Concurrency and Synchronisation
Learning Outcomes

• Understand concurrency is an issue in operating systems and multithreaded applications
• Know the concept of a critical region.
• Understand how mutual exclusion of critical regions can be used to solve concurrency issues
  • Including how mutual exclusion can be implemented correctly and efficiently.
• Be able to identify and solve a producer consumer bounded buffer problem.
• Understand and apply standard synchronisation primitives to solve synchronisation problems.
Textbook

• Sections 2.3 - 2.3.7 & 2.5
Concurrency Example

count is a global variable shared between two threads. After increment and decrement complete, what is the value of count?

```c
void increment ()
{
    int t;
    t = count;
    t = t + 1;
    count = t;
}
```

```c
void decrement ()
{
    int t;
    t = count;
    t = t - 1;
    count = t;
}
```

We have a race condition
Where is the concurrency?

- (a) Three processes each with one thread
- (b) One process with three threads
There is in-kernel concurrency even for single-threaded processes

Process's user-level stack and execution state

User Mode

Process A

Process B

Process C

Operating System

Kernel Mode

Process's in-kernel stack and execution state
Critical Region

• We can control access to the shared resource by controlling access to the code that accesses the resource.

⇒ **A critical region** is a region of code where shared resources are accessed.
  • Variables, memory, files, etc...

• Uncoordinated entry to the critical region results in a race condition
  ⇒ Incorrect behaviour, deadlock, lost work,...
Identifying critical regions

• Critical regions are regions of code that:
  • Access a shared resource,
  • and correctness relies on the shared resource not being concurrently modified by another thread/process/entity.

```c
void increment ()
{
    int t;
    t = count;
    t = t + 1;
    count = t;
}

void decrement ()
{
    int t;
    t = count;
    t = t - 1;
    count = t;
}
```
Accessing Critical Regions

Mutual exclusion using critical regions
Example critical regions

```c
struct node {
    int data;
    struct node *next;
};
struct node *head;

void init(void)
{
    head = NULL;
}

void insert(struct *item)
{
    item->next = head;
    head = item;
}

struct node *remove(void)
{
    struct node *t;
    t = head;
    if (t != NULL) {
        head = head->next;
    }
    return t;
}
```

• Simple last-in-first-out queue implemented as a linked list.
Example Race

```c
void insert(struct *item)
{
    item->next = head;
    head = item;
}
```

```c
void insert(struct *item)
{
    item->next = head;
    head = item;
}
```
Example critical regions

```c
struct node {
    int data;
    struct node *next;
};
struct node *head;

void init(void)
{
    head = NULL;
}

void insert(struct *item)
{
    item->next = head;
    head = item;
}

struct node *remove(void)
{
    struct node *t;
    t = head;
    if (t != NULL) {
        head = head->next;
    }
    return t;
}
```

• Critical sections
Critical Regions Solutions

• We seek a solution to coordinate access to critical regions.
  • Also called critical sections
• Conditions required of any solution to the critical region problem
  1. Mutual Exclusion:
    • No two processes simultaneously in critical region
  2. No assumptions made about speeds or numbers of CPUs
  3. Progress
    • No process running outside its critical region may block another process
  4. Bounded
    • No process waits forever to enter its critical region
A solution?

• A lock variable
  • If lock == 1,
    • somebody is in the critical section and we must wait
  • If lock == 0,
    • nobody is in the critical section and we are free to enter
A solution?

while(TRUE) {
    while(lock == 1);
    lock = 1;
    critical();
    lock = 0
    non_critical();
}

while(TRUE) {
    while(lock == 1);
    lock = 1;
    critical();
    lock = 0
    non_critical();
}
A problematic execution sequence

```c
while(TRUE) {
    while(lock == 1);
    lock = 1;
    critical();
    lock = 0
    non_critical();
}
```

The problematic sequence:

```c
while(TRUE) {
    while(lock == 1);
    lock = 1;
    critical();
    lock = 1;
    non_critical();
}
```
Observation

- Unfortunately, it is usually easier to show something does not work, than it is to prove that it does work.
  - Easier to provide a counter example
  - Ideally, we’d like to prove, or at least informally demonstrate, that our solutions work.
Mutual Exclusion by Taking Turns

while (TRUE) {
    while (turn != 0) /* loop */;
    critical_region()
    turn = 1;
    noncritical_region()
} 

(a)

while (TRUE) {
    while (turn != 1) /* loop */;
    critical_region()
    turn = 0;
    noncritical_region()
} 

(b)

Proposed solution to critical region problem
(a) Process 0.  (b) Process 1.
Mutual Exclusion by Taking Turns

