

CS61B Lecture #8: Object-Oriented Mechanisms

Today:

- New in this lecture: the bare mechanics of “object-oriented programming.”
- The general topic is: Writing software that operates on many kinds of data.

Overloading

Problem: How to get `System.out.print(x)` to print `x`, regardless of type of `x`?

- In Scheme or Python, one function can take an argument of any type, and then test the type (if needed).
- In Java, methods specify a single type of argument.
- Partial solution: *overloading*—multiple method definitions with the same name and different numbers or types of arguments.
- E.g., `System.out` has type `java.io.PrintStream`, which defines

```
void println() Prints new line.  
void println(String s) Prints S.  
void println(boolean b) Prints "true" or "false"  
void println(char c) Prints single character  
void println(int i) Prints I in decimal  
etc.
```

- Each of these is a different function. Compiler decides which to call on the basis of arguments' types.

Generic Data Structures

Problem: How to get a "list of anything" or "array of anything"?

- Again, no problem in Scheme or Python.
- But in Java, lists (such as `IntList`) and arrays have a single type of element.
- First, the short answer: any *reference* value can be converted to type `java.lang.Object` and back, so can use `Object` as the "generic (reference) type":

```
Object[] things = new Object[2];
things[0] = new IntList(3, null);
things[1] = "Stuff";
// Now ((IntList) things[0]).head == 3;
// and ((String) things[1]).startsWith("St") is true
// things[0].head           Illegal
// things[1].startsWith("St") Illegal
```

And Primitive Values?

- Primitive values (ints, longs, bytes, shorts, floats, doubles, chars, and booleans) are not really convertible to Object.
- Presents a problem for "list of anything."
- So Java introduced a set of *wrapper types*, one for each primitive type:

Prim.	Ref.		Prim.	Ref.		Prim.	Ref.
byte	Byte		short	Short		int	Integer
long	Long		char	Character		boolean	Boolean
float	Float		double	Double			

- One can create new wrapper objects for any value (*boxing*):

```
Integer Three = new Integer(3);  
Object ThreeObj = Three;
```

and vice-versa (*unboxing*):

```
int three = Three.intValue();
```

Autoboxing

In recent versions, boxing and unboxing is automatic (in many cases):

```
Integer Three = 3;  
int three = Three;  
int six = Three + 3;
```

