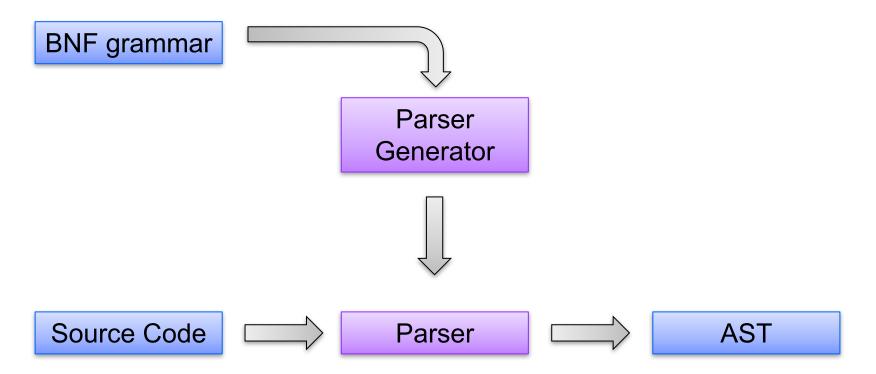
AST is an abstract tree representation of the source code

- each node represents a syntactic construct occurring in the code
 - statement, variable, operator, statement list
- called "abstract" because some details of concrete syntax are omitted
 - AST normalizes (provides common representation) of irrelevant differences in syntax (e.g., white space, comments, order of operations)
- example AST: (x + 3) * (y 5)





Language Parsing in a Nutshell



Parser generator

input: BNF grammar; output: parser (program)

Parser

input: program source code; output: AST or error



WHILE AST in Python

One class per syntactic entity

One field per child

Class hierarchy corresponds to the semantic one

```
Emacs-x86_64-10_9 Prelude - /tmp/ast.py
class Ast(object):
class Ast(object):
    """Base class of AST hierarchy"""
    pass
class Stmt (Ast):
    """A single statement"""
    pass
class AsgnStmt (Stmt):
    """An assignment statement"""
    def init (self, lhs, rhs):
        self.lhs = lhs
        self.rhs = rhs
class IfStmt (Stmt):
    """If-then-else statement"""
    def init (self, cond, then_stmt, else_stmt=None):
        self.cond = cond
        self.then stmt = then stmt
        self.else stmt = else stmt
```



Behavior Pattern: Visitor

Applicability

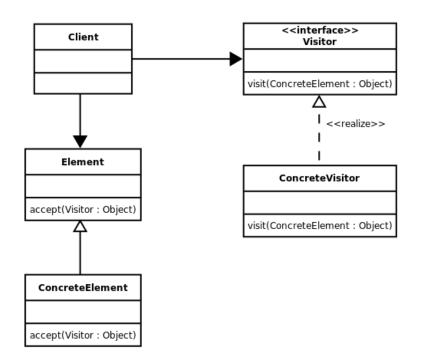
- Object hierarchy with many classes
- Operations depend on classes
- Set of classes is stable
- Want to define new operations

Consequences

- Simplifies adding new operations
- Groups related behavior in one class
- Extending class hierarchy is difficult
- Visitor can maintain state
- Element must expose interface

In Python

- Method name is used instead of polymorphism, e.g., visit_Stmt()
- Visitor's visit() method dispatches calls based on reflection. No need for accept()





Example Visitor in Python

```
class AstVisitor(object):
    """Base class for AST visitor"""
    def __init__(self):
        pass

def visit (self, node, *args, **kwargs):
        """Visit a node."""
    method = 'visit_' + node.__class__.__name__
        visitor = getattr (self, method)
        return visitor (node, *args, **kwargs)

def visit_BoolConst (self, node, *args, **kwargs):
        visitor = getattr (self, 'visit_' + Const.__name__)
        return visitor (node, *args, **kwargs)
```

```
class PrintVisitor (AstVisitor):
    """A printing visitor"""
    def visit IntVar (self, node, *args, **kwargs):
        self. write (node.name)
    def visit Const (self, node, *args, **kwargs):
        self. write (node.val)
    def visit Exp (self, node, *args, **kwargs):
        if node.is unary ():
            self._write (node.op)
            self.visit (node.arg (0))
        else:
            self. open brkt (**kwargs)
            self.visit (node.arg (0))
            for a in node.args [1:]:
                self. write (' ')
                self. write (node.op)
                self. write (' ')
                self.visit (a)
            self. close brkt (**kwargs)
```



Exercise: Implement a state counting visitor

Write a visitor that counts the number of statements in a program

- (a) Implementation 1:
 - the visitor should be stateless and return the number of statements
- (b) Implementation 2:
 - uses an internal state (field) to keep track of the number of statements