• Works due to *strict alternation*
  • Each process takes turns

• Cons
  • Busy waiting
  • Process must wait its turn even while the other process is doing something else.
    • With many processes, must wait for everyone to have a turn
      • Does not guarantee progress if a process no longer needs a turn.
    • Poor solution when processes require the critical section at differing rates
Mutual Exclusion by Disabling Interrupts

• Before entering a critical region, disable interrupts
• After leaving the critical region, enable interrupts

• Pros
  • simple

• Cons
  • Only available in the kernel
  • Blocks everybody else, even with no contention
    • Slows interrupt response time
  • Does not work on a multiprocessor
Hardware Support for mutual exclusion

• Test and set instruction
  • Can be used to implement lock variables correctly
    • It loads the value of the lock
    • If lock == 0,
      • set the lock to 1
      • return the result 0 – we acquire the lock
    • If lock == 1
      • return 1 – another thread/process has the lock
  • Hardware guarantees that the instruction executes atomically.
    • Atomically: As an indivisible unit.
Mutual Exclusion with Test-and-Set

enter__region:
  TSL REGISTER, LOCK | copy lock to register and set lock to 1
  CMP REGISTER, #0  | was lock zero?
  JNE enter__region | if it was non zero, lock was set, so loop
  RET | return to caller; critical region entered

leave__region:
  MOVE LOCK, #0     | store a 0 in lock
  RET | return to caller

Entering and leaving a critical region using the TSL instruction
Test-and-Set

• Pros
  • Simple (easy to show it’s correct)
  • Available at user-level
    • To any number of processors
    • To implement any number of lock variables

• Cons
  • Busy waits (also termed a spin lock)
    • Consumes CPU
    • Starvation is possible when a process leaves its critical section and more than one process is waiting.
Tackling the Busy-Wait Problem

• Sleep / Wakeup
  • The idea
    • When process is waiting for an event, it calls sleep to block, instead of busy waiting.
    • The event happens, the event generator (another process) calls wakeup to unblock the sleeping process.
    • Waking a ready/running process has no effect.
The Producer-Consumer Problem

- Also called the \textit{bounded buffer} problem
- A producer produces data items and stores the items in a buffer
- A consumer takes the items out of the buffer and consumes them.
Issues

• We must keep an accurate count of items in buffer
  • Producer
    • should sleep when the buffer is full,
    • and wakeup when there is empty space in the buffer
      • The consumer can call wakeup when it consumes the first entry of the full buffer
  • Consumer
    • should sleep when the buffer is empty
    • and wake up when there are items available
      • Producer can call wakeup when it adds the first item to the buffer

![Diagram of producer and consumer interactions with buffer]
Pseudo-code for producer and consumer

```c
int count = 0;
#define N 4 /* buf size */
prod() {
    while(TRUE) {
        item = produce()
        if (count == N)
            sleep();
        insert_item();
        count++;
        if (count == 1)
            wakeup(con);
    }
}

con() {
    while(TRUE) {
        if (count == 0)
            sleep();
        remove_item();
        count--;
        if (count == N-1)
            wakeup(prod);
    }
}
```

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Problems

int count = 0;       con() {          
#define N 4 /* buf size */ while(TRUE) {  
prod() {                
    while(TRUE) {         
        item = produce()  
        if (count == N)      
            sleep();       
        insert_item();      
        count++;            
        if (count == 1)      
            wakeup(con);    
    }                      
    }                       
}                           
}                           

Concurrent uncontrolled access to the buffer
Problems

```c
int count = 0;
#define N 4 /* buf size */
prod() {
    while(TRUE) {
        item = produce();
        if (count == N)
            sleep();
        insert_item();
        count++;
        if (count == 1)
            wakeup(con);
    }
}

con() {
    while(TRUE) {
        if (count == 0)
            sleep();
        remove_item();
        count--;
        if (count == N-1)
            wakeup(prod);
    }
}
```

