

# C++ Templates

## CSE 333 Winter 2019

**Instructor:** Hal Perkins

**Teaching Assistants:**

Alexey Beall

Renshu Gu

Harshita Neti

David Porter

Forrest Timour

Soumya Vasisht

Yifan Xu

Sujie Zhou

# Lecture Outline

## ❖ **Templates**

# Suppose that...

- ❖ You want to write a function to compare two ints
- ❖ You want to write a function to compare two strings
  - Function overloading!

```
// returns 0 if equal, 1 if value1 is bigger, -1 otherwise
int compare(const int &value1, const int &value2) {
    if (value1 < value2) return -1;
    if (value2 < value1) return 1;
    return 0;
}
```

```
// returns 0 if equal, 1 if value1 is bigger, -1 otherwise
int compare(const string &value1, const string &value2) {
    if (value1 < value2) return -1;
    if (value2 < value1) return 1;
    return 0;
}
```

# Hm...

- ❖ The two implementations of **compare** are nearly identical!
  - What if we wanted a version of **compare** for *every* comparable type?
  - We could write (many) more functions, but that's obviously wasteful and redundant
- ❖ What we'd prefer to do is write "*generic code*"
  - Code that is **type-independent**
  - Code that is **compile-type polymorphic** across types

# C++ Parametric Polymorphism

- ❖ C++ has the notion of **templates**
  - A function or class that accepts a ***type*** as a parameter
    - You define the function or class once in a type-agnostic way
    - When you invoke the function or instantiate the class, you specify (one or more) types or values as arguments to it
  - At ***compile-time***, the compiler will generate the “specialized” code from your template using the types you provided
    - Your template definition is NOT runnable code
    - Code is *only* generated if you use your template

# Function Templates

- ❖ Template to **compare** two “things”:

```
#include <iostream>
#include <string>

// returns 0 if equal, 1 if value1 is bigger, -1 otherwise
template <typename T> // <...> can also be written <class T>
int compare(const T &value1, const T &value2) {
    if (value1 < value2) return -1;
    if (value2 < value1) return 1;
    return 0;
}

int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    std::string h("hello"), w("world");
    std::cout << compare<int>(10, 20) << std::endl;
    std::cout << compare<std::string>(h, w) << std::endl;
    std::cout << compare<double>(50.5, 50.6) << std::endl;
    return 0;
}
```

# Compiler Inference

- ❖ Same thing, but letting the compiler infer the types:

```
#include <iostream>
#include <string>

// returns 0 if equal, 1 if value1 is bigger, -1 otherwise
template <typename T>
int compare(const T &value1, const T &value2) {
    if (value1 < value2) return -1;
    if (value2 < value1) return 1;
    return 0;
}

int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    std::string h("hello"), w("world");
    std::cout << compare(10, 20) << std::endl; // ok
    std::cout << compare(h, w) << std::endl;   // ok
    std::cout << compare("Hello", "World") << std::endl; // hm...
    return 0;
}
```

functiontemplate\_infer.cc

# Template Non-types

- ❖ You can use non-types (constant values) in a template:

```
#include <iostream>
#include <string>

// return pointer to new N-element heap array filled with val
// (not entirely realistic, but shows what's possible)
template <typename T, int N>
T* valarray(const T &val) {
    T* a = new T[N];
    for (int i = 0; i < N; ++i)
        a[i] = val;
    return a;
}

int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    int *ip = valarray<int, 10>(17);
    string *sp = valarray<string, 17>("hello");
    ...
}
```



# What's Going On?

- ❖ The compiler doesn't generate any code when it sees the template function
  - It doesn't know what code to generate yet, since it doesn't know what types are involved
- ❖ When the compiler sees the function being used, then it understands what types are involved
  - It generates the *instantiation* of the template and compiles it (kind of like macro expansion)
    - The compiler generates template instantiations for *each* type used as a template parameter