Stateless Visitor

```
class StmtCounterStateless (wlang.ast.AstVisitor):
    def init (self):
        super (StmtCounterStateless, self). init ()
    def visit StmtList (self, node, *args, **kwargs):
        if node.stmts is None:
           return 0
       res = 0
       for s in node.stmts:
           res = res + self.visit (s)
        return res
    def visit IfStmt (self, node, *args, **kwargs):
        res = 1 + self.visit (node.then stmt)
        if node.has else ():
            res = res + self.visit (node.else stmt)
        return res
    def visit WhileStmt (self, node, *args, **kwargs):
       return 1 + self.visit (node.body)
    def visit Stmt (self, node, *args, **kwargs):
        return 1
```



Statefull Visitor

```
class StmtCounterStatefull (wlang.ast.AstVisitor):
    def init (self):
        super (StmtCounterStatefull, self). init_ ()
        self. count = 0
    def get num stmts (self):
        return self. count
    def count (self, node, *args, **kwargs):
        self. count = 0
        self.visit (node, *args, **kwargs)
    def visit StmtList (self, node, *args, **kwargs):
        if node.stmts is None:
            return
        for s in node.stmts:
            self.visit (s)
    def visit Stmt (self, node, *args, **kwargs):
        self. count = self. count + 1
    def visit IfStmt (self, node, *args, **kwargs):
        self.visit Stmt (node)
        self.visit (node.then stmt)
        if node.has else ():
            self.visit (node.else stmt)
    def visit WhileStmt (self, node, *args, **kwargs):
        self.visit Stmt (node)
        self.visit (node.body)
```



From Programming to Modeling

Extend a programming language with 3 modeling features

Assertions

• assert e – aborts an execution when e is false, no-op otherwise

```
void assert (bool b) { if (!b) error(); }
```

Non-determinism

• havoc x – assigns variable x a non-deterministic value

```
void havoc(int &x) { int y; x = y; }
```

Assumptions

assume e – blocks execution if e is false, noop otherwise

```
void assume (bool e) { while (!e); }
```



Safety Specifications as Assertions

A program is correct if all executions that satisfy all assumptions also satisfy all assertions

A program is incorrect if there exists an execution that satisfies all of the assumptions AND violates at least one an assertion

Assumptions express pre-conditions on which the program behavior relies

Assertions express desired properties that the program must maintain



Non-determinism vs. Randomness

A *deterministic* function always returns the same result on the same input

• e.g., F(5) = 10

A *non-deterministic* function may return different values on the same input

• e.g., G(5) in [0, 10] "G(5) returns a non-deterministic value between 0 and 10"

A *random* function may choose a different value with a probability distribution

• e.g., H(5) = (3 with prob. 0.3, 4 with prob. 0.2, and 5 with prob. 0.5)

Non-deterministic choice cannot be implemented!

used to model the worst possible adversary/environment



Modeling with Non-determinism

```
int x, y;
void main (void)
  havoc (x);
  assume (x > 10);
  assume (x <= 100);
  y = x + 1;
  assert (y > x);
  assert (y < 200);
```



Order of Assumptions

```
int x, y;
void main (void)
  havoc (x);
 y = x + 1;
  assume (x > 10);
  assume (x <= 100);
  assert (y > x);
  assert (y < 200);
```

```
int x, y;
void main (void)
  havoc (x);
  y = x + 1;
  assert (y > x);
  assert (y < 200);
  assume (x > 10);
  assume (x <= 100);
```



Dangers of unrestricted assumptions

Assumptions can lead to vacuous correctness claims!!!

```
if (x > 0) {
  assume (x < 0);
  assert (0); }</pre>
```

Is this program correct?

Assume must either be checked with assert or used as an idiom:

```
havoc (x);
havoc (y);
assume (x < y);</pre>
```



SEMANTICS



Meaning of WHILE Programs

Questions to answer:

- What is the "meaning" of a given WHILE expression/statement?
- How would we evaluate WHILE expressions and statements?

- How are the evaluator and the meaning related?
- How can we reason about the effect of a command?



Semantics of Programming Languages

Denotational Semantics

- Meaning of a program is defined as the mathematical object it computes (e.g., partial functions).
- example: Abstract Interpretation

Axiomatic Semantics

- Meaning of a program is defined in terms of its effect on the truth of logical assertions.
- example: Hoare Logic

(Structural) Operational Semantics

- Meaning of a program is defined by formalizing the individual computation steps of the program.
- example: Natural Operational Semantics



Semantics of WHILE

The meaning of WHILE expressions depends on the values of variables, i.e. the current state.

