**DASC 5333**

**2/11/2025**

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**Introduction to UML**

by K. Yue

**1. Introduction to UML**

* UML: A set of graphical notations for object-oriented modeling.
* Wikipedia: "The Unified Modeling Language (UML) offers a way to visualize a system's architectural blueprints in a diagram."
* A standard maintained by OMG: [OMG's UML page](http://www.uml.org/#UML2.0https://www.uml.org/index.htmhttp://www.uml.org/index.htm).
* Two major versions:
  + Version 1.4.2: international standard released in 2005.
  + Version 2.5.1: released in 2017, added nested classifiers and improved behavior models. Specification: <https://www.omg.org/spec/UML>
* Two main types of diagrams:
  + Structure diagrams: model static structures.
  + Behavior diagrams: model dynamic behaviors.
* Version 2.5 has *15* diagrams: 7 structure diagrams and 8 behavior diagrams.
* Some Resources:
  + [OMG UML Resource](https://www.uml.org/resource-hub.htm)
  + [SPARX UML Tutorial](http://www.sparxsystems.com/uml-tutorial.html).
* We will focus on the *class diagram* only.

Class Diagram of UML 2.2 diagram (from Wikipedia):



**2. Class Diagrams (Emphasis on DB applications)**

**2.1 Introduction:**

* A *static* structure diagram in UML.
* "Describes the structure of a system by showing the system's classes, their attributes, operations (or methods), and the relationships among the classes." -- from Wikipedia.
* Read "class diagram" from Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Class_diagram>.
* For a significantly better introduction by IBM: <http://www.ibm.com/developerworks/rational/library/content/RationalEdge/sep04/bell/>.
* Two kinds of tools for drawing UML diagrams:
  + Graphical tools: main purposes are drawing diagrams (e.g., MS Visio, draw io, etc.)
  + Computer-Aided Software Engineering (CASE) tools: for software development with some understanding of the semantics of diagram elements (e.g., MagicDraw, IBM Rational Rhapsody, Visual Paradigm, Astah, etc.)
* We use Astah UML Editor
  + We will use *community version* in classroom demonstration, which is now deprecated.
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* A screenshot of a computer

  Description automatically generated

Example:

Problem description: A faculty member (e.g. Yue) advises a student (e.g. Smith) ….. A faculty member has a faculty id and name (breakdown to fname and lname)

Concepts (have data storage requirements):

* Faculty: modeled by a class (form objects, e.g. Yue, Hasan, Wu, …)
* Student: modeled by a class.
* Advises: modeled as an association: Yue advises Smith
* Faculty id is a property of a faculty (e.g. Bun Yue’s id is 1234567): attribute of facully objects

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

Example of creating the class ‘class’:

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

2025\_2\_4\_ex1.asta:

Class:

1. Name
2. Data member/attribute compartment: properties
3. Methods/Operation compartment: less important in data

A screenshot of a computer

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* One may also use UML object diagrams to show objects and their associations of a snapshot of the system.

**2.2 A Simple Conceptual Modeling Process**

1. Study application requirements to gain a good understanding of the problem.
2. Conduct an analysis to extract concepts that may have data requirements.
3. For each concept, design how should it be modeled? Major options are:
   1. by attributes
   2. by a class
   3. by associations between classes (including special associations, such as composition, aggregation, generalization, etc.)
   4. no need to model (as it does not represent any data requirement)

These steps are repeated until the model reaches the necessary fidelity, accuracy, and precision.

***Example:***

**Problem**. A used car dealership application's subsystem: information about cars and their manufacturers.

**Specification description**: A car manufacturer has a unique id and name. A car maker may make many cars. For example, Honda, which may have a manufacturer id of 10001 (value of the attribute mid), makes Civic and Accord.

