

Ollscoil na Gaillimие University of Galway

CT213 Computing System & Organisation

Lecture 6: Process Synchronisation

Dr Takfarinas Saber takfarinas.saber@universityofgalway.ie

Concurrent Programming

- Concurrent programs: *interleaving sets of sequential atomic instructions*.
 - i.e., interacting sequential processes run at same time, on same/different processor(s)
 - processes *interleaved*, i.e. at any time each processor runs one of instructions of the sequential processes



Correctness

If all the math is done in registers, then the results depend on interleaving (indeterminate computation).

• This dependency on unforeseen circumstances is known as a *Race Condition*.

<u>Generalisation</u>: a program is correct when its preconditions hold then its post conditions will hold.

Program1: load reg, N
Program2: load reg, N
Program1: add reg, #1
Program2: add reg, #1
Program1: store reg, N
Program2: store reg, N

A concurrent program *must be* correct <u>under all possible *interleavings*</u>.



Lets Look at this in Practice: Race Conditions

- A race condition occurs when a program output is dependent on the sequence or timing of code execution
 - if multiple processes of execution enter a **critical section** at about the same time; both attempt to update the shared data structure
 - >leads to surprising results (undesirable)
 - ✤You must work to avoid this with concurrent code
- Critical section = parts of the program where a shared resource is accessed
 - It needs to be protected in ways that avoid the concurrent access



Example Bank Transaction

```
Int withdraw(account, amount){
    int balance = account.balance;
    balance = balance - amount ;
    account.balance = balance;
    return balance;
```



}

Example Bank Transaction

Two processes:

- Process 1: withdraw 10 from account
- Process 2: withdraw 20 from account

	//account.balance = 100
Process 1	<pre>Int withdraw(account, amount = 10){ int balance = account.balance; //100 balance = balance - amount ; //90</pre>
Process 2	<pre>Int withdraw(account, amount = 20){ int balance = account.balance; //80 balance = balance - amount ; //80 account.balance = balance; //80</pre>
Process 1	account.balance = balance; //90 return balance; //90 }
Process 2	return balance; //80 }
OIL NA GAILLIMHE	<pre>//account.balance = 90!</pre>

Race Condition Consequences

We can get different results every time we run the code > result is indeterminate

Deterministic computations have the same result each time

- We want deterministic concurrent code
- ➤We can use synchronisation mechanisms



Handling Race Conditions

- We need a mechanism to control access to shared resources in concurrent code
 - > Synchronisation is necessary for any shared data structure

Idea:

- Focus on critical sections of code
 - i.e., bits that access shared resources
- We want critical sections to run with mutual exclusion
 > only one process can execute that code at the same time



Example: Bank Transactions

What code should be within the critical section?



Q: Why is this not critical?



Critical Section Properties

- Mutual exclusion: only 1 process can access at a time
- Guarantee of progress: processes outside the critical section cannot stop another from entering it
- **Bounded waiting**: a process waiting to enter a critical section will eventually enter
 - Processes in the critical section will eventually leave
- **Performance**: the overhead of entering/exiting should be small
 - Especially compared to amount of work done in there why?
- Fair: don't make some processes wait much longer than others



Synchronisation Solutions

Ways to protect critical sections

- Option 1: Atomicity
 - Atomic operations cannot be interrupted, in order to avoid illogical outcomes
- Option 2: Conditional synchronisation (ordering)
 - Making sure that one process runs before another



Atomicity

- Basic atomicity is provided by the hardware
 - E.g., References and assignments (i.e., read & write operations) are atomic in all CPUs
- However higher-level constructs (i.e., any sequence of two or more CPU instructions) are not atomic in general
- Some languages (e.g., Java) have mechanisms to specify multiple instructions as atomic



Conditional Synchronisation

- Strategy: Person A writes a rough draft and then Person B edits it.
 - A and B cannot write at the same time (as they are working on different versions of the paper)
 - Must ensure that Person B cannot start until Person A is finished





What Might Conditional Synchronisation Look Like?