A state s is a function from L to Z

- assigns a value for every location/variable
- notation: s(x) is the value of variable x in state s

The set of all states is $Q = L \rightarrow Z$

We use q to range over Q



Judgments

We write $\langle e, q \rangle \Downarrow n$ to mean that expression e evaluates to n in state q.

- The formula <e, q> ↓ n is called a judgment

 (a judgement is a relation between an expression e, a state q and a number n)
- We can view
 ↓ as a function of two arguments e and q

This formulation is called natural operational semantics

- also known as big-step operational semantics
- the judgment relates the expression and its "meaning"

How to define <e1 + e2, q $> \downarrow \dots$?



Inference Rules

We express the evaluation rules as inference rules for our judgments.

The rules are also called evaluation rules.

An inference rule
$$F_1 \dots F_n \\ G$$
 where H

defines a relation between judgments $F_1,...,F_n$ and G.

- The judgments $F_1,...,F_n$ are the premises of the rule;
- The judgments *G* is the conclusion of the rule;
- The formula *H* is called the side condition of the rule. If *n*=0 the rule is called an axiom. In this case, the line separating premises and conclusion may be omitted.



Inference Rules for Aexp

In general, we have one rule per language construct:

$$\langle n, q \rangle \Downarrow n$$
 $\langle x, q \rangle \Downarrow q(x)$

$$\Downarrow n_1 < e_2, q> \Downarrow n_2$$

 $\Downarrow (n_1 + n_2)$
 $\Downarrow n_1 < e_2, q> \Downarrow n_2$
 $\Downarrow (n_1 - n_2)$

$$\psi n_1 \psi n_2$$

 $\psi (n_1 * n_2)$

This is called structural operational semantics.

rules are defined based on the structure of the expressions.



Inference Rules for Bexp

$$\Downarrow n_1 < e_2, q> \Downarrow n_2$$

 $\Downarrow (n_1 = n_2)$

$$\Downarrow n_1 < e_2, q> \Downarrow n_2$$

 $\Downarrow (n_1 \le n_2)$

$$\psi t_1 \psi t_2 < b_1 \land b_2, q> \psi (t_1 \land t_2)$$



Derivation

Derivation is a well-formed application of inference rules

Derivation infers new facts from existing ones

$$<7, q> \downarrow 7$$
 $<2, q> \downarrow 2$
 $<5, q> \downarrow 5$ $<7*2, q> \downarrow 14$
 $<5 + (7*2), q> \downarrow 19$



Evaluation of Statements

Evaluation of a statement produces a side-effect

The result of evaluation of a statement is a new state

We write $\langle s, q \rangle \Downarrow q'$ to mean that evaluation of statement s in state q results in a new state q'

$$\frac{\langle s_1, q \rangle \Downarrow q'' \quad \langle s_2, q'' \rangle \Downarrow q'}{\langle s_1; s_2, q \rangle \Downarrow q'}$$

$$\langle b, q \rangle \Downarrow false \qquad \langle s_2, q \rangle \Downarrow q'$$

 $\langle if b then s_1 else s_2, q \rangle \Downarrow q'$



Derivation and Execution

Derivation of statement facts corresponds to execution / interpretation For example

• Show that <p:=0; x:=1; n:=2, []> ↓ [p:=0,x:=1,n:=2]

$$\psi$$
 [p:=0,x:=1] ψ [p:=0,x:=1,n:=2]
 ψ [p:=0,x:=1,n:=2]



Semantics of Loops

$$\langle b, q \rangle \Downarrow false$$
 $\langle b, q \rangle \Downarrow true$ $\langle s; while b do s, q \rangle \Downarrow q'$ $\langle while b do s, q \rangle \Downarrow q'$ $\langle while b do s, q \rangle \Downarrow q'$

What about infinite execution?

- Can introduce a special state ¬, called *top*, that represents divergence
- Infinite loop enters divergent state

Any statement in divergent state is treated like 'skip'

Need small step semantics to deal with reactive execution

execution that does not terminate, but produces useful result



GRAPHS



Graphs

A graph, G = (N, E), is an ordered pair consisting of

- a node set, N, and
- an edge set, $E = \{(n_i, n_i)\}$

If the pairs in E are ordered, then G is called a directed graph and is depicted with arrowheads on its edges

If not, the graph is called an undirected graph

Graphs are suggestive devices that help in the visualization of relations

• The set of edges in the graph are visual representations of the ordered pairs that compose relations

Graphs provide a mathematical basis for reasoning about programs



Paths

a path, P, through a directed graph G = (N, E) is a sequence of edges, $((u_1, v_1), (u_2, v_2), ... (u_t, v_t)$ such that

- $v_{k-1} = u_k$ for all $1 < k \le t$
- u₁ is called the start node and v_t is called the end node

