Why study PL?

“A different language is a different vision of life”
  - Fellini

- Hypothesis: Programming language shapes programming thought
- Characteristics of a language affect how ideas can be expressed in the language

Course Goals

“Free your mind”
  - Morpheus

You will learn several new
- languages and constructs
- ways to describe and organize computation

Yes, you can do that in Java/Assembly but ...

So what does studying PL buy me?

Enables you to create software that is

- Readable
- Correct
- Extendable
- Modifiable
- Reusable

So what does studying PL buy me?

Will help you learn new languages

- There was no Java (C#) 14 (9) years ago
- Will learn the anatomy of a PL
- Fundamental building blocks of languages reappear in different guises in different languages and different settings
- Re-learn the languages you already know
So what does studying PL buy me?

Enables you to design new languages
“who, me?”

Buried inside any extensible system is a PL
• Emacs: E-Lisp
• Word, Powerpoint: VBScript
• Quake: QuakeC
• Facebook: FBML, FBJS
• SQL, Renderman, LaTeX, XML...

So what does studying PL buy me?

Enables you to better choose the right language
“but isn’t that decided by
- libraries,
- standards,
- and my boss?”
Yes. Chicken-and-egg.

My goal: educate tomorrow’s tech leaders & bosses
So you’ll make considered, informed choices

So what does studying PL buy me?

Makes you look at things in different ways, think outside of the box

Knowing language paradigms other than traditional ones will give you new tools to approach problems, even if you are programming in Java

PL Dimensions

• Wide variety of programming languages
• How do they differ?
• along certain dimensions…
• What are these dimensions?

PL Dimensions (discussion)

Dimension: Syntax

• Languages have different syntax
  - But the difference in syntax can be superficial
  - C# and Java have different syntax, but are very similar
• In this class, will look beyond superficial syntax to understand the underlying principles
Dimension: Computation model
- Functional: Lisp, OCaml, ML
- Imperative: Fortran, Pascal, C
- Object oriented: Smalltalk, C++, Java, C#
- Constraint-based: Prolog, CLP(R)

Dimension: Memory model
- Explicit allocation-deallocation: C, C++
- Garbage collection: Smalltalk, Java, C#
- Regions: safe versions of C (e.g. Cyclone)
  - allocate in a region, deallocate entire region at once
  - more efficient than GC, but no dangling ptrs

Dimension: Typing model
- Statically typed: Java, C, C++, C#
- Dynamically typed: Lisp, Scheme, Perl, Smalltalk
- Strongly typed (Java) vs. weakly typed (C, C++)

Dimension: Scoping model
- What x gets read inside of f?

\begin{verbatim}
int x;
int f() {
  ... x ...
}
\end{verbatim}
- Static scoping says the global x
- Dynamic scoping says the one from g

\begin{verbatim}
g(int x) {
  f();
}
\end{verbatim}

Dimension: Execution model
- Compiled: C, C++
- Interpreted: Perl, shell scripting PLs
- Hybrid: Java
- Is this really a property of the language? Or the language implementation?
- Depends…

So many dimensions
- Yikes, there are so many dimensions!
- How to study all this!
- One option: study each dimension in turn
- In this course: explore the various dimensions by looking at a handful of PLs
Course material

Outline:
1. Functional, OCaml, 4 weeks
2. OO, Python, 4 weeks
3. Logic, Prolog, 1 weeks

No recommended Text:
- Online lecture notes
- Resources posted on webpage
- Pay attention to lecture and section!

Course Mechanics

www.cs.ucsd.edu/classes/wi11/cse130/

Nothing printed, everything on Webpage!

- Lectures: Sorin Lerner, TuTh 3:30-4:50
- Section: Jeff Meister, ???

Requirements and Grading

- Prog. Assignments (6-8): 35%
- In class exercises (8-10): 5%
- Midterm (open book): 30%
- Final (cheat sheet allowed): 30%

Weekly Programming Assignments

Schedule up on webpage

Due on Friday 5 PM

Deadline Extension:
- Four “late days”, used as “whole unit”
- 5 mins late = 1 late day
- Plan ahead, no other extensions

PA #1 online, due Jan 14

Word from our sponsor ...

- Programming Assignments done ALONE
- We use plagiarism detection software
  - Have code from all previous classes
  - MOSS is fantastic, plagiarize at your own risk
- Zero Tolerance
  - offenders punished ruthlessly
- Please see academic integrity statement

Weekly Programming Assignments

Unfamiliar languages
+ Unfamiliar environments

Start Early!
Weekly Programming Assignments

Scoring = Style + Test suite

No Compile, No Score

Forget Java, C, C++ ... ... other 20th century PLs

Don’t complain ... that Ocaml is hard ... that Ocaml is retarded

Immerse yourself in new language

Free your mind.

Enough with the small talk

Say hello to OCaml

Quicksort in C

Quicksort in OCaml

Why readability matters...

Quicksort in J
Say hello to OCaml

let rec sort l =
match l with [] -> []
| (h::t) ->
  let (l,r) = List.partition ((<=) h) t in
  (sort l) @ h :: (sort r)

Quicksort in OCaml

Plan (next 4 weeks)

1. Fast forward
   - Rapid introduction to what's in OCaml

2. Rewind

3. Slow motion
   - Go over the pieces individually