Princeton University
COS 217: Introduction to Programming Systems
Spring 2015 Midterm Exam Preparation

Topics

You are responsible for all material covered in lectures, precepts, assignments, and required readings. This is a non-exhaustive list of topics that were covered:

1. Number Systems
    - The binary, octal, and hexadecimal number systems
    - Finite representation of unsigned integers
        - Operations on unsigned integers
    - Finite representation of signed integers
        - Signed magnitude, ones' complement, two's complement
        - Operations on signed integers
    - Finite representation of rational numbers

2. C Programming
    - The program preparation process: preprocess, compile, assemble, link
    - Program structure: multi-file programs using header files
    - Process memory layout: text, stack, heap, rodata, data, bss sections
    - Data types
    - Variable declarations and definitions
    - Variable scope, linkage, and duration/extent
    - Constants: #define, constant variables, enumerations
    - Operators
    - Statements
    - Function declarations and definitions
    - Pointers and arrays
        - Call-by-reference, arrays as parameters, strings
        - Command-line arguments
    - Input/output facilities
    - *Text files (see King Chapter 22)*
    - Structures
    - Dynamic memory management
        - malloc(), calloc(), realloc(), free()
        - Common errors: dereference of dangling pointer, memory leak, double free
    - Abstract objects
    - Abstract data types; opaque pointers
    - Generic data structures and functions
        - Void pointers
        - Function pointers and function callbacks
    - *Parameterized macros and their dangers (see King Section 14.3)*

3. Programming-in-the-Large
    - Testing
        - External testing taxonomy: statement, path, boundary, stress
        - Internal testing techniques: validate parameters, check invariants, check function return values, change code temporarily, leave testing code intact
        - General testing strategies: automate the tests, test incrementally, let debugging drive testing (fault injection)

- Program and programming style
    - Bottom-up design, top-down design, least-risk design
- Debugging
    - General heuristics for debugging: understand error messages, think before writing, look for familiar bugs, divide and conquer, add more internal tests, display output, use a debugger, focus on recent changes
    - Heuristics for debugging dynamic memory management: look for common DMM bugs, diagnose seg faults using gdb, manually inspect malloc(), calls, comment-out free() calls, use Meminfo, use Valgrind
- Data structures and algorithms
    - Linked lists
    - Hash tables: hashing algorithms, defensive copies, key ownership
- Modularity
    - History of modularity: non-modular, structured, abstract object, abstract data type programming
    - Module qualities: encapsulates data, is consistent, has a minimal interface, detects and handles/reports errors, establishes contracts, has strong cohesion, has weak coupling
- Performance Improvement
    - When to improve performance
    - Improving execution (time) efficiency: do timing studies, identify hot spots, use a better algorithm, enable compiler speed optimization, tune the code
    - Improving memory (space) efficiency: use a smaller data type, compute instead of storing, enable compiler space optimization

4. Applications
    - De-commenting
    - Lexical analysis using finite state automata
    - String manipulation
    - Symbol tables, linked lists, hash tables
    - Dynamically expanding arrays

5. Tools: The Unix/GNU programming environment
    - Unix/Linux, Bash, Emacs, GCC, GDB, Gprof

Readings

As specified by the course "Schedule" web page...

Required:

- *C Programming* (King): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.1, 22
- *Computer Systems* (Bryant & O'Hallaron): 1

Recommended:

- *Computer Systems* (Bryant & O'Hallaron): 2
- *The Practice of Programming* (Kernighan & Pike): 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
- *Unix Tutorial for Beginners* (website)
- *GNU Emacs Tutorial* (website)
- *GNU GDB Tutorial* (website)
- *GNU Gprof Tutorial* (website)