Concepts:

1. Car: class
2. Manufacturer: class
3. Unique id: 10001 (X) is the id of Honda (Y): attribute of manufacturer
4. Name: attribute (X) of manufacturer (Y)
5. Car maker: synonym of manufacturer; no need to model.
6. Make (X): Honda (object of the class A) makes (X) Civic (object of the class B)
7. Honda: object of the class Manufacturer, an instance of a class. AN example of a class.
8. Manufacturer id: attribute of manufacturer.
9. 10001: no need to model; example of the value of mid.
10. Civic: object of the class car
11. Accord

Choices of model decisions:

1. Class X (object: instance of a class); have properties, associations. Objects exists by themselves X by itself. E.g. X: faculty; Yue faculty object
2. Attributes (properties) X of a class, etc: value only; simple. Fname of a faculty. X of Y. Bun (X) is the first name of the faculty (Y) ‘Bun Yue’
3. Associations X (relationship between two objects). A – X – B. For example Yue (A) advises (X) Smith (B)
4. No need to model in the UML class diagram.

**Analysis and Design**

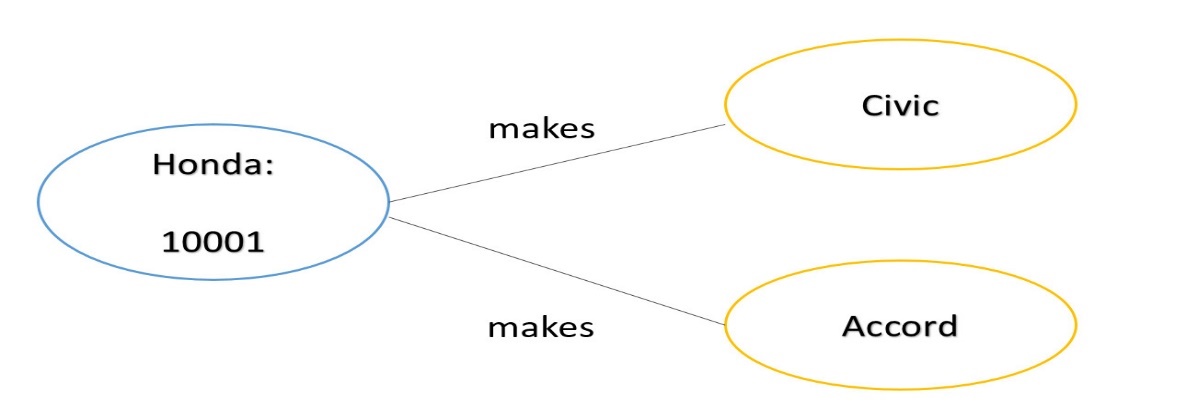
Some observations:

1. Manufacturer: a class (template) that can be used to initiate many manufacturer objects (instances).
2. Honda: an object of the class Manufacturer.
3. Resolve ambiguous terms: e.g., the term "manufacturer" may refer to the manufacturer class, or a particular manufacturer (i.e., a manufacturer object such as Honda).
4. Define synonym: manufacturer, car manufacturer and car maker may be the same. Different terms can refer to the same concept.
5. "Unique id": may be modeled as an attribute (name), a property of the manufacturer class.
6. Make additional assumptions: E.g., every manufacturer object *must* have an unique id.
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10. Car: a class, as there may be many *brands* of cars.
11. Prepare questions: E.g., do we need to introduce the concept *model* (e.g., Coupe, Sedan, Si Coupe)?
12. Civic and Accord: object instances of Car.
13. Additional assumption: Every car must have a name as its attribute.
14. Make, or manufacture: a relationship between a manufacturer (object) and a car (object). A manufactor (object) makes (verb: possible asspication) a car (object).

**Class Diagram:**



**Object Diagram:**



**2.3 Classes**

**2.3.1 Basics**

1. Drawn as a rectangular box.
2. The class names, attributes, and operations may be specified, with selected details in the name, attribute, and operation *compartments* respectively.
3. Attribute and operation compartments are optional.
4. For DB modeling,
   1. The attribute compartment will eventually need to be clearly modeled.
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5. The levels of details depend on the phases of modeling. It is a common mistake to specify too much detail in the early modeling phases.
6. As modeling proceeds, more details are added, updated, and refined.

