Lecture 5: C programming

Mohamed Zahran (aka Z)
mzahran@cs.nyu.edu
http://www.mzahran.com
In 1972 Dennis Ritchie at Bell Labs writes C and in 1978 the publication of *The C Programming Language* by Kernighan & Ritchie caused a revolution in the computing world.
Why C?

• Mainly because it produces code that runs nearly as fast as code written in assembly language. Some examples of the use of C might be:
  – Operating Systems
  – Language Compilers
  – Assemblers
  – Text Editors
  – Print Spoolers
  – Network Drivers
  – Language Interpreters
  – Utilities
Your first goal: Learn C!

• Resources
  – These lectures
  – Additional online resources

• Learning a Programming Language
  – The best way to learn is to write programs
C: A High-Level Language

- Gives symbolic names to values
  - don’t need to know which register or memory location
- Provides abstraction of underlying hardware
  - operations do not depend on instruction set
  - example: can write “a = b * c”, even though the hardware may not have a multiply instruction
- Provides expressiveness
  - use meaningful symbols that convey meaning
  - simple expressions for common control patterns (if-then-else)
- Enhances code readability
- Safeguards against bugs
  - can enforce rules or conditions at compile-time or run-time
Compilation vs. Interpretation

• Different ways of translating high-level language

  • **Interpretation**
    – interpreter = program that executes program statements
    – generally one line/command at a time
    – limited processing
    – easy to debug, make changes, view intermediate results
    – languages: LISP, Perl, Matlab, shell

  • **Compilation**
    – translates statements into machine language
      • does not execute, but creates executable program
    – performs optimization over multiple statements
    – change requires recompilation
      • can be harder to debug, since executed code may be different
    – languages: C, C++, Fortran, Haskell, Erlang, ...
Compilation vs. Interpretation

• Consider the following algorithm:
  – Get W from the keyboard.
  – X = W + W
  – Y = X + X
  – Z = Y + Y
  – Print Z to screen.

• If interpreting, how many arithmetic operations occur?

• If compiling, we can analyze the entire program and possibly reduce the number of operations. Can we simplify the above algorithm to use a single arithmetic operation?
Compiling a C Program

- Entire mechanism is usually called the “compiler”
- Preprocessor
  - macro substitution
  - conditional compilation
  - “source-level” transformations
    • output is still C
- Compiler + Assembler
  - generates object file
    • machine instructions
- Linker
  - combine object files (including libraries) into executable image
Compiler

- **Source Code Analysis**
  - “front end”
  - parses programs to identify its pieces
    - variables, expressions, statements, functions, etc.
  - depends on language (not on target machine)
- **Code Generation**
  - “back end”
  - generates machine code from analyzed source
  - may optimize machine code to make it run more efficiently
  - very dependent on target machine
- **Symbol Table**
  - map between symbolic names and items
A Simple C Program

#include <stdio.h>
#define STOP 0

/* Function: main                                   */
/* Description: counts down from user input to STOP */
main()
{
    /* variable declarations */
    int counter; /* an integer to hold count values */
    int startPoint; /* starting point for countdown */

    /* prompt user for input */
    printf("Enter a positive number: ");
    scanf("%d", &startPoint); /* read into startPoint */

    /* count down and print count */
    for (counter=startPoint; counter >= STOP; counter--)
        printf("%d\n", counter);
}
Preprocessor Directives

- `#include <stdio.h>`
  - Before compiling, copy contents of header file (stdio.h) into source code.
  - Header files typically contain descriptions of functions and variables needed by the program.
    - no restrictions -- could be any C source code

- `#define STOP 0`
  - Before compiling, replace all instances of the string "STOP" with the string "0"
  - Called a macro
  - Used for values that won't change during execution, but might change if the program is reused. (Must recompile.)
Comments

• Begins with /* and ends with */

• Can span multiple lines
• Cannot have a comment within a comment
• Comments are not recognized within a string
  – example: "my/*don't print this*/string"
    would be printed as: my/*don't print this*/string

• Use comments to help reader, not to confuse or to restate the obvious
main Function

• Every C program must have a function called main().

• This is the code that is executed when the program runs.

