Computer Systems Modeling and Verification
(USEEN1)

Structural Pattern Matching (Quick Intro)

This intro is taken from the appendix of PEP 636 – Structural Pattern Matching: Tutorial.

A match statement takes an expression and compares its value to successive patterns given as one or more case blocks. This is superficially similar to a switch statement in C, Java or JavaScript (and many other languages), but much more powerful.

The simplest form compares a subject value against one or more literals:

```
def http_error(status: int) -> str:
    match status:
        case 400:
            return "Bad request"
        case 404:
            return "Not found"
        case 418:
            return "I'm a teapot"
        case _:
            return "Something's wrong with the Internet"
```

Note the last block: the "variable name" `_` acts as a *wildcard* and never fails to match.

You can combine several literals in a single pattern using `|` ("or"):

```
case 401 | 403 | 404:
    return "Not allowed"
```

Patterns can look like unpacking assignments, and can be used to bind variables:

```
# point is an (x, y) tuple
match point:
    case (0, 0):
        print("Origin")
    case (0, y):
        print(f"Y={y}")
    case (x, 0):
        print(f"X={x}")
    case (x, y):
        print(f"X={x}, Y={y}")
    case _:
        raise ValueError("Not a point")
```

Study that one carefully! The first pattern has two literals, and can be thought of as an extension of the literal pattern shown above. But the next two patterns combine a literal and a variable, and the variable *binds* a value from the subject (`point`). The fourth pattern captures two values, which makes it conceptually similar to the unpacking assignment `(x, y) = point`.

If you are using classes to structure your data you can use the class name followed by an argument list resembling a constructor, but with the ability to capture attributes into variables:

```
from dataclasses import dataclass

@dataclass
class Point:
    x: int
    y: int

def where_is(point: Point) -> None:
    match point:
        case Point(x=0, y=0):
            print("Origin")
        case Point(x=0, y=y):
            print(f"Y={y}")
        case Point(x=x, y=0):
            print(f"X={x}")
        case Point():
            print("Somewhere else")
        case _:
            print("Not a point")
```

You can use positional parameters with some builtin classes that provide an ordering for their attributes (e.g. dataclasses). You can also define a specific position for attributes in patterns by setting the `__match_args__` special attribute in your classes. If it's set to `("x", "y")`, the following patterns are all equivalent (and all bind the `y` attribute to the `var` variable):

```
Point(1, var)
Point(1, y=var)
Point(x=1, y=var)
Point(y=var, x=1)
```

Patterns can be arbitrarily nested. For example, if we have a short list of points, we could match it like this:

```
match points:
    case []:
        print("No points")
    case [Point(0, 0)]:
        print("The origin")
    case [Point(x, y)]:
        print(f"Single point {x}, {y}")
    case [Point(0, y1), Point(0, y2)]:
        print(f"Two on the Y axis at {y1}, {y2}")
    case _:
        print("Something else")
```

We can add an `if` clause to a pattern, known as a "guard". If the guard is false, `match` goes on to try the next case block. Note that value capture happens before the guard is evaluated:

```
match point:
    case Point(x, y) if x == y:
        print(f"Y=X at {x}")
    case Point(x, y):
        print(f"Not on the diagonal")
```