Code Constructs to Support Defining Critical Sections

- Locks
 - Very primitive, just provide mutual exclusion, minimal semantics, useful as a building block for other methods
- Semaphores
 - Basic, easy to understand
- Monitors
 - Higher level abstraction, requires language support, implicit operations



Mutual Exclusion solutions: Locks



Locks: Basic idea

- Lock = a token you need to enter a critical section of code
- If a process wants to execute a critical section...it must have the lock:
 - Need to ask for lock
 - Need to release lock
- No restrictions on executing other code





Lock States and Operation

- Locks have 2 states:
 - Held: some process is in the critical section
 - Not held: no process is in the critical section
- Locks have 2 operations:
 - Acquire:
 - mark lock as held or wait until released
 - If not held => execute immediately
 - Release:
 - mark lock as not held

If many processes call acquire, only 1 process can get the lock



Using Lock

- Locks are declared like variables: Lock myLock;
- A program can use multiple locks why? Lock myDataLock, myIoLock;
- To use a lock:
 - Surround critical section as follows:
 - Call acquire() at start of critical section
 - Call release() at end of critical section
- Remember our general pattern for mutex

```
while (true)
           // Non Critical Section
           myLock.acquire();
              Critical Section
           myLock.release();
           // Non_Critical_Section
       end while
Surround critical
section of code
```



Lock Benefits

- Only 1 process can execute the critical section code at a time
- When a process is done (and calls release) another process can enter the critical section
- Achieves requirements of mutual exclusion and progress for concurrent systems



Lock Limitations

- Acquiring a lock *only* blocks processes trying to acquire the *same* lock
 - i.e., processes can acquire other locks
- Must use the same lock for all critical sections accessing the same data (or resource)
 - E.g., withdraw() and deposit() for a bank account
- Q: What does this mean for code complexity?
 - E.g., Add a new process that accesses same data



Lock in Use Example: Bank Transactions

See our old code:



The local variable, does not need to be protected



E.g., Bank Transaction with Locks

//account.balance = 100



Impacts

- We can run the processes in any order:
 - We will have the correct final balance
- ► We no longer have a race condition



Software Implementation of Locks (v1)

```
Struct lock {
     bool held; //initially FALSE
void acquire(lock) {
     while(lock->held)
          ; //just wait
     lock->held = TRUE;
void release(lock) {
     lock->held = FALSE;
```



How does it run?



Solve via Hardware Support

```
//c code for test and set behaviour
bool test_and_set (bool *flag) {
    bool old = *flag;
    *flag = true;
    return old;
}
```

Processor has a special instruction called "test and set"

• Allows atomic read and update



Hardware-based Spinlock

```
struct lock {
     bool held; //initially FALSE
void acquire(lock) {
     while(test and set(&lock->held))
           ; //just wait
     return;
void release(lock) {
     lock->held = FALSE;
                                 Q: Why is this called a spin lock?
```

Drawbacks of Spinlocks

- Spinlocks are a form of busy waiting => burn CPU time
- Once acquired they are held until explicitly released
 - What about other processes?
- Inefficient if lock is held for long periods
 - OS overhead of context switching
 - If Process Scheduler makes processes sleep while lock is held
 - All other processes use their CPU time to spin while the process with the lock makes no progress



Do Locks give us sufficient safety?

- 1. Check Safety properties: these must <u>always</u> be true
 - *Mutual exclusion:* Two processes must not interleave certain sequences of instructions
 - Absence of deadlock: Deadlock is when a non-terminating system cannot respond to any signal
- 2. Check Liveness properties: These must *eventually* be true
 - Absence of starvation: Information sent is delivered
 - *Fairness:* That any contention must be resolved
- If you can demonstrate any cases in which these properties do not hold
- > then, the system is not correct



Lock Deadlock Scenario

• 2+ processes, 2 shared resources, 2 locks



Protocols to avoid deadlock

- Add a timer to lock.request() method
 ➤ Cancel job and attempt it another time
- Add a new lock.check() method to see if a lock is already held before requesting it

➤you can do something else and come back and check again

• Avoid hold and wait protocol

Prever hold onto 1 resource when you need 2

But these all lead to problems too!



Livelock by trying to avoid deadlock

• 2 processes, 2 resources, locks with checking



Starvation

- More general case of livelock
- 1 or more processes do not get to run as another process is locking the resource
- Example:
 - 2 processes
 - Process A runs for 99ms, releases lock for 1ms
 - Process B runs for 1ms, releases lock for 90ms

A sends many more requests for resourceB hardly ever gets allocated the resource



Locks/Critical Sections and Reliability

- What if a process is interrupted, is suspended, or crashes inside its critical section?
- In the middle of the critical section, the system may be in an inconsistent state
- Not only that: the process is holding a lock and if it dies no other process waiting on that lock can proceed!
- Developers must ensure critical regions are very short and always terminate.