• The code for the function lives within brackets:

```c
main()
{
    /* code goes here */
}
```
Variable Declarations

- Variables are used as names for data items.
- Each variable has a **type**, which tells the compiler how the data is to be interpreted (and how much space it needs, etc.).

```
• int counter;
• int startPoint;
```

- **int** is a predefined integer type in C.
Input and Output

• Variety of I/O functions in *C Standard Library*.  
• **Must include `<stdio.h>` to use them.**

• `printf("%d\n", counter);`
  – String contains characters to print and formatting directions for variables.
  – This call says to print the variable `counter` as a decimal integer, followed by a linefeed (`\n`).

• `scanf("%d", &startPoint);`
  – String contains formatting directions for looking at input.
  – This call says to read a decimal integer and assign it to the variable `startPoint`. (Don't worry about the `&` yet.)
More About Output

- Can print arbitrary expressions, not just variables
  - `printf("%d\n", startPoint - counter);`

- Print multiple expressions with a single statement
  - `printf("%d %d\n", counter, startPoint - counter);`

- Different formatting options:
  - `%d` decimal integer
  - `%x` hexadecimal integer
  - `%c` ASCII character
  - `%f` floating-point number
Examples

• This code:
  
  ```c
  printf("%d is a prime number.\n", 43);
  printf("43 + 59 in decimal is %d.\n", 43+59);
  printf("43 + 59 in hex is %x.\n", 43+59);
  printf("43 + 59 as a character is %c.\n", 43+59);
  ```

• produces this output:

  43 is a prime number.
  43 + 59 in decimal is 102.
  43 + 59 in hex is 66.
  43 + 59 as a character is f.
Examples of Input

• Many of the same formatting characters are available for user input.

  scanf("%c", &nextChar);
  – reads a single character and stores it in nextChar

  scanf("%f", &radius);
  – reads a floating point number and stores it in radius

  scanf("%d %d", &length, &width);
  – reads two decimal integers (separated by whitespace), stores the first one in length and the second in width

• Must use ampersand (&) for variables being modified.
Compiling and Linking

```
gcc -o myprog myprog.c
```

Calls the compiler, the assembler, and the linker.

You want the executable generated to be named “myprog”.
If you do not specify a name, “a.out” will be generated.
Basic C Elements

• **Variables**
  – named, typed data items

• **Operators**
  – predefined actions performed on data items
  – combined with variables to form expressions, statements

If(x > y) ....

x = y * 3;
Data Types

• Examples of data types in C

  • int  integer
  • float  floating point
  • char  character

• Exact size can vary, depending on processor, but for x86:
  – int $\rightarrow$ 4 bytes
  – float $\rightarrow$ 4 bytes
  – char $\rightarrow$ 1 byte
Variable Names

• Any combination of letters, numbers, and underscore (_)

• Case matters
  – "sum" is different than "Sum"

• Cannot begin with a number

• Only first 31 characters are used
Examples

• Legal
  i
  wordsPerSecond
  words_per_second
  _green
  aReally_longName_moreThan31chars
  aReally_longName_moreThan31characters

• Illegal
  10sdigit
  ten'sdigit
  done?
  double
Scope: Global and Local

- **Where** is the variable accessible?
  - **Global:** accessed anywhere in program
  - **Local:** only accessible in a particular region

- Compiler infers scope from where variable is declared
  - programmer doesn't have to explicitly state

- Variable is local to the block in which it is declared
  - block defined by open and closed braces { }

- Global variable is declared outside all blocks
#include <stdio.h>

int itsGlobal = 0;

main()
{
    int itsLocal = 1;  /* local to main */
    printf("Global %d Local %d\n", itsGlobal, itsLocal);
    {
        int itsLocal = 2;  /* local to this block */
        itsGlobal = 4;  /* change global variable */
        printf("Global %d Local %d\n", itsGlobal, itsLocal);
    }
    printf("Global %d Local %d\n", itsGlobal, itsLocal);
}
Operators

• Programmers manipulate variables using the operators provided by the high-level language.

• Variables and operators combine to form expressions and statements which denote the work to be done by the program.