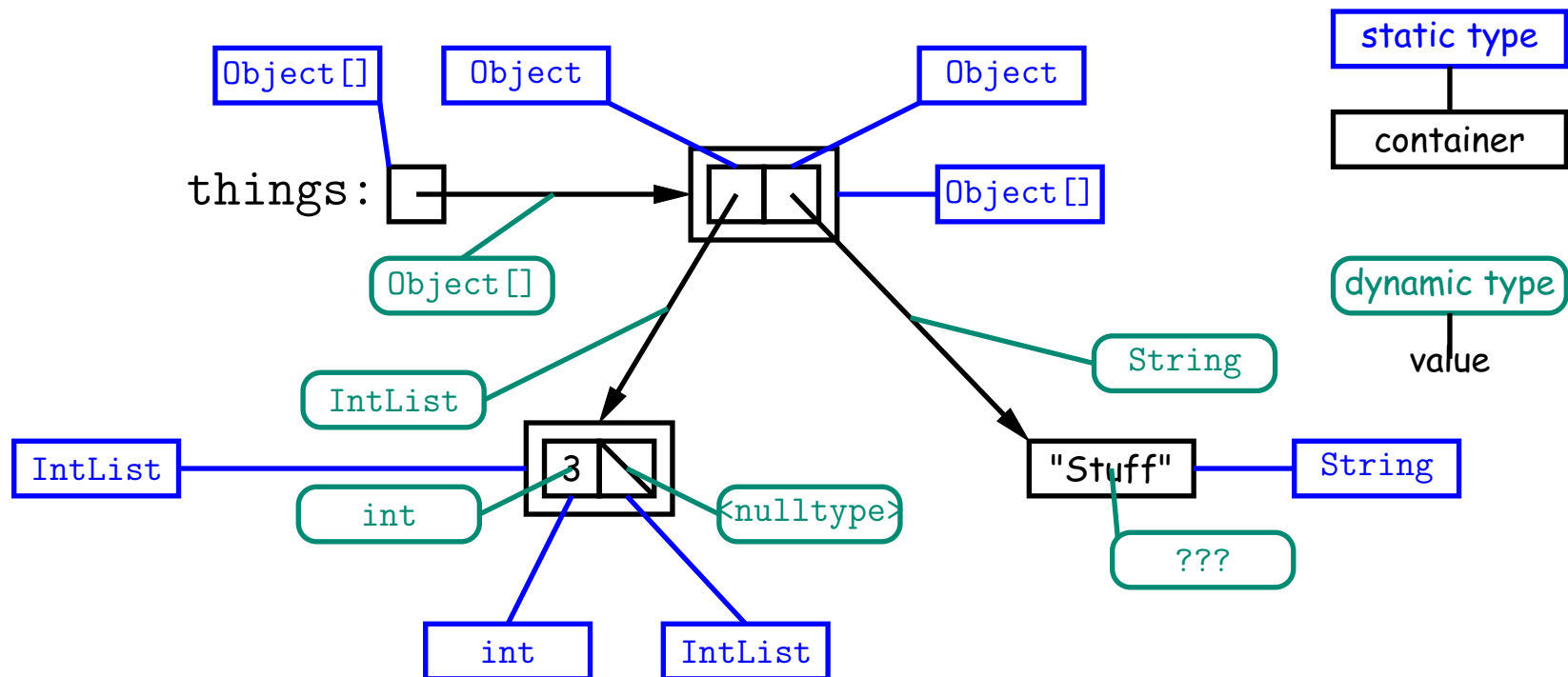
```
Integer[] someInts = { 1, 2, 3 };  
for (int x : someInts) {  
    System.out.println(x);  
}
```

```
System.out.println(someInts[0]); // Prints Integer 1, but NOT  
unboxed.
```

Dynamic vs. Static Types

- Every value has a type—its *dynamic type*.
- Every container (variable, component, parameter), literal, function call, and operator expression (e.g. $x+y$) has a type—its *static type*.
- Therefore, every expression has a static type.

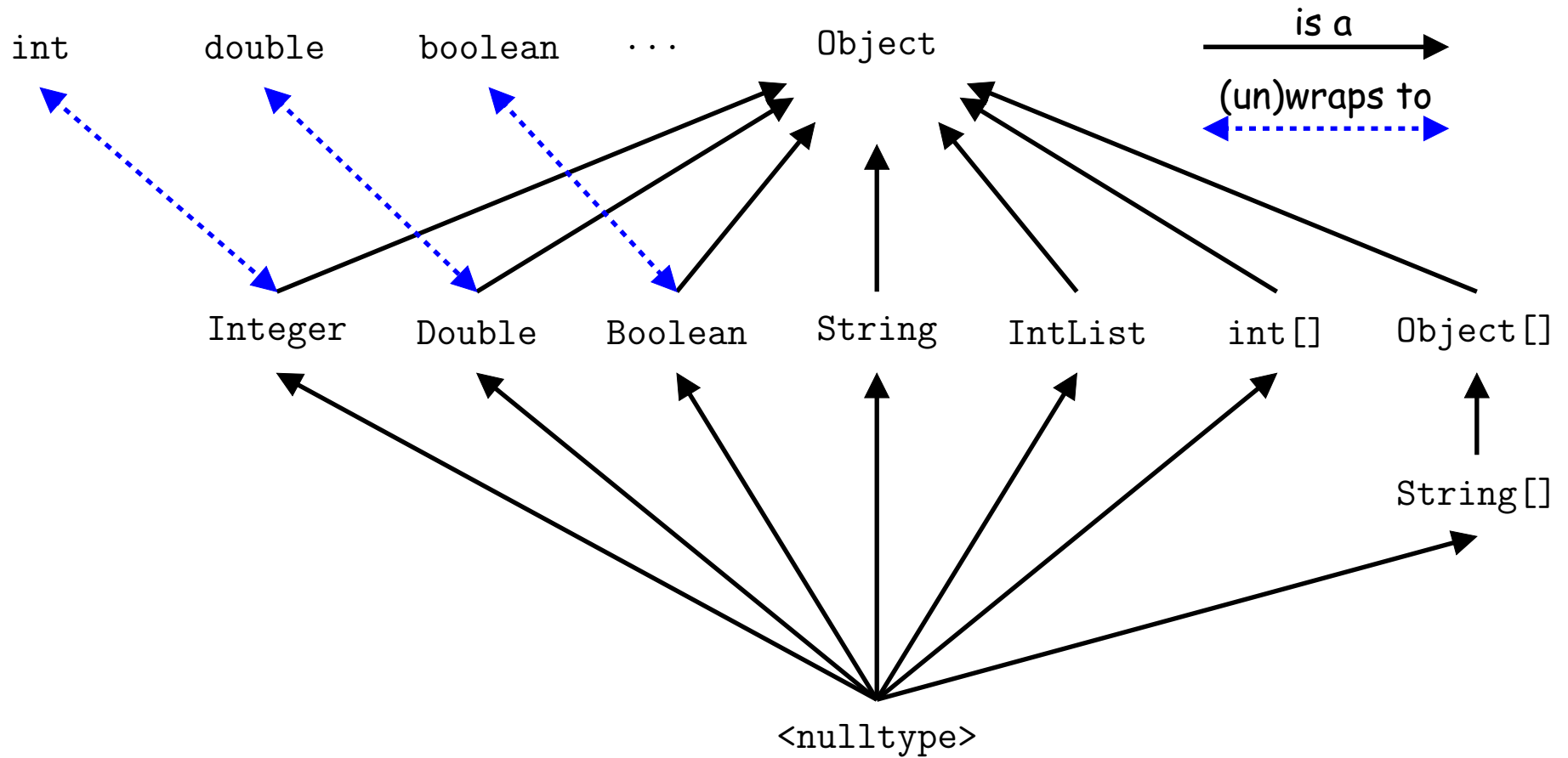
```
Object[] things = new Object[2];  
things[0] = new IntList(3, null);  
things[1] = "Stuff";
```