The length of a path is the number of edges (or nodes-1 ©) in the path

Paths are also frequently represented by a sequence of nodes

• $(u_1, u_2, u_3, ..., u_t)$



Cycles

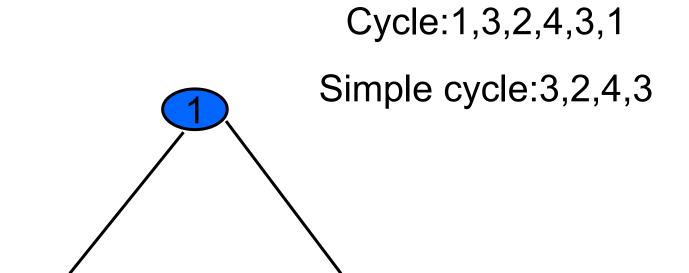
A cycle in a graph G is a path whose start node and end node are the same

A simple cycle in a graph G is a cycle such that all of its nodes are different (except for the start and end nodes)

If a graph G has no path through it that is a cycle, then the graph is called acyclic



Example of Cycles





Trees

An acyclic, undirected graph is called a tree

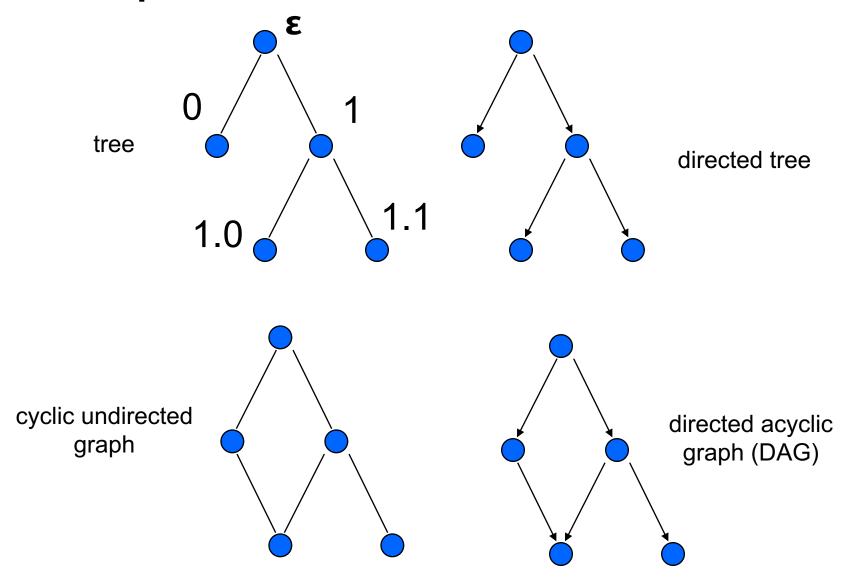
If the undirected version of a directed graph is acyclic, then the graph is called a directed tree

If the undirected version of a directed graph has cycles, but the directed graph itself has no cycles, then the graph is called a Directed Acyclic Graph (DAG)

Every tree is isomorphic to a prefix-closed subset of N* for some natural number N



Examples





GRAPHS AS MODELS OF COMPUTATION



Computation tree

A tree model of all the possible executions of a system

At each node represents a state of the system

valuation of all variables

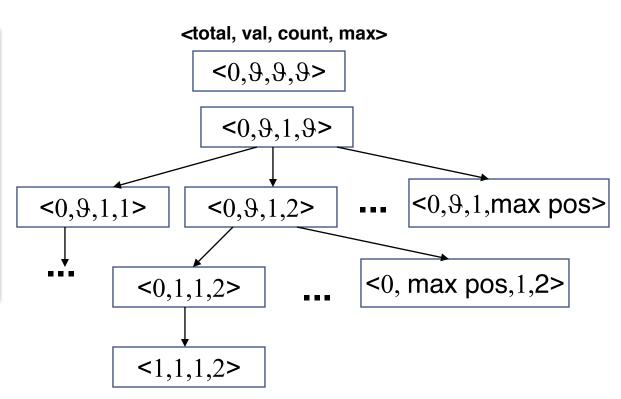
Can have infinite number of paths

Can have infinite paths



Example Computation Tree

```
total := 0;
count := 1;
max := input();
while (count <= max)
  do {
  val := input();
  total := total+val;
  count := count+1};
print (total)</pre>
```



Is this tree infinite?