Concurrent uncontrolled access to the counter
Proposed Solution

• Lets use a locking primitive based on test-and-set to protect the concurrent access
Proposed solution?

```c
int count = 0;
#define N 4 /* buf size */
prod() {
    while(TRUE) {
        item = produce()
        if (count == N)
            sleep();
        acquire_lock()
        insert_item();
        count++;
        release_lock()
        if (count == 1)
            wakeup(con);
    }
}
con() {
    while(TRUE) {
        if (count == 0)
            sleep();
        acquire_lock()
        remove_item();
        count--;
        release_lock();
        if (count == N-1)
            wakeup(prod);
    }
}
```
Problematic execution sequence

```c
prod() {
    while(TRUE) {
        item = produce();
        if (count == N)
            sleep();
        acquire_lock();
        insert_item();
        count++;
        release_lock();
        if (count == 1)
            wakeup(con);
    }
}

con() {
    while(TRUE) {
        if (count == 0)
            sleep();
        acquire_lock();
        remove_item();
        count--;
        release_lock();
        if (count == N-1)
            wakeup(prod);
    }
}
```

wakeup without a matching sleep is lost
Problem

- The test for *some condition* and actually going to sleep needs to be atomic
- The following does not work:

```
acquire_lock()
if (count == N)
    sleep();
release_lock()
```

The lock is held while asleep ⇒ count will never change

```
acquire_lock()
if (count == 1)
    wake_up();
release_lock()
```
Semaphores

• Dijkstra (1965) introduced two primitives that are more powerful than simple sleep and wakeup alone.
  • P(): proberen, from Dutch to test.
  • V(): verhogen, from Dutch to increment.
  • Also called wait & signal, down & up.
How do they work

• If a resource is not available, the corresponding semaphore blocks any process waiting for the resource
• Blocked processes are put into a process queue maintained by the semaphore (avoids busy waiting!)
• When a process releases a resource, it signals this by means of the semaphore
• Signalling resumes a blocked process if there is any
• Wait and signal operations cannot be interrupted
• Complex coordination can be implemented by multiple semaphores
Semaphore Implementation

• Define a semaphore as a record

    ```
    typedef struct {
        int count;
        struct process *L;
    } semaphore;
    ```

• Assume two simple operations:
  • `sleep` suspends the process that invokes it.
  • `wakeup(P)` resumes the execution of a blocked process P.
• Semaphore operations now defined as
  
  \textit{wait}(S):  
  
  \begin{verbatim}
  S.count--;  
  if (S.count < 0) {  
  add this process to S.L;  
  sleep;  
  }
  \end{verbatim}

  \textit{signal}(S):  
  
  \begin{verbatim}
  S.count++;  
  if (S.count <= 0) {  
  remove a process P from S.L;  
  wakeup(P);  
  }
  \end{verbatim}

• Each primitive is atomic  
  • E.g. interrupts are disabled for each
Semaphore as a General Synchronization Tool

- Execute $B$ in $P_j$ only after $A$ executed in $P_i$
- Use semaphore $count$ initialized to 0
- Code:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{P}_i \\
\vdots \\
\text{A} \quad \text{wait(flag)} \\
\text{signal(flag)} \\
\text{B} \\
\text{P}_j \\
\vdots
\end{array}
\]
Semaphore Implementation of a Mutex

• Mutex is short for Mutual Exclusion
  • Can also be called a lock

    semaphore mutex;
    mutex.count = 1; /* initialise mutex */

    wait(mutex); /* enter the critical region */

    Blahblah();

    signal(mutex); /* exit the critical region */

Notice that the initial count determines how many waits can progress before blocking and requiring a signal \( \Rightarrow \) mutex.count initialised as 1
Solving the producer-consumer problem with semaphores

```c
#define N = 4

semaphore mutex = 1;

/* count empty slots */
semaphore empty = N;

/* count full slots */
semaphore full = 0;
```
Solving the producer-consumer problem with semaphores

```c
prod() {
    while(TRUE) {
        item = produce()
        wait(empty);
        wait(mutex)
        insert_item();
        signal(mutex);
        signal(full);
    }
}

con() {
    while(TRUE) {
        wait(full);
        wait(mutex);
        remove_item();
        signal(mutex);
        signal(empty);
    }
}
```
Summarising Semaphores

• Semaphores can be used to solve a variety of concurrency problems

• However, programming with them can be error-prone
  • E.g. must *signal* for every *wait* for mutexes
    • Too many, or too few signals or waits, or signals and waits in the wrong order, can have catastrophic results
Monitors

• To ease concurrent programming, Hoare (1974) proposed monitors.
  • A higher level synchronisation primitive
  • Programming language construct

• Idea
  • A set of procedures, variables, data types are grouped in a special kind of module, a monitor.
    • Variables and data types only accessed from within the monitor
  • Only one process/thread can be in the monitor at any one time
    • Mutual exclusion is implemented by the compiler (which should be less error prone)
Monitor

- When a thread calls a monitor procedure that has a thread already inside, it is queued and it sleeps until the current thread exits the monitor.
Monitors

\begin{verbatim}
monitor example
    integer i;
    condition c;

    procedure producer();
    .
    .
    .
    .
    end;

    procedure consumer();
    .
    .
    .
    .
    end;
end monitor;
\end{verbatim}

Example of a monitor
Simple example

```plaintext
monitor counter {
    int count;
    procedure inc() {
        count = count + 1;
    }
    procedure dec() {
        count = count - 1;
    }
}
```

Note: “paper” language
- Compiler guarantees only one thread can be active in the monitor at any one time
- Easy to see this provides mutual exclusion
  - No race condition on `count`.

