Victory Lap

Prof. Clarkson
Fall 2016

Today’s music: *We are the Champions* by Queen
Victory Lap

Extra trip around the track by the exhausted victors (us) 😊
Thank you!

Huge thank you to TAs and consultants!

Thank you!

Thank you to Piazza heroes!
Thank you!

And a huge thank you to all of you!

• You surmounted a daunting challenge
• You occasionally laughed at my dumb jokes 😊

I <3 this course. You make it all worthwhile.
What did we learn?

• You feel exhausted...
• You're tired of coding...

...step back and think about what happened along the way
OCaml is awesome because of...

- **Immutable programming**
  - Variable’s values cannot destructively be changed; makes reasoning about program easier!
- **Algebraic datatypes and pattern matching**
  - Makes definition and manipulation of complex data structures easy to express
- **First-class functions**
  - Functions can be passed around like ordinary values
- **Static type-checking**
  - Reduce number of run-time errors
- **Automatic type inference**
  - No burden to write down types of every single variable
- **Parametric polymorphism**
  - Enables construction of abstractions that work across many data types
- **Garbage collection**
  - Automated memory management eliminates many run-time errors
- **Modules**
  - Advanced system for structuring large systems
BIG IDEAS
1. Languages can be learned systematically

• Every language feature can be defined in isolation from other features, with rules for:
  — syntax
  — static semantics (typing rules)
  — dynamic semantics (evaluation rules)

• Divide-and-conquer!

• Entire language can be defined mathematically and precisely
  — SML is. Read *The Definition of Standard ML (Revised)* (Tofte, Harper, MacQueen, 1997).

• Learning to think about software in this “PL” way has made you a better programmer even when you go back to old ways
  — And given you the mental tools and experience you need for a lifetime of confidently picking up new languages and ideas
2. Immutability is an advantage

- No need to think about pointers or draw memory diagrams
- Think at a higher level of abstraction
- Programmer can alias or copy without worry
- Concurrent programming easier with immutable data

- But mutability is appropriate when
  - you need to model inherently state-based phenomena
  - or implement some efficient data structures
3. Programming languages aren’t magic

• Interpretation of a (smallish) language is something you can implement yourself

• Domain specific languages (DSL): something you probably will implement for some project(s) in your career
4. Elegant abstractions *are* magic

From a small number of simple ideas...

...an explosion of code!

- language features: product types, union types
- higher order functions: map, fold, ...
- data structures: lists, trees, dictionaries, monads
- module systems: abstraction, functors
5. Building software is more than hacking

- **Design**: think before you type
- **Empathy**: write code to communicate
- **Assurance**: testing and verification
- **Teamwork**: accomplish more with others
6. CS has an intellectual history created by people like you
Big ideas

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Q&A
FAQs

• Why OCaml?
• When will I use FP again?
Languages are tools
Languages are tools

• There's no universally perfect tool
• There's no universally perfect language
• OCaml was good for this course because:
  – good mix of functional & imperative features
  – relatively easy to reason about meaning of programs
  – From the Turing Award citation for Robin Milner:
    *ML was way ahead of its time. It is built on clean and well-articulated mathematical ideas, teased apart so that they can be studied independently and relatively easily remixed and reused. ML has influenced many practical languages, including Java, Scala, and Microsoft’s F#. Indeed, no serious language designer should ignore this example of good design.*
• But OCaml isn't perfect (see above)
FAQs

• Why OCaml?
• When will I use FP again?
FAQs

• Why OCaml?

• When will I use FP again? Why did I study FP?
Why study functional programming?

1. Functional languages teach you that programming transcends programming in a language (assuming you have only programmed in imperative languages)

2. Functional languages predict the future

3. (Functional languages are sometimes used in industry)

4. Functional languages are elegant
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Analogy: studying a foreign language

• Learn about another culture; incorporate aspects into your own life
• Shed preconceptions and prejudices about others
• Understand your native language better
Alan J. Perlis

“A language that doesn't affect the way you think about programming is not worth knowing.”

First recipient of the Turing Award for his “influence in the area of advanced programming techniques and compiler construction”

1922-1990
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Functional languages predict the future

• Garbage collection
  *Java [1995], LISP [1958]*

• Generics
  *Java 5 [2004], ML [1990]*

• Higher-order functions
  *C#3.0 [2007], Java 8 [2014], LISP [1958]*

• Type inference
  *C++11 [2011], Java 7 [2011] and 8, ML [1990]*

• What's next?
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Functional languages in the real world

- Java 8  
  [Oracle](https://www.oracle.com)
- F#, C# 3.0, LINQ  
  [Microsoft](https://www.microsoft.com)
- Scala  
  [Twitter](https://twitter.com), [Foursquare](https://foursquare.com), [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com)
- Haskell  
  [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com), [Barclays](https://www.barclays.com), [AT&T](https://www.att.com)
- Erlang  
  [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com), [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com), [T-Mobile](https://www.t-mobile.com)
- OCaml  
  [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com), [Bloomberg](https://www.bloomberg.com), [Citrix](https://www.citrix.com), [Jane Street](https://www.janestreet.com)

[https://ocaml.org/learn/companies.html](https://ocaml.org/learn/companies.html)
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Elegant

Stylish

Neat

Dignified

Refined

Simple

Effective

Graceful

Precise

Consistent

Tasteful
What next?

• Follow-on courses:
  – CS 4110 Programming Languages and Logics (how to define and reason about programming languages)
  – CS 4120 Compilers (how to implement programming languages)

• Learn another functional language?
  – Racket, Haskell, Coq

• Join the course staff?
  – CS department collects applications
  – If you get an A of any kind, apply in May 2017 to be on my staff for Fall 2017
What next?

• Stay in touch
  – Tell me when 3110 helps you out with future courses (or jobs!)
  – Ask me cool PL questions
  – Drop by to tell me about the rest of your time in CS (and beyond!)... I really do like to know

• DO AMAZING THINGS WITH YOUR LIFE
FINAL MATTERS
Final Exam

- Thursday, 12/15/16, 9:00-11:30 am, Statler Auditorium
- Covers everything in the course
- You may have **three** pages of notes
- Rough plan:
  - one hour of closed-book multiple choice
  - one hour of open-book in-class programming
  - **bring your laptop**
- (remaining details posted on Piazza)
- Available for review from homework handback room when it opens in spring semester
- Final grades will be in CMS about 1 week after exam
Finally

“Education is what remains after one has forgotten everything one learned in school.” –Albert Einstein

1879-1955
Finally

• The most important idea of this course:
  – complicated artifacts can be broken down into small pieces
  – you can then study those small pieces and understand how they work in isolation
  – then you can understand why their aggregation achieves some goals

• Examples: a module you designed, or the OCaml language

• That kind of analysis is applicable anywhere, not just programming
Upcoming events

• [yesterday] MS2 due, but no late penalties throughout the late submission period
• [by next Wed] submit a course eval; take time on this, especially the free response questions

This is ...
This is victory.
THIS HAS BEEN 3110