Note that software application modeling and database modeling have different foci.

1. Software modeling: focus on operations (methods, especially public methods).
2. Database modeling: focus on attributes (data).

***Example:*** The following sequence of diagrams of how the modeling of the used car dealership application may proceed.

Initial version: v0.0.1.0:

* Only some major classes, associations, and attributes.

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Version v0.0.1.1:

* Add a payment class and some attributes.

A diagram of a company structure

Description automatically generated

Version v0.0.1.2:

1. Decided to split the concept 'car' into two concepts 'car model' and 'car'. Adjust associations.
2. Add some type information.

A diagram of a car model

Description automatically generated

Version v0.0.1.3:

1. Add an association between Payment and Car.
2. Add multiplicity of the association "of the model of":
   1. A car must be made of one car model.
   2. There may be many cars made of the same model.
3. Add multiplicity of 1 to the attributes Amount and PayTime of the class Payment. They are mandatory.

A diagram of a model

Description automatically generated

A screenshot of a computer

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

A yellow rectangular boxes with black text

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* For example, one may focus on the main classes and their associations in the first model, without worrying about the attribute or operation compartments.
* Most UML editors allow controlling visibility of different elements. For example, in Astah:



* A *stereotype* (specifying the kind of entities) and a property list with tagged values can be added to any compartment.
* Their flexibility allows for customization and *extensibility* to fit specific applications.
* Additional *properties*on data members may be specified, such as:
  1. Visibility: + (public: +, protected: #, private: -, etc.)
  2. data types
  3. abstract (in italic) or concrete (as constraints)
  4. class members (underscored) or instance members
  5. default values

**Example:** for software modeling:

A screenshot of a computer program

Description automatically generated

***Example:*** for database modeling.



The classes Patron, Member and Department with some attributes may be modeled in the first draft of the UML class diagram. Boxes in the diagram above:

1. In a subsequent iteration, attributes may be added using settings of the UML tool showing visibility of the attribute members.
2. Data types may be included using predefined data types provided by the tool.
3. In a further iteration, stereotype may be added, such as to identify the primary key <<PK>> and simple candidate key <<unique>>.
4. More specific user-defined types (or implementation types) may be used.
5. Operation members may be added. They are in general less important than data members in data modeling.
6. Multiplicity should eventually be added, as shown in the diagram for Patron below.



* Note that multiplicity can be used to depict *nullable* and *multi-valued* attributes. In this example, PatronId is not nullable ([1]), Phone is nullable ([0..1]) and Hobbies can have multiple values ([0..\*]).

Check out the introductions to class diagrams from [agile modeling](http://www.agilemodeling.com/artifacts/classDiagram.htm) and [wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Class_diagram).

* Some *possible* relational database *extensions* on attributes may include:
  1. Multi-valued: \* or by using multiplicity.
  2. Multiplicity can also be used to indicate whether an attribute is nullable.
  3. Derived: <<derived>> using stereotype, \, or using other specific notations
  4. Primary key: <<PK>> as stereotype.
  5. Candidate keys: <<CK>> as stereotype.
  6. Unique field: <<unique>> as stereotype.
  7. Nullability: <<nullable>> or by using multiplicity.
  8. User-defined or system defined SQL data types.
  9. Indexing: <<index>> as stereotype.
* Check with your organizations for UML guidelines on a specific project.
* An example of a database profile for UML: <http://www.agiledata.org/essays/umlDataModelingProfile.html>
  1. may be adapted for uses in later phase of modeling.