Disadvantages of Computation Trees

Represent the space that we want to reason about

For anything interesting, they are too large to create or reason about

Other models of executable behavior are providing abstractions of the computation tree model

- Abstract values
- Abstract flow of control
- Specialize abstraction depending on focus of analysis



Control Flow Graph (CFG)

Represents the flow of execution in the program

G = (N, E, S, T) where

- the nodes N represent executable instructions (statement, statement fragments, or basic blocks);
- the edges E represent the potential transfer of control;
- S is a designated start node;
- T is a designated final node
- E = { (n_i, n_i) | syntactically, the execution of n_i follows the execution of n_i }

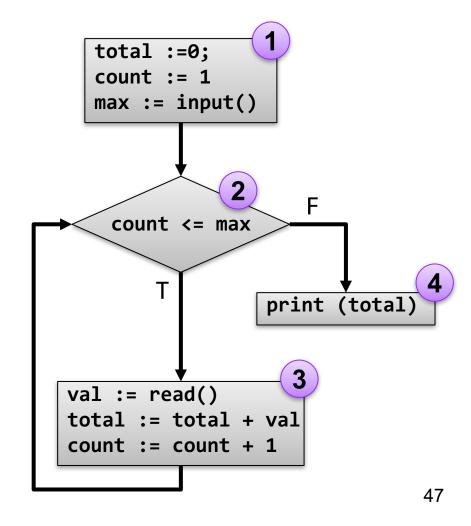
Nodes may correspond to single statements, parts of statements, or several statements (i.e., basic blocks)

Execution of a node means that the instructions associated with a node are executed in order from the first instruction to the last



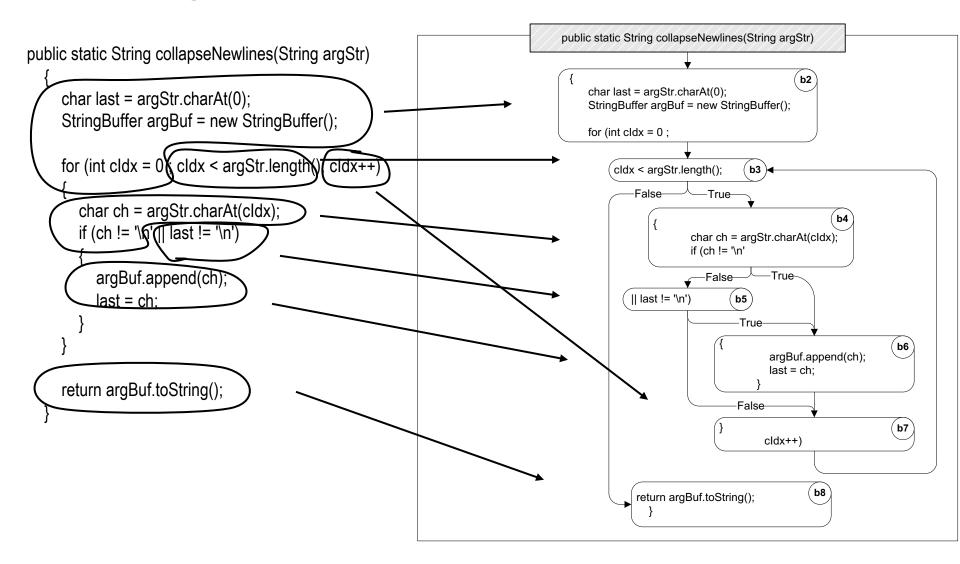
Example of a Control Flow Graph

```
total := 0;
count := 1;
max := input();
while (count <= max)
  do {
  val := input();
  total := total+val;
  count := count+1};
print (total)</pre>
```





Deriving a Control Flow Graph





Control Flow Graph

basic block

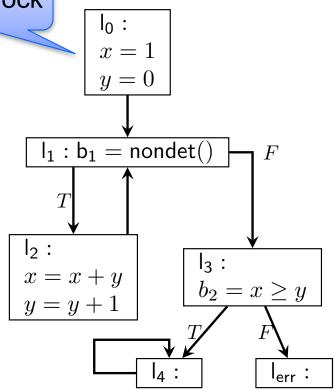
A CFG is a graph of basic blocks

edges represent different control flow

A CFG corresponds to a program syntax

where statements are restricted to the form

and S is control-free (i.e., assignments and procedure calls)





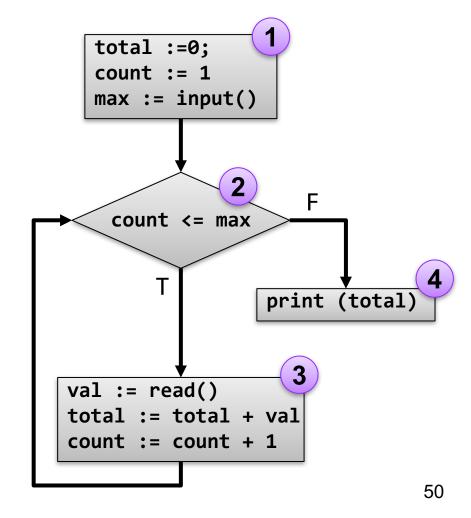
CFG: Sub-path and Complete Path

a sub-path through a CFG is a sequence of nodes $(n_i, n_{i+1}, ..., n_t)$, $i \ge 1$ where for each n_k , $i \le k < t$, (n_k, n_{k+1}) is an edge in the graph