Type Hierarchies

- A container with (static) type `T` may contain a certain value only if that value “is a” `T`—that is, if the (dynamic) type of the value is a *subtype* of `T`. Likewise, a function with return type `T` may return only values that are subtypes of `T`.
- All types are subtypes of themselves (& that’s all for primitive types)
- *Reference types* form a *type hierarchy*; some are subtypes of others. `null`’s type is a subtype of all reference types.
- All reference types are subtypes of `Object`.

Java Library Type Hierarchy (Partial)



The Basic Static Type Rule

- Java is designed so that any expression of (static) type T always yields a value that “is a” T .
- Static types are “known to the compiler,” because you declare them, as in

```
String x;           // Static type of field
int f(Object s) {   // Static type of call to f, and of parameter
    int y;          // Static type of local variable
```

or they are pre-declared by the language (like 3).

- Compiler insists that in an *assignment*, $L = E$, or function call, $f(E)$, where

```
void f(SomeType L) { ... },
```

E 's static type must be subtype of L 's static type.

- Similar rules apply to $E[i]$ (static type of E must be an array) and other built-in operations.

Coercions

- The values of type `short`, for example, are a subset of those of `int` (shorts are representable as 16-bit integers, ints as 32-bit integer)
- But we *don't* say that `short` is a subtype of `int`, because they don't quite behave the same.
- Instead, we say that values of type `short` can be *coerced* (converted) to a value of type `int`.
- Leads to a slight fudge: compiler will silently coerce "smaller" integer types to larger ones, `float` to `double`, and (as just seen) between primitive types and their wrapper types.
- So,

```
short x = 3002;  
int y = x;
```

works without complaint.

Consequences of Compiler's "Sanity Checks"

- This is a *conservative* rule. The last line of the following, which you might think is perfectly sensible, is illegal:

```
int[] A = new int[2];  
Object x = A; // All references are Objects  
A[i] = 0;    // Static type of A is array...  
x[i+1] = 1;  // But not of x: ERROR
```

Compiler figures that not every Object is an array.