**2.3.2 More Properties of Classes**

* A class is a 'first-class citizen.'
  + It has attributes.
  + It can form associations with other classes.
  + It can have operations.
  + Objects of a class can*exist* by themselves.
  + It has more structures for modeling data requirements.
* As a comparison, an attribute is not a first-class citizen.
  + It does not have sub-attributes.
  + It cannot form associations with other elements.
  + The existence of an attribute depends on the object..
* Objects can be instantiated from classes.

***Example:***



We may have four objects of the student class: S1, S2, S3 and S4. Each student object represents an individual student in a database application.

We may have three objects of the course class: C1, C2, and C3. Each course object represents an individual course in the database application.

**2.4 Associations**

* Binary associations are represented by solid lines.
* Important options include:
  1. Association names with directional arrows (for reading).
  2. Association roles: the role of an object participating in an association.
  3. Multiplicities: the allowed number of associated objects.
  4. Association attributes can usually stored by promoting an association to an *association classes*.
  5. Qualifiers: association attributes to partition the targeted classes.
  6. Navigational requirement: specified by arrows. Usually not used in data modeling.
  7. Dependency constraints: by dotted lines.
* Some modeling questions and decisions:
  1. Should we model something as a class or as an association?
  2. Should we model something as a class or as an attribute?
  3. What kind of association should I use? Binary association, association class, n-ary association?

***Example:*** Note that no attribute is shown in this initial phase.

A diagram of a company

Description automatically generated

Note:

1. Job is an association class.
2. The arrow in the association "works-for" shows the direction of the association.
3. The association "manages" is between two job objects.
4. The {or} designation specifies the partition of the account class into two classes: person (account) and corporate (account).

***Example:*** For:



The association Enroll describes the association 'type'. An association is actually between two *objects* (a student object and a course object). Examples:

S1 -- C1: meaning student S1 is enrolled in course C1.  
S1 -- C3: (The associations S1--C2 and S1-C4 do not exist. This means the student S1 has not enrolled in the C2 or C4.)  
S2 -- C1  
S2 -- C2  
S2 -- C4  
S3 -- C3  
S4 -- C1  
S4 -- C4

**2.5 Multiplicity**

* Multiplicity can be specified by a number, the symbol \* (many), a range, or a set. Some example:
  + 0..1: zero or 1
  + 1..1: only 1
  + 1: may be 0..1 or 1..1; usually interpreted as 1..1
  + 0..\*: zero or many
  + 1..\*: 1 or many
  + \*: many; may be 0..\* or 1..\*
  + 1..4: 1 to 4
  + {1, 2, 6}: 1, 2 or 6
  + {1, 3:5, 7:9}: 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9
* Multiplicity is a very common source of errors. Please refer to the explanation in the following diagram until you are very clear about it.

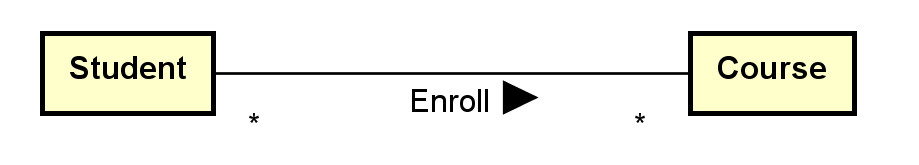


* Meaning:
  + *Every* X object must be associated with *n* Y objects.
  + Every Y object must be associated with m X objects.

***Example***

What do you think about these class diagrams?

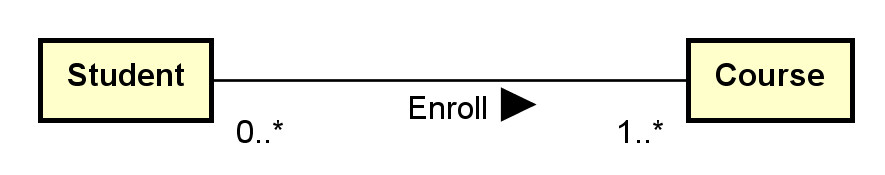
(a)



Assumptions made:

1. A student may take many courses.
2. Not sure whether a student is allowed to take zero course since \* (instead of 0..\* or 1..\* is used).
3. A course may have many students enrolled.
4. Not sure whether a course has no student enrolled since \* (instead of 0..\* or 1..\* is used).