•
How do we block waiting for an event?

• We need a mechanism to block waiting for an event (in addition to ensuring mutual exclusion)
  • e.g., for producer consumer problem when buffer is empty or full
• Condition Variables
Condition Variable

• To allow a process to wait within the monitor, a **condition** variable must be declared, as
  
  ```
  condition x, y;
  ```

• Condition variable can only be used with the operations **wait** and **signal**.
  
  • The operation
    ```
    x.wait();
    ```
  
  • means that the process invoking this operation is suspended until another process invokes
  • Another thread can enter the monitor while original is suspended

  ```
  x.signal();
  ```

  • The **x.signal** operation resumes exactly one suspended process. If no process is suspended, then the **signal** operation has no effect.
Condition Variables

queues associated with $x, y$ conditions

shared data

entry queue

operations

initialization code
Monitors

```plaintext
monitor ProducerConsumer
    condition full, empty;
    integer count;
    procedure insert(item: integer);
    begin
        if count = N then wait(full);
        insert_item(item);
        count := count + 1;
        if count = 1 then signal(empty)
    end;
    function remove: integer;
    begin
        if count = 0 then wait(empty);
        remove = remove_item;
        count := count - 1;
        if count = N - 1 then signal(full)
    end;
    count := 0;
end monitor;

procedure producer;
begin
    while true do
    begin
        item = produce_item;
        ProducerConsumer.insert(item)
    end
end;

procedure consumer;
begin
    while true do
    begin
        item = ProducerConsumer.remove;
        consume_item(item)
    end
end;
```

• Outline of producer-consumer problem with monitors
  • only one monitor procedure active at one time
  • buffer has $N$ slots
OS/161 Provided Synchronisation Primitives
• Locks
• Semaphores
• Condition Variables
Locks

• Functions to create and destroy locks

```c
struct lock *lock_create(const char *name);
void lock_destroy(struct lock *);
```

• Functions to acquire and release them

```c
void lock_acquire(struct lock *);
void lock_release(struct lock *);
```
Example use of locks

```c
int count;
struct lock *count_lock

main() {
    count = 0;
    count_lock =
        lock_create("count lock");
    if (count_lock == NULL)
        panic("I’m dead");
    stuff();
}

procedure inc() {
    lock_acquire(count_lock);
    count = count + 1;
    lock_release(count_lock);
}

procedure dec() {
    lock_acquire(count_lock);
    count = count -1;
    lock_release(count_lock);
}
```
Semaphores

struct semaphore *sem_create(const char *name, int initial_count);
void sem_destroy(struct semaphore *);
void P(struct semaphore *);
void V(struct semaphore *);
Example use of Semaphores

```
int count;
struct semaphore
  *count_mutex;

main() {
  count = 0;
count_mutex =
    sem_create(“count”,
               1);
  if (count_mutex == NULL)
    panic(“I’m dead”);
  stuff();
}

procedure inc() {
  P(count_mutex);
count = count + 1;
  V(count_mutex);
}

procedure dec() {
  P(count_mutex);
count = count -1;
  V(count_mutex);
}
```
Condition Variables

```c
struct cv *cv_create(const char *name);
void       cv_destroy(struct cv *);

void       cv_wait(struct cv *cv, struct lock *lock);
  • Releases the lock and blocks
  • Upon resumption, it re-acquires the lock
    • Note: we must recheck the condition we slept on

void       cv_signal(struct cv *cv, struct lock *lock);
void       cv_broadcast(struct cv *cv, struct lock *lock);
  • Wakes one/all, does not release the lock
  • First “waiter” scheduled after signaller releases the lock will re-acquire the lock

Note: All three variants must hold the lock passed in.
Condition Variables and Bounded Buffers

Non-solution

```c
lock_acquire(c_lock)
if (count == 0)
    sleep();
remove_item();
count--;
lock_release(c_lock);
```

Solution

```c
lock_acquire(c_lock)
while (count == 0)
    cv_wait(c_cv, c_lock);
remove_item();
count--;
lock_release(c_lock);
```
Alternative Producer-Consumer Solution Using OS/161 CVs