• e.g., 2, 3, 2, 3, 2, 4

a complete path starts at the start node and ends at the final node

• e.g., 1, 2, 3, 2, 4





Infeasible Paths

Every executable sequence in the represented component corresponds to a path in G

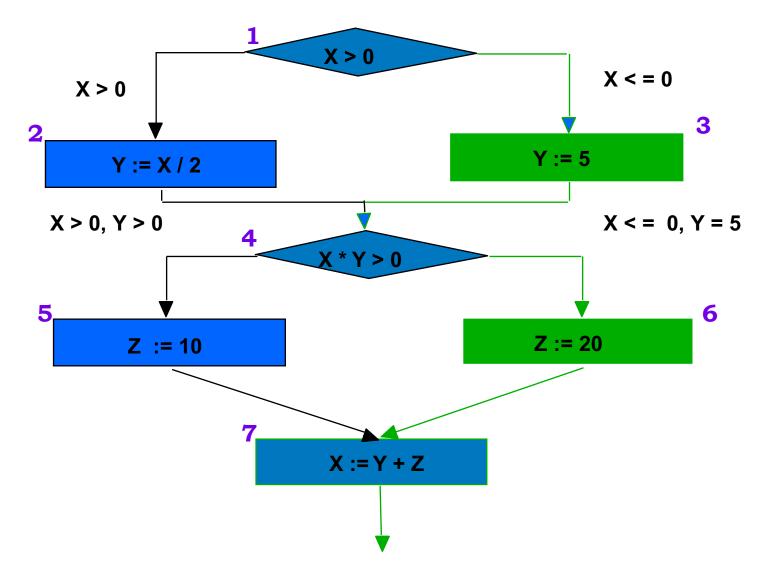
Not all paths correspond to executable sequences

- requires additional semantic information
- "infeasible paths" are not an indication of a fault

CFG usually overestimates the executable behavior



Example with an infeasible path





Example Paths

Feasible path: 1, 2, 4, 5, 7

Infeasible path: 1, 3, 4, 5, 7

Determining if a path is feasible or not requires additional semantic information

- In general, undecidable
- In practice, intractable
 - Some exceptions are studied in this course



Infeasible paths vs. unreachable vs dead code

unreachable code

- $\bullet X := X + 1;$
- goto loop;
- Y := Y + 5;

Never executed

dead code

- X := X + 1;
- X := 7;
- $\bullet X := X + Y;$

'Executed', but irrelevant



Benefits of CFG

Probably the most commonly used representation

Numerous variants

Basis for inter-component analysis

Collections of CFGs

Basis for various transformations

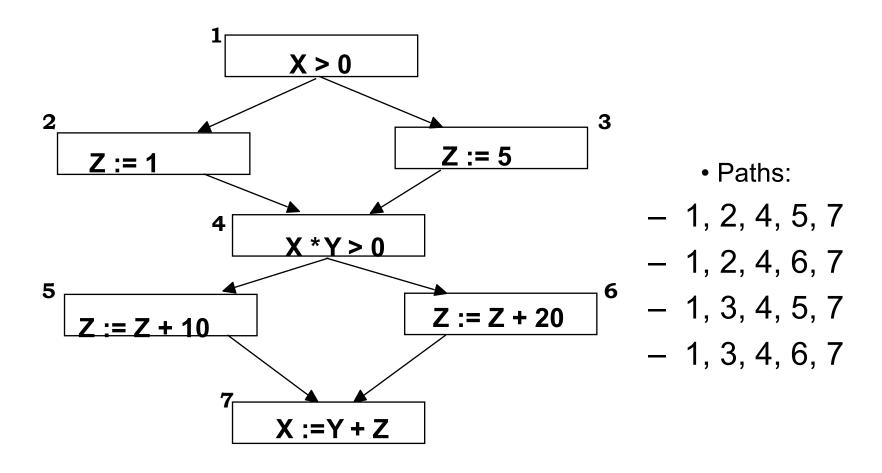
- Compiler optimizations
- S/W analysis

Basis for automated analysis

 Graphical representations of interesting programs are too complex for direct human understanding