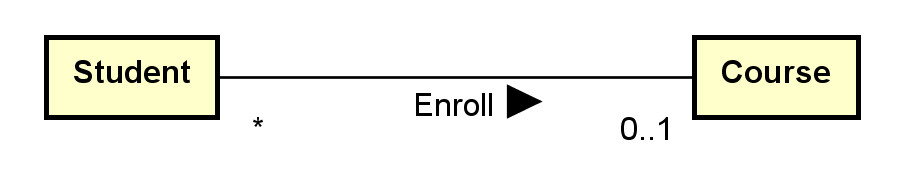
(b)



Assumptions made:

1. A student must be enrolled in one or more courses (may not be a reasonable assumption).
2. A course may have 0 or more students enrolled.

(c)



Assumptions made:

1. A student can only be enrolled in 0 or 1 course only (sound not reasonable).
2. A course may have many students enrolled.
3. Not sure whether a course has no student enrolled since \* (instead of 0..\* or 1..\* is used).

**Aggregation indicator**

1. aggregation (hollow diamond) and composition indicator (solid diamond):
2. Aggregation models the ‘a-part-of’ relationship (whole-part). E.g., car-wheel.
3. Composition is a *strong* form of aggregation: the part's lifecycle is dependent on the whole's lifecycle; e.g. university-department, building-room.
4. They can also be represented by using multiplicity.

***Example:*** Aggregation and Composition

A diagram of a graph

Description automatically generated

What do you think about this composition and aggregation examples in: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Congregationalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:AggregationAndComposition.svg)?

**Ternary Associations**

* N-ary associations are represented using a diamond connecting to participating classes.
  + Not so common.
  + May be modeled as a class instead.
* A ternary association involves three participating objects.

An example from a tutorial:

A diagram of a football team

Description automatically generated

Notes:

* In modeling, a ternary association can reasonably be replaced by promoting it to a class and add three binary associations.
* Don't use n-ary associations where n>=3 unless you are sure.

**Generalization and Specialization**

* Generalization is represented by a hollow triangle at the superclass.
  + Generalization models the 'a-kind-of’ association.
  + It is mainly used to
    - manage classes with common data members and methods by putting these common members into their superclass.
    - provide inheritance.
    - avoid multiple copies of member definition.
* Some options of generalization include:
  + discriminator (the name of the partition),
  + powertype (a class in which an instance of it is a subclass of the superclass),
  + constraints (overlapping, disjoint, complete, incomplete and user defined constraints).

***Example:***

A diagram of a vehicle

Description automatically generated

A diagram of a tree

Description automatically generated

* There are many possible options and extensions.

**Constructing class diagrams: some tips**

1. There are many methodologies and best practice tips to construct effective class diagrams.
2. There are many possible modeling options: e.g., classes versus attributes, classes versus associations, multiplicity, etc.
3. Need to fully understand the assumptions and implications when making modeling decisions.
4. Do not model implementation details in earlier modeling phases.

**3. Example: toyu**

A reasonable conceptual model of the toyu database in UML:

