

# Scoping

## Principles of Programming Languages

Colorado School of Mines

<https://lambda.mines.edu>

# Learning Group Activity

Start working on the Tic-Tac-Toe activity with your group. I'll come around and answer any questions you have about the activity, and give you a check for "glancing over it".

Save your Exam Questions

We'll have an exam review session during the second half of class.

## Note

Materials from today (with the exception of the review session) are on Exam 2, not Exam 1.

- A **scope** refers to the period of which a variable is visible.
- Languages limit the scope of variables to be just within the function to help avoid the risk of collision in two identically named variables. But it raises the question: *what does it mean to be within a function?*
  - In **static scoping**<sup>1</sup>, the variable is visible when it is within the same function *structure-wise*.
  - In **dynamic scoping**, the variable is visible when it is within the same function *environment-wise*.

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<sup>1</sup>Also called "lexical scoping".

# Static Scoping: Example

```
procedure A (  
   $x \leftarrow 0$   
  procedure B (  
    ▷  $x$  is visible within  $B$   
     $y \leftarrow x + 1$   
  )  
  procedure C (  
    ▷  $x$  is visible within  $C$ , but not  $y$   
     $x \leftarrow x - 2$   
  )  
  B()  
  C()  
)
```

Any downsides? What happens when we add first class functions?

# Closures

When we add first class functions to static scoping, the function must carry around an environment of the variables it depends on.

```
/* A Lehmer Linear Congruential Generator in JavaScript */  
function prng(seed) {  
    var x = seed;  
    function next() {  
        x = (16807 * x) % 2147483647;  
        return x;  
    }  
    return next;  
}
```

What other uses could you use closures for?

# Dynamic Scoping: Example

In dynamic scoping, the calling environment determines the visible variables.

```
procedure A (  
  ▷  $x$  from caller  
  print  $x$   
   $x \leftarrow x + 5$   
)
```

```
procedure B (  
   $x \leftarrow 0$   
  A()  
  print  $x$   
)
```

```
procedure C (  
   $x \leftarrow 2$   
  A()  
  print  $x$   
)
```

**Advantages:** easy first-class functions without need to carry calling environment

# Scoping in the Wild

- **Static:** C, C++, Pascal, Python
- **Dynamic:** C preprocessor macros, Early Lisps, Emacs Lisp, Bash
- **Allows both:** Common Lisp, Scheme, Perl

# Exam Review Time

- Any questions on exam material?
- We will go through exam topics, and do a quick review otherwise.