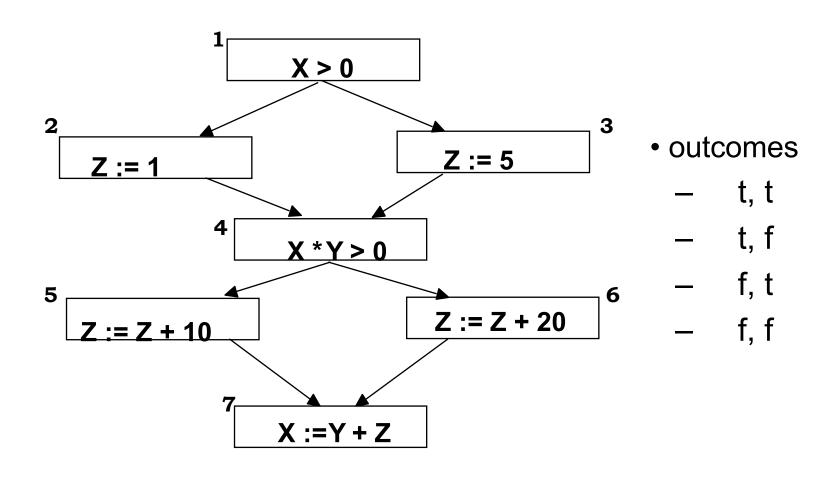


Paths



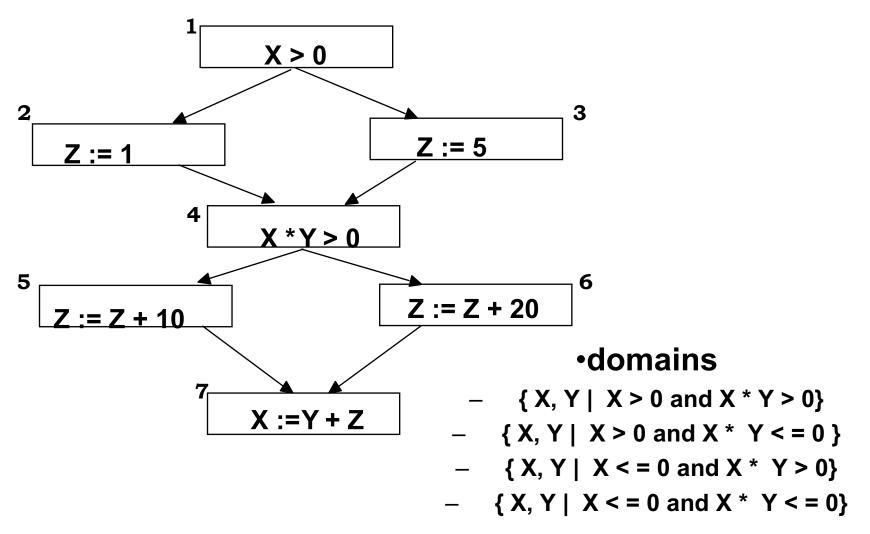


Paths can be identified by predicate outcomes





Paths can be identified by domains





CFG Abstraction Level?

Loop conditions? (yes)
Individual statements? (no)
Exception handling? (no)

What's best depends on type of analysis to be conducted



CFG Exercise (1)

Draw a control flow graph with 7 nodes.

```
int binary_search(int a[], int low, int high,
int target) { /* binary search for target in
the sorted a[low, high] */
      while (low <= high) {
        int middle = low + (high - low)/2;
 3
        if (target < a[middle])
 4
           high = middle - 1;
 5
        else if (target > a[middle])
 6
           low = middle + 1;
        else
           return middle;
     return -1; /* return -1 if target is not
found in a[low, high] */
```

CFG Exercise (2)

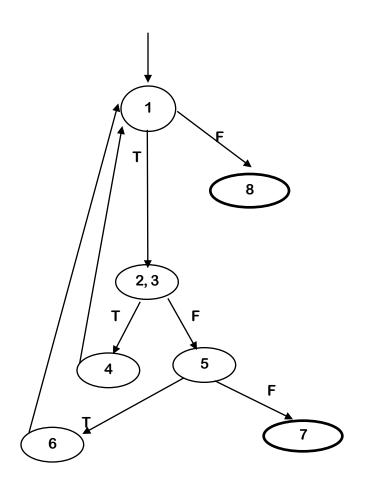
Draw a control flow graph with 8 nodes.

```
int binary_search(int a[], int low, int high,
int target) { /* binary search for target in
the sorted a[low, high] */
      while (low <= high) {
        int middle = low + (high - low)/2;
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        if (target < a[middle])
 4
           high = middle - 1;
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        else if (target > a[middle])
 6
           low = middle + 1;
        else
           return middle;
     return -1; /* return -1 if target is not
found in a[low, high] */
```