A diagram of a computer program

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

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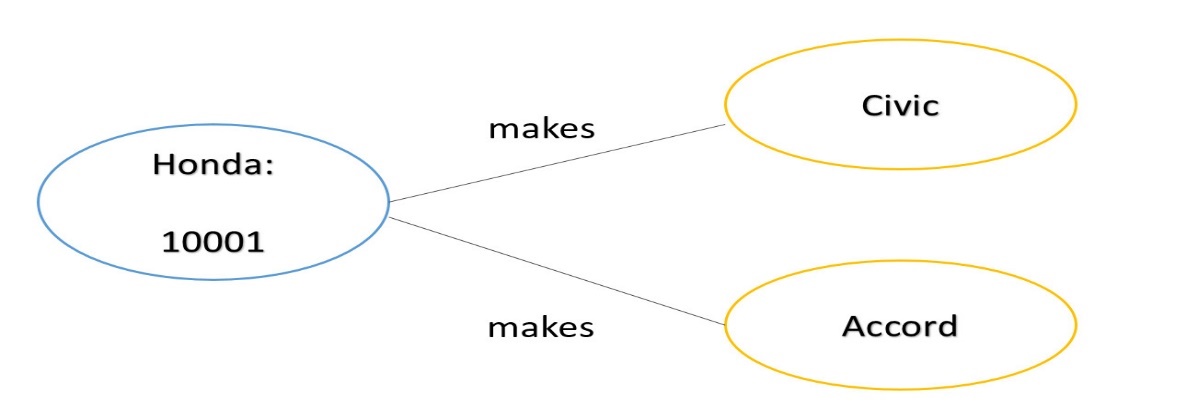
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* Binary associations are represented by solid lines.
* Important options include:
  1. Association names with directional arrows (for reading).
  2. Association roles: the role of an object participating in an association.
  3. Multiplicities: the allowed number of associated objects.
  4. Association attributes can usually stored by promoting an association to an *association classes*.
  5. Qualifiers: association attributes to partition the targeted classes.
  6. Navigational requirement: specified by arrows. Usually not used in data modeling.
  7. Dependency constraints: by dotted lines.
* Some modeling questions and decisions:
  1. Should we model something as a class or as an association?
  2. Should we model something as a class or as an attribute?
  3. What kind of association should I use? Binary association, association class, n-ary association?

***Example:*** Note that no attribute is shown in this initial phase.

A diagram of a company

Description automatically generated

Note:

1. Job is an association class.
2. The arrow in the association "works-for" shows the direction of the association.
3. The association "manages" is between two job objects.
4. The {or} designation specifies the partition of the account class into two classes: person (account) and corporate (account).

***Example:*** For:



The association Enroll describes the association 'type'. An association is actually between two *objects* (a student object and a course object). Examples:

S1 -- C1: meaning student S1 is enrolled in course C1.  
S1 -- C3: (The associations S1--C2 and S1-C4 do not exist. This means the student S1 has not enrolled in the C2 or C4.)  
S2 -- C1  
S2 -- C2  
S2 -- C4  
S3 -- C3  
S4 -- C1  
S4 -- C4

**2.5 Multiplicity**

* Multiplicity can be specified by a number, the symbol \* (many), a range, or a set. Some example:
  + 0..1: zero or 1
  + 1..1: only 1
  + 1: may be 0..1 or 1..1; usually interpreted as 1..1
  + 0..\*: zero or many
  + 1..\*: 1 or many
  + \*: many; may be 0..\* or 1..\*
  + 1..4: 1 to 4
  + {1, 2, 6}: 1, 2 or 6
  + {1, 3:5, 7:9}: 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9
* Multiplicity is a very common source of errors. Please refer to the explanation in the following diagram until you are very clear about it.

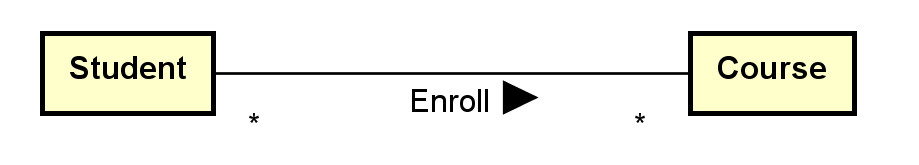


* Meaning:
  + *Every* X object must be associated with *n* Y objects.
  + Every Y object must be associated with m X objects.

***Example***

What do you think about these class diagrams?