• Each operator may correspond to many machine instructions.
Expression

• Any combination of variables, constants, operators, and function calls
  – every expression has a type, derived from the types of its components (according to C typing rules)

• Examples:
  – `counter >= STOP`
  – `x + sqrt(y)`
  – `x & z + 3 || 9 - w-- % 6`
Statement

• Expresses a complete unit of work
  – executed in sequential order

• Simple statement ends with semicolon
  
  \[
  z = x \times y; \quad /* \text{assign product to } z */ \\
  y = y + 1; \quad /* \text{after multiplication} */ \\
  ; \quad /* \text{null statement} */
  \]

• Compound statement groups simple statements using braces.
  – syntactically equivalent to a simple statement
  
  \[
  \{ \quad z = x \times y; \; y = y + 1; \; \}
  \]
Operators

• Three things to know about each operator
• (1) Function
  – what does it do?
• (2) Precedence
  – in which order are operators combined?
  – Example:
    "a * b + c * d" is the same as "(a * b) + (c * d)"
    because multiply (*) has a higher precedence than addition (+)
• (3) Associativity
  – in which order are operators of the same precedence combined?
  – Example:
    "a - b - c" is the same as "(a - b) - c"
    because add/sub associate left-to-right
Assignment Operator

• Changes the value of a variable.

\[ x = x + 4; \]

1. Evaluate right-hand side.

2. Set value of left-hand side variable to result.
Assignment Operator

• All expressions evaluate to a value, even ones with the assignment operator.

• For assignment, the result is the value assigned.
  – usually (but not always) the value of the right-hand side
    • type conversion might make assigned value different than computed value

• Assignment associates right to left.

  \[ y = x = 3; \]

  \( y \) gets the value 3, because \((x = 3)\) evaluates to the value 3.
Arithmetic Expressions

If mixed types, smaller type is "promoted" to larger.

\[ x + 4.3 \]
if \( x \) is int, converted to double and result is double

Integer division -- fraction is dropped.

\[ x / 3 \]
if \( x \) is int and \( x=5 \), result is 1 (not 1.666666...)

Modulo -- result is remainder.

\[ x \% 3 \]
if \( x \) is int and \( x=5 \), result is 2.
## Bitwise Operators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Operation</th>
<th>Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>~</td>
<td>bitwise NOT</td>
<td>~x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;&lt;</td>
<td>left shift</td>
<td>x &lt;&lt; y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;&gt;</td>
<td>right shift</td>
<td>x &gt;&gt; y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td>bitwise AND</td>
<td>x &amp; y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>^</td>
<td>bitwise XOR</td>
<td>x ^ y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bitwise OR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Logical Operators

- Symbol | Operation    | Usage
- !     | logical NOT  | !x
- &&    | logical AND  | x && y
- ||    | logical OR   | x || y

- Treats entire variable (or value) as TRUE (non-zero) or FALSE (zero).
## Relational Operators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Operation</th>
<th>Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;</td>
<td>greater than</td>
<td>$x &gt; y$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;=</td>
<td>greater than or equal</td>
<td>$x &gt;= y$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;</td>
<td>less than</td>
<td>$x &lt; y$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;=</td>
<td>less than or equal</td>
<td>$x &lt;= y$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>==</td>
<td>equal</td>
<td>$x == y$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>!=</td>
<td>not equal</td>
<td>$x != y$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Result is 1 (TRUE) or 0 (FALSE).

Note: Don't confuse equality (==) with assignment (=).
**Special Operators: ++ and --**

- Changes value of variable before (or after) its value is used in an expression.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Operation</th>
<th>Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>++</td>
<td>postincrement</td>
<td>x++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>postdecrement</td>
<td>x--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>++</td>
<td>preincrement</td>
<td>++x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>predecrement</td>
<td>--x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Pre*: Increment/decrement variable *before* using its value.

*Post*: Increment/decrement variable *after* using its value.
Using `++` and `--`

• \( x = 4; \)
• \( y = x++; \)
• **Results:** \( x = 5, y = 4 \)
  (because \( x \) is incremented after assignment)

• \( x = 4; \)
• \( y = ++x; \)
• **Results:** \( x = 5, y = 5 \)
  (because \( x \) is incremented before assignment)
Practice with Precedence

• Assume \( a=1, b=2, c=3, d=4 \).

\[
x = a \times b + c \times d / 2;
\]

same as:

\[
x = (a \times b) + ((c \times d) / 2);
\]

• For long or confusing expressions, use parentheses, because reader might not have memorized precedence table.
### Special Operators: `+=, *=, etc.`