CFG Exercise (1) Solution

Draw a control flow graph with 7 nodes.

```
int binary_search(int a[], int low, int high,
int target) { /* binary search for target in
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      while (low <= high) {
         int middle = low + (high - low)/2;
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         if (target < a[middle])</pre>
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            high = middle - 1;
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            low = middle + 1;
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```

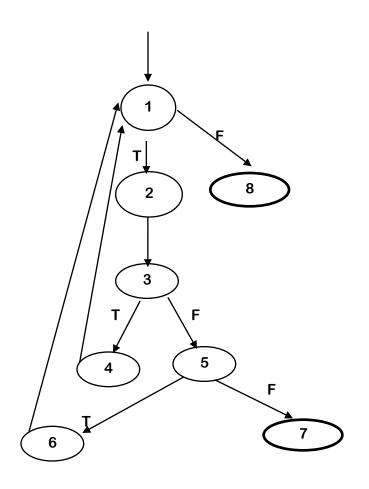




CFG Exercise (2) Solution

Draw a control flow graph with 8 nodes.

```
int binary_search(int a[], int low, int high,
int target) { /* binary search for target in
the sorted a[low, high] */
      while (low <= high) {
         int middle = low + (high - low)/2;
 3
         if (target < a[middle])</pre>
 4
            high = middle - 1;
 5
         else if (target > a[middle])
 6
            low = middle + 1;
        else
           return middle;
     return -1; /* return -1 if target is not
found in a[low, high] */
```



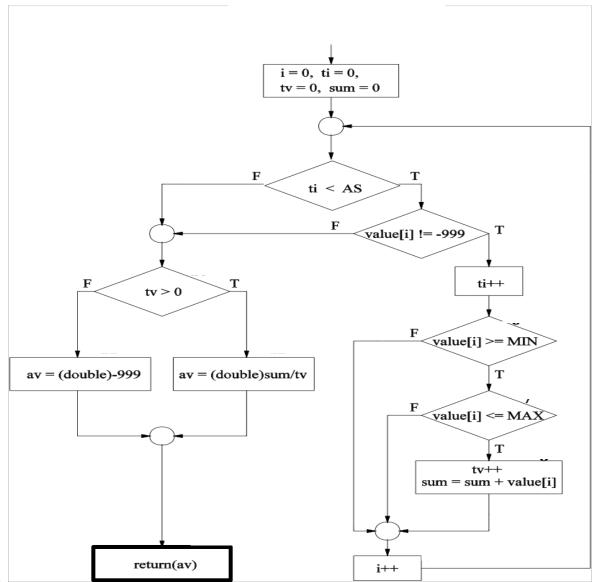


CFG Exercise (3)

/* Function: ReturnAverage Computes the average of all those numbers in the input array in the positive range [MIN, MAX]. The max size of the array is AS. But, the array size could be smaller than AS in which case the end of input is designated by -999. */

```
1
       public static double ReturnAverage(int value[], int AS, int MIN, int MAX) {
            int i, ti, tv, sum;
3
            double av;
            i = 0; ti = 0; tv = 0; sum = 0;
5
            while (ti < AS && value[i] != -999) {
6
                  ti++;
                   if (value[i] >= MIN && value[i] <= MAX) 
8
                   tv++;
9
                   sum = sum + value[i];
10
11
                   1++;
12
             }
13
             if (tv > 0) av = (double)sum/tv;
14
                              else av = (double) - 999;
15
             return (av);
```

CFG of ReturnAverage





Single Static Assignment

SSA == every variable has a unique assignment (a *definition*)
A procedure is in SSA form if every variable has exactly one definition

SSA form is used by many compilers

- explicit def-use chains
- simplifies optimizations and improves analyses

PHI-function are necessary to maintain unique definitions in branching control flow

$$x = PHI (v_0:bb_0, ..., v_n:bb_n)$$
 (phi-assignment)

"x gets v_i if previously executed block was bb_i"



Single Static Assignment: An Example

val:bb

```
int x, y, n;

x = 0;
while (x < N) {
   if (y > 0)
        x = x + y;
   else
        x = x - y;
   y = -1 * y;
}
```

```
0: goto 1
1: x_0 = PHI(0:0, x_3:5);
  y 0 = PHI(y:0, y 1:5);
   if (x_0 < N) goto 2 else goto 6
2: if (y_0 > 0) goto 3 else goto 4
3: x_1 = x_0 + y_0; goto 5
4: x_2 = x_0 - y_0; goto 5
5: x_3 = PHI(x_1:3, x_2:4);
  y 1 = -1 * y 0;
  goto 1
6:
```