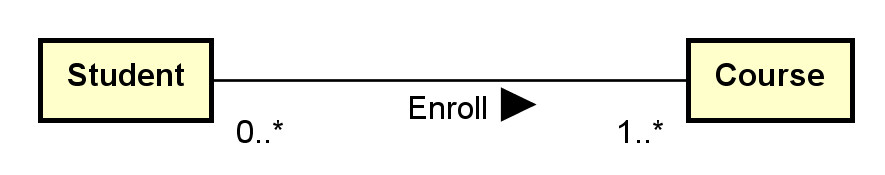
(a)



Assumptions made:

1. A student may take many courses.
2. Not sure whether a student is allowed to take zero course since \* (instead of 0..\* or 1..\* is used).
3. A course may have many students enrolled.
4. Not sure whether a course has no student enrolled since \* (instead of 0..\* or 1..\* is used).

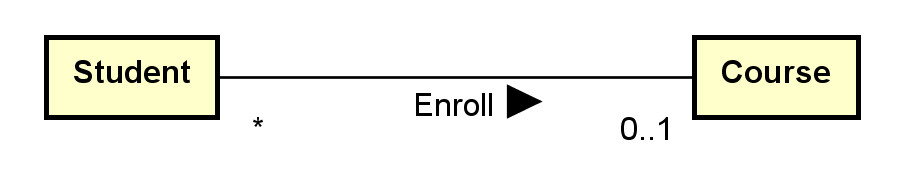
(b)



Assumptions made:

1. A student must be enrolled in one or more courses (may not be a reasonable assumption).
2. A course may have 0 or more students enrolled.

(c)



Assumptions made:

1. A student can only be enrolled in 0 or 1 course only (sound not reasonable).
2. A course may have many students enrolled.
3. Not sure whether a course has no student enrolled since \* (instead of 0..\* or 1..\* is used).

**Aggregation indicator**

1. aggregation (hollow diamond) and composition indicator (solid diamond):
2. Aggregation models the ‘a-part-of’ relationship (whole-part). E.g., car-wheel.
3. Composition is a *strong* form of aggregation: the part's lifecycle is dependent on the whole's lifecycle; e.g. university-department, building-room.
4. They can also be represented by using multiplicity.

***Example:*** Aggregation and Composition

A diagram of a graph

Description automatically generated

What do you think about this composition and aggregation examples in: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Congregationalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:AggregationAndComposition.svg)?

**Ternary Associations**

* N-ary associations are represented using a diamond connecting to participating classes.
  + Not so common.
  + May be modeled as a class instead.
* A ternary association involves three participating objects.

An example from a tutorial:

A diagram of a football team

Description automatically generated

Notes:

* In modeling, a ternary association can reasonably be replaced by promoting it to a class and add three binary associations.
* Don't use n-ary associations where n>=3 unless you are sure.

**Generalization and Specialization**

* Generalization is represented by a hollow triangle at the superclass.
  + Generalization models the 'a-kind-of’ association.
  + It is mainly used to
    - manage classes with common data members and methods by putting these common members into their superclass.
    - provide inheritance.
    - avoid multiple copies of member definition.
* Some options of generalization include:
  + discriminator (the name of the partition),
  + powertype (a class in which an instance of it is a subclass of the superclass),
  + constraints (overlapping, disjoint, complete, incomplete and user defined constraints).

***Example:***

A diagram of a vehicle

Description automatically generated

A diagram of a tree

Description automatically generated

* There are many possible options and extensions.

**Constructing class diagrams: some tips**

1. There are many methodologies and best practice tips to construct effective class diagrams.
2. There are many possible modeling options: e.g., classes versus attributes, classes versus associations, multiplicity, etc.
3. Need to fully understand the assumptions and implications when making modeling decisions.
4. Do not model implementation details in earlier modeling phases.

**3. Example: toyu**

A reasonable conceptual model of the toyu database in UML:

A diagram of a computer program

Description automatically generated with medium confidence