- Arithmetic and bitwise operators can be combined with assignment operator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Equivalent assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><code>x += y;</code></td>
<td><code>x = x + y;</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>x -= y;</code></td>
<td><code>x = x - y;</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>x *= y;</code></td>
<td><code>x = x * y;</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>x /= y;</code></td>
<td><code>x = x / y;</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>x %= y;</code></td>
<td><code>x = x % y;</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>x &amp;= y;</code></td>
<td><code>x = x &amp; y;</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>`x</td>
<td>= y;`</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>x ^= y;</code></td>
<td><code>x = x ^ y;</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>x &lt;&lt;= y;</code></td>
<td><code>x = x &lt;&lt; y;</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><code>x &gt;&gt;= y;</code></td>
<td><code>x = x &gt;&gt; y;</code></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Special Operator: Conditional

- Symbol: `?:`
- Operation: conditional
- Usage: `x?y:z`

- If `x` is TRUE (non-zero), result is `y`; else, result is `z`.
- Like a MUX, with `x` as the select signal.
Control Structures

• **Conditional**
  making a decision about which code to execute, based on evaluated expression
  – if
  – if-else
  – switch

• **Iteration**
  executing code multiple times, ending based on evaluated expression
  – while
  – for
  – do-while
• if (condition) 
  action;

*Condition* is a C expression, 
which evaluates to TRUE (non-zero) or FALSE (zero).
*Action* is a C statement, 
which may be simple or compound (a block).
Example If Statements

- if (x <= 10)
  
  \[ y = x \times x + 5; \]

- if (x <= 10) {
  
  \[ y = x \times x + 5; \]
  \[ z = (2 \times y) / 3; \]
}

- if (x <= 10)
  
  \[ y = x \times x + 5; \]
  \[ z = (2 \times y) / 3; \]

  compound statement; both executed if x <= 10

  only first statement is conditional; second statement is always executed
More If Examples

• if (0 <= age && age <= 11)
  kids += 1;

• if (month == 4 || month == 6 ||
    month == 9 || month == 11)
  printf(“The month has 30 days.\n”);

• if (x = 2)
  y = 5;

  always true,
  so action is always executed!

• This is a common programming error (= instead of ==), not caught by compiler because it’s syntactically correct.
If’s Can Be Nested

if (x == 3)
  if (y != 6) {
    z = z + 1;
    w = w + 2;
  }

is the same as...

if ((x == 3) && (y != 6)) {
  z = z + 1;
  w = w + 2;
}
Matching Else with If

`if (x != 10)
   if (y > 3)
      z = z / 2;
   else
      z = z * 2;`

is the same as...

`if (x != 10) {
   if (y > 3)
      z = z / 2;
   else
      z = z * 2;
}

else is always associated with closest unassociated if.

is NOT the same as...

`if (x != 10) {
   if (y > 3)
      z = z / 2;
}
else
   z = z * 2;`
Chaining If’s and Else’s

if (month == 4 || month == 6 || month == 9
    || month == 11)
    printf("Month has 30 days.\n");
else if (month == 1 || month == 3 ||
    month == 5 || month == 7 ||
    month == 8 || month == 10 ||
    month == 12)
    printf("Month has 31 days.\n");
else if (month == 2)
    printf("Month has 28 or 29 days.\n");
else
    printf("Don’t know that month.\n");
Infinite Loops

• The following loop will never terminate:

  ```c
  x = 0;
  while (x < 10)
      printf("%d ", x);
  ```

• Loop body does not change condition, so test never fails.

• This is a common programming error that can be difficult to find.
for (init; end-test; update) statement

Executes loop body as long as test evaluates to TRUE (non-zero). Initialization and update code included in loop statement.

Note: Test is evaluated before executing loop body.
Example For Loops

/* -- what does this loop do? -- */

numberOfOnes = 0;
for (bitNum = 0; bitNum < 16; bitNum++) {
    if (inputValue & (1 << bitNum))
        numberOfOnes++;
}

Nested Loops

Loop body can (of course) be another loop.

