



FID3005 Constraint Programming 7.5 credits

Villkorsprogrammering

This is a translation of the Swedish, legally binding, course syllabus.

If the course is discontinued, students may request to be examined during the following two academic years

Establishment

Course syllabus for FID3005 valid from Spring 2011

Grading scale

Education cycle

Third cycle

Specific prerequisites

Language of instruction

The language of instruction is specified in the course offering information in the course catalogue.

Intended learning outcomes

The overall aim of the course is to create understanding of the fundamental concepts underlying constraint programming; develop skills in modeling and solving combinatorial

problems; develop skills in taking advantage of strong algorithmic techniques; create understanding of merits and limitations of constraint programming.

More specifically, after the course a student should be able to:

- explain and apply basic modeling techniques for constraint problems, including the selection of variables, constraints, and optimization criteria.
- describe and apply depth-first search and branch-and-bound search for solving constraint problems.
- describe and define constraint propagation, search branching, and search tree exploration. Prove correctness, consistency, and completeness of propagators implementing constraints. Define and prove correctness of branching strategies. Describe optimizations of constraint propagation based on fixpoint reasoning.
- describe advanced modeling techniques, analyze combinatorial problems for the applicability of these techniques, and apply and combine them. These techniques include: general symmetries, value and variable symmetries, symmetry breaking with constraints, symmetry breaking during search, domination constraints, redundant constraints, redundant modeling and channeling, using strong algorithmic techniques, and branching heuristics.
- describe and apply Regin's algorithm for the distinct constraint as an example of strong constraint propagation. Explain algorithms for the element constraint, linear constraints, and disjunctive scheduling constraints. Implement a simple propagation algorithm.
- describe the main strength and weaknesses of constraint programming and how constraint programming relates to other methods (local search and integer programming).
- describe and apply current research trends in constraint programming in all areas mentioned above.

Course contents

Modeling with constraint programming: typical techniques for modeling in different application areas (redundant constraints, symmetry elimination); refining models by strong algorithmic methods; heuristic search methods; application to hard real-size problems.

Basic principles underlying constraint programming: models for propagation and search and their essential properties; different levels of consistency; different constraint domains.

Strong algorithmic methods: Regin's distinct algorithm; edge-finding; integration (achieving required properties for propagation).

Relation to other techniques used in solving combinatorial problems: integer programming, local search; discussion of merits and weaknesses; hybrid approaches (column generation, etc).

Research area overview: major conferences and journals. Current hot topics and connection to other research areas.

Examination

Based on recommendation from KTH's coordinator for disabilities, the examiner will decide how to adapt an examination for students with documented disability.

The examiner may apply another examination format when re-examining individual students.

Approved written examination, approved assignments, and approved application of current research (in the form of using it for a research paper, report, or project, etc).

The course is graded with P/F (pass or fail).

Ethical approach

- All members of a group are responsible for the group's work.
- In any assessment, every student shall honestly disclose any help received and sources used.
- In an oral assessment, every student shall be able to present and answer questions about the entire assignment and solution.