# This Creates a Problem

```
#ifndef _COMPARE_H_
#define _COMPARE_H_

template <typename T>
int comp(const T& a, const T& b);

#endif // _COMPARE_H_
```

compare.h

```
#include <iostream>
#include "compare.h"

using namespace std;

int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    cout << comp<int>(10, 20);
    cout << endl;
    return 0;
}
```

main.cc

```
#include "compare.h"

template <typename T>
int comp(const T& a, const T& b) {
    if (a < b) return -1;
    if (b < a) return 1;
    return 0;
}
```

compare.cc

# Solution #1 (Google Style Guide prefers)

```
#ifndef _COMPARE_H_
#define _COMPARE_H_

template <typename T>
int comp(const T& a, const T& b) {
    if (a < b) return -1;
    if (b < a) return 1;
    return 0;
}

#endif // _COMPARE_H_
```

compare.h

```
#include <iostream>
#include "compare.h"

using namespace std;

int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    cout << comp<int>(10, 20);
    cout << endl;
    return 0;
}
```

main.cc

## Solution #2 (you'll see this sometimes)

```
#ifndef __COMPARE_H__
#define __COMPARE_H__

template <typename T>
int comp(const T& a, const T& b);

#include "compare.cc"

#endif // __COMPARE_H__
```

compare.h

```
#include <iostream>
#include "compare.h"

using namespace std;

int main(int argc, char **argv) {
    cout << comp<int>(10, 20);
    cout << endl;
    return 0;
}
```

main.cc

```
template <typename T>
int comp(const T& a, const T& b) {
    if (a < b) return -1;
    if (b < a) return 1;
    return 0;
}
```

compare.cc

# Class Templates

- ❖ Templates are useful for classes as well
  - (In fact, that was one of the main motivations for templates!)
- ❖ Imagine we want a class that holds a pair of things that we can:
  - Set the value of the first thing
  - Set the value of the second thing
  - Get the value of the first thing
  - Get the value of the second thing
  - Swap the values of the things
  - Print the pair of things

# Pair Class Definition

Pair.h

```
#ifndef _PAIR_H_
#define _PAIR_H_

template <typename Thing> class Pair {
public:
    Pair() { };

    Thing get_first() const { return first_; }
    Thing get_second() const { return second_; }
    void set_first(Thing &copyme);
    void set_second(Thing &copyme);
    void Swap();

private:
    Thing first_, second_;
};

#include "Pair.cc"

#endif // _PAIR_H_
```

# Pair Function Definitions

Pair.cc

```
template <typename Thing>
void Pair<Thing>::set_first(Thing &copyme) {
    first_ = copyme;
}

template <typename Thing>
void Pair<Thing>::set_second(Thing &copyme) {
    second_ = copyme;
}

template <typename Thing>
void Pair<Thing>::Swap() {
    Thing tmp = first_;
    first_ = second_;
    second_ = tmp;
}

template <typename T>
std::ostream &operator<<(std::ostream &out, const Pair<T>& p) {
    return out << "Pair(" << p.get_first() << ", "
               << p.get_second() << ")";
}
```

# Using Pair

usepair.cc

```
#include <iostream>
#include <string>

#include "Pair.h"

int main(int argc, char** argv) {
    Pair<std::string> ps;
    std::string x("foo"), y("bar");

    ps.set_first(x);
    ps.set_second(y);
    ps.Swap();
    std::cout << ps << std::endl;

    return 0;
}
```



# Class Template Notes (look in *Primer* for more)

- ❖ `Thing` is replaced with template argument when class is instantiated
  - The class template parameter name is in scope of the template class definition and can be freely used there
  - Class template member functions are template functions with template parameters that match those of the class template
    - These member functions must be defined as template function outside of the class template definition (if not written inline)
      - The template parameter name does *not* need to match that used in the template class definition, but really should
  - Only template methods that are actually called in your program are instantiated (but this is an implementation detail)

# Review Questions (both template and class issues)

- ❖ Why are only `get_first()` and `get_second()` `const`?
- ❖ Why do the accessor methods return `Thing` and not references?
- ❖ Why is `operator<<` not a friend function?
- ❖ What happens in the default constructor when `Thing` is a class?
- ❖ In the execution of `Swap()`, how many times are each of the following invoked (assuming `Thing` is a class)?  
ctor \_\_\_\_\_      cctor \_\_\_\_\_      op= \_\_\_\_\_      dtor \_\_\_\_\_