/* print a multiplication table */
for (mp1 = 0; mp1 < 10; mp1++) {
    for (mp2 = 0; mp2 < 10; mp2++)
    {
        printf("%d\t", mp1*mp2);
    }
    printf("\n");
}
Problem 1: Calculating Pi

- Calculate $\pi$ using its series expansion. User inputs number of terms.

$$\pi = 4 - \frac{4}{3} + \frac{4}{5} - \frac{4}{7} + \cdots + (-1)^{n-1} \frac{4}{2n+1} + \cdots$$
Pi: 1st refinement

Start

Initialize

Get Input

Evaluate Series

Output Results

Stop

Initialize iteration count

count < terms

Evaluate next term

count = count + 1

F

T
Pi: 2nd refinement

Initialize iteration count

Evaluate next term

count = count + 1

T

count < terms

count is odd

subtract term

add term

F

F
Pi: Code for Evaluate Terms

for (count=0; count < numOfTerms; count++)
{
    if (count % 2) {
        /* odd term -- subtract */
        pi -= 4.0 / (2 * count + 1);
    }
    else {
        /* even term -- add */
        pi += 4.0 / (2 * count + 1);
    }
}
#include <stdio.h>

main() {
    double pi = 0.0;
    int numOfTerms, count;

    printf("Number of terms (must be 1 or larger) : ");
    scanf("%d", &numOfTerms);

    for (count=0; count < numOfTerms; count++) {
        if (count % 2) {
            pi -= 4.0 / (2 * count + 1); /* odd term -- subtract */
        } else {
            pi += 4.0 / (2 * count + 1); /* even term -- add */
        }
    }
    printf("The approximate value of pi is %f\n", pi);
}
Problem 2: Finding Prime Numbers

• Print all prime numbers less than 100.
• A number is prime if its only divisors are 1 and itself.
• All non-prime numbers less than 100 will have a divisor between 2 and 10.
Primes: 1st refinement

Start

Initialize

Print primes

Stop

Initialize num = 2

num < 100

num = num + 1

Print num if prime

T

F
Primes: 2nd refinement

Initialize
num = 2

num < 100

Print num if prime

num = num + 1

Divide num by 2 through 10

no divisors?

Print num
Primes: 3rd refinement

Divide num by 2 through 10

no divisors?

Print num
Primes: Using a Flag Variable

• To keep track of whether number was divisible, we use a "flag" variable.
  – Set prime = TRUE, assuming that this number is prime.
  – If any divisor divides number evenly, set prime = FALSE.
    • Once it is set to FALSE, it stays FALSE.
  – After all divisors are checked, number is prime if the flag variable is still TRUE.

• Use macros to help readability.
• \#define TRUE 1
  \#define FALSE 0
#include <stdio.h>
#define TRUE 1
#define FALSE 0

main () {
    int num, divisor, prime;

    /* start with 2 and go up to 100 */
    for (num = 2; num < 100; num++) {

        prime = TRUE; /* assume num is prime */

        /* test whether divisible by 2 through 10 */
        for (divisor = 2; divisor <= 10; divisor++)
            if (((num % divisor) == 0) && (num != divisor))
                prime = FALSE; /* not prime */

        if (prime) /* if prime, print it */
            printf("The number %d is prime\n", num);
    }
}
Switch

```c
switch (expression) {
  case const1:
    action1; break;
  case const2:
    action2; break;
  default:
    action3;
}
```

Alternative to long if-else chain. If break is not used, then case "falls through" to the next.
More About Switch

• **Case expressions must be constant.**

```c
    case i:  /* illegal if i is a variable */
```

• **If no break, then next case is also executed.**

```c
    switch (a) {
        case 1:
            printf(“A”);
        case 2:
            printf(“B”);
        default:
            printf(“C”);
    }
```

If a is 1, prints “ABC”. If a is 2, prints “BC”. Otherwise, prints “C”.
Break and Continue

- **break;**
  - used *only* in switch statement or iteration statement
  - passes control out of the “smallest” (loop or switch) statement containing it to the statement immediately following
  - usually used to exit a loop before terminating condition occurs (or to exit switch statement when case is done)

- **continue;**
  - used only in iteration statement
  - terminates the execution of the loop body for this iteration
  - loop expression is evaluated to see whether another iteration should be performed
  - if *for* loop, also executes the re-initializer
Example

• What does the following loop do?
  for (i = 0; i <= 20; i++) {
      if (i%2 == 0) continue;
      printf("%d ", i);
  }

• What happens if break instead of continue?
Conclusions

• C programming is a very strong programming language and is the closest to assembly than all the high-level language programs.

• We have studied the basics of C programming in the lecture.