```c
int count = 0;
#define N 4 /* buf size */
prod() {
    while(TRUE) {
        item = produce()
        lock_acquire(l)
        while (count == N)
            cv_wait(full,l);
        insert_item(item);
        count++;
        cv_signal(empty,l);
        lock_release(l)
    }
}
con() {
    while(TRUE) {
        lock_acquire(l)
        while (count == 0)
            cv_wait(empty,l);
        item = remove_item();
        count--;
        cv_signal(full,l);
        lock_release(l);
        consume(item);
    }
}
```
Dining Philosophers

• Philosophers eat/think
• Eating needs 2 forks
• Pick one fork at a time
• How to prevent deadlock
Dining Philosophers

#define N 5 /* number of philosophers */
#define LEFT (i+N-1)%N /* number of i’s left neighbor */
#define RIGHT (i+1)%N /* number of i’s right neighbor */
#define THINKING 0 /* philosopher is thinking */
#define HUNGRY 1 /* philosopher is trying to get forks */
#define EATING 2 /* philosopher is eating */
typedef int semaphore; /* semaphores are a special kind of int */
int state[N]; /* array to keep track of everyone’s state */
semaphore mutex = 1; /* mutual exclusion for critical regions */
semaphore s[N]; /* one semaphore per philosopher */

void philosopher(int i) /* i: philosopher number, from 0 to N–1 */
{
    while (TRUE) {
        think(); /* repeat forever */
        take_forks(i); /* philosopher is thinking */
        eat(); /* acquire two forks or block */
        yum-yum, spaghetti */
        put_forks(i); /* yum-yum, spaghetti */
        put both forks back on table */
    }
}
Dining Philosophers

#define N 5

void philosopher(int i) {
    while (TRUE) {
        think(); /* philosopher is thinking */
        take_fork(i); /* take left fork */
        take_fork((i+1) % N); /* take right fork; % is modulo operator */
        eat(); /* yum-yum, spaghetti */
        put_fork(i); /* put left fork back on the table */
        put_fork((i+1) % N); /* put right fork back on the table */
    }
}

A nonsolution to the dining philosophers problem
Dining Philosophers

```c
void take_forks(int i)  /* i: philosopher number, from 0 to N–1 */
{
    down(&mutex);       /* enter critical region */
    state[i] = HUNGRY;  /* record fact that philosopher i is hungry */
    test(i);            /* try to acquire 2 forks */
    up(&mutex);         /* exit critical region */
    down(&s[i]);        /* block if forks were not acquired */
}

void put_forks(i)  /* i: philosopher number, from 0 to N–1 */
{
    down(&mutex);       /* enter critical region */
    state[i] = THINKING; /* philosopher has finished eating */
    test(LEFT);         /* see if left neighbor can now eat */
    test(RIGHT);        /* see if right neighbor can now eat */
    up(&mutex);         /* exit critical region */
}

void test(i)  /* i: philosopher number, from 0 to N–1 */
{
    if (state[i] == HUNGRY && state[LEFT] != EATING && state[RIGHT] != EATING) {
        state[i] = EATING;
        up(&s[i]);
    }
}
```

Solution to dining philosophers problem (part 2)
The Readers and Writers Problem

• Models access to a database
  • E.g. airline reservation system
  • Can have more than one concurrent reader
    • To check schedules and reservations
  • Writers must have exclusive access
    • To book a ticket or update a schedule
The Readers and Writers Problem

```c
typedef int semaphore;     /* use your imagination */
semaphore mutex = 1;       /* controls access to 'rc' */
semaphore db = 1;          /* controls access to the database */
int rc = 0;                /* # of processes reading or wanting to */

void reader(void) {
    while (TRUE) {          /* repeat forever */
        down(&mutex);       /* get exclusive access to 'rc' */
        rc = rc + 1;        /* one reader more now */
        if (rc == 1) down(&db); /* if this is the first reader ... */
        up(&mutex);         /* release exclusive access to 'rc' */
        read_data_base();   /* access the data */
        down(&mutex);       /* get exclusive access to 'rc' */
        rc = rc - 1;        /* one reader fewer now */
        if (rc == 0) up(&db); /* if this is the last reader ... */
        up(&mutex);         /* release exclusive access to 'rc' */
        use_data_read();    /* noncritical region */
    }
}

void writer(void) {
    while (TRUE) {          /* repeat forever */
        think_up_data();     /* noncritical region */
        down(&db);           /* get exclusive access */
        write_data_base();   /* update the data */
        up(&db);             /* release exclusive access */
    }
}
```

A solution to the readers and writers problem