- Q: Don't we *know* that x contains array value!?
- A: Yes, but still must tell the compiler, like this:

```
((int[]) x)[i+1] = 1;
```

- Defn: Static type of cast (T) E is T.
- Q: What if x *isn't* an array value, or is null?
- A: For that we have runtime errors—exceptions.

Overriding and Extension

- Notation so far is clumsy.
- Q: If I know Object variable `x` contains a String, why can't I write, `x.startsWith("this")`?
- A: `startsWith` is only defined on Strings, not on all Objects, so the compiler isn't sure it makes sense, unless you cast.
- But, if an operation *were* defined on all Objects, then you *wouldn't* need clumsy casting.
- Example: `.toString()` is defined on all Objects. You can always say `x.toString()` if `x` has a reference type.
- The default `.toString()` function is not very useful; on an `IntList`, would produce string like `"IntList@2f6684"`
- But for any subtype of Object, you may *override* the default definition.

Overriding toString

- For example, if `s` is a `String`, `s.toString()` is the identity function (fortunately).
- For any type you define, you may supply your own definition. For example, in `IntList`, could add

```
public String toString() {
    StringBuffer b = new StringBuffer();
    b.append("[");
    for (IntList L = this; L != null; L = L.tail)
        b.append(" " + L.head);
    b.append("]");
    return b.toString();
}
```

- If `x = new IntList(3, new IntList(4, null))`, then `x.toString()` is `"[3 4]"`.
- Conveniently, the `"+"` operator on `Strings` calls `.toString` when asked to append an `Object`, and so does the `"%s"` formatter for `printf`.
- With this trick, you can supply an output function for any type you define.

Extending a Class

- To say that class B is a direct subtype of class A (or A is a direct *superclass* of B), write

```
class B extends A { ... }
```

- By default, class ... extends java.lang.Object.
- The subtype *inherits* all fields and methods of its *superclass* (and passes them along to any of its subtypes).
- In class B, you may *override* an instance method (*not* a static method), by providing a new definition with same *signature* (name, return type, argument types).
- I'll say that a method and all its overridings form a *dynamic method set*.
- **The Point:** If $f(\dots)$ is an instance method, then the call $x.f(\dots)$ calls whatever overriding of f applies to the *dynamic type* of x , *regardless* of the static type of x .

Illustration

```
class Worker {  
    void work() {  
        collectPay();  
    }  
}
```

```
class Prof extends Worker {  
    // Inherits work()  
}
```

```
class TA extends Worker {  
    void work() {  
        while (true) {  
            doLab(); discuss(); officeHour();  
        }  
    }  
}
```

```
Prof paul = new Prof();      | paul.work() ==> collectPay();  
TA daniel = new TA();       | daniel.work() ==> doLab(); discuss(); ...  
Worker wPaul = paul,       | wPaul.work() ==> collectPay();  
    wDaniel = daniel;      | wDaniel.work() ==> doLab(); discuss(); ...
```

Lesson: For instance methods (only), select method based on *dynamic type*. Simple to state, but we'll see it has profound consequences.

What About Fields and Static Methods?

```
class Parent {  
    int x = 0;  
    static int y = 1;  
    static void f() {  
        System.out.printf("Ahem!%n");  
    }  
    static int f(int x) {  
        return x+1;  
    }  
}
```

```
class Child extends Parent {  
    String x = "no";  
    static String y = "way";  
    static void f() {  
        System.out.printf("I wanna!%n");  
    }  
}
```

<code>Child tom = new Child();</code>	tom.x	==> no	pTom.x	==> 0
<code>Parent pTom = tom;</code>	tom.y	==> way	pTom.y	==> 1
	tom.f()	==> I wanna!	pTom.f()	==> Ahem!
	tom.f(1)	==> 2	pTom.f(1)	==> 2

Lesson: Fields *hide* inherited fields of same name; static methods *hide* methods of the same signature.

Real Lesson: Hiding causes confusion; so understand it, but don't do it!

What's the Point?

- The mechanism described here allows us to define a kind of *generic* method.
- A superclass can define a set of operations (methods) that are common to many different classes.
- Subclasses can then provide different implementations of these common methods, each specialized in some way.
- All subclasses will have at least the methods listed by the superclass.
- So when we write methods that operate on the superclass, they will automatically work for all subclasses with no extra work.