Beyond Locks

- Locks only provide mutual exclusion
 - Ensure only 1 process is in the critical section at a time
 - Good for protecting our shared resource to prevent race conditions and avoid nondeterministic execution
 - E.g., bank balance We want more!
- What about fairness, avoiding starvation, and livelock?

> We need to be able to place an ordering on the scheduling of processes


Take Home Message

- Race conditions, deadlock, livelock, fairness, and reliability are all concerns when writing concurrent code
- Several mechanisms exist to ensure the orderly execution of cooperating processes



Higher Level Support for Mutual Exclusion: Semaphores



Example Scenario: we want to place an order on when processes execute

- Producer- Consumer:
 - Producer: creates a resource (data)
 - Consumer: Uses a resource (data)
 - E.g.ps | grep "gcc" | wc
- Don't want producers and consumers to operate in lockstep (i.e., atomicity)
 - Each command must wait for the previous output
 - Implies lots of context switching (i.e., very expensive)
- Solution: place a fixed size buffer between producers and consumers
 - Synchronise access to buffer
 - Producer waits of buffer full; consumer waits if buffer empty



Semaphores

- Semaphore = higher level synchronisation primitive
 - Invented by Dijkstra in 1965 as part of THE OS project
- Semaphores are a kind of generalized lock
 - Main synchronisation primitive used in original UNIX
- Implement with a counter that is manipulated atomically via 2 operations signal and wait

wait(semaphore): A.K.A., down() or P()
 decrement counter
 if counter is zero then block until semaphore is
 signalled
signal(semaphore): A.K.A., up() or V()
 increment counter
 wake up one waiter, if any
sem_init(semaphore, counter):
 set initial counter value



Semaphore Pseudocode

wait() and signal() are critical sections!

- Hence, they must be executed atomically with respect to each other
- Each semaphore has an associated queue of processes
 - When wait() is called by a process
 - If semaphore is available => process continues
 - If semaphore is unavailable => process blocks, waits on queue
 - signal() opens the semaphore
 - If processes are waiting on a queue => one process is unblocked
 - If no processes are on the queue => the signal is remembered for the next time wait() is called

Note: Blocking processes are not spinning, they release the CPU to do other work

```
struct semaphore {
        int value;
        queue L; // list of processes
wait (S) {
        if (s.value > 0)
                s.value = s.value -1;
        else {
                add this process to s.L;
                block;
signal (S) {
        if (S.L != EMPTY) {
                remove a process P from S.L;
                wakeup(P);
        } else
                s.value = s.value + 1;
```



Semaphore Initialisation

- If semaphore initialised to 1
 - First call to wait goes through
 - Semaphore value goes from 1 to 0
 - Second call to wait() blocks
 - Semaphore value stays at zero, process goes on queue
 - If first process calls signal()
 - Semaphore value stays at 0
 - Wakes up second process
 - \Rightarrow Acts like a mutex lock
 - \Rightarrow Can use semaphores to implement locks This is called a **binary semaphore**



What happens if we initialise to 2?

Initial value of semaphore = number of processes that can be active at once:

- Sem_init(sem, 2)
 - value=2, L =[]

Consider multiple processes:

- Process1: wait(sem)
 - value=1,L=[], P1 executes
- Process2: wait(sem)
 - value=0, L[], P2 executes
- Process3: wait(sem)
 - value=0, L[P3], P3 blocks

```
struct semaphore {
         int value;
         queue L; // list of processes
wait (S) {
        if (s.value > 0)
                  s.value = s.value -1;
         else {
                  add this process to s.L;
                 block;
signal (S) {
         if (S.L != EMPTY) {
                  remove a process P from
S.L;
                  wakeup(P);
         } else
                  s.value = s.value + 1;
```



Uses of Semaphores

- Allocating a number of resources
 - Shared buffers: each time you want to access a buffer, call wait() => you are queued if there is no buffer available
- Counter is initialised to N = number of resources
- Called a counting semaphore
- Useful for conditional synchronisation
 - i.e., one process is waiting for another process to finish a piece of work before it continues



Semaphores for Mutual Exclusion

With semaphores:

• guaranteeing mutual exclusion for N processes is trivial

```
semaphore mutex = 1;
void Process(int i) {
   while (1) {
          // Non Critical Section Bit
          wait(mutex) // grab the mutual exclusion semaphore
          // Do the Critical Section Bit
          signal(mutex) //grab the mutual exclusion semaphore
int main () {
   cobegin {
           Process(1); Process(2);
```

Bounded Buffer Problem

- Producer-consumer problem
 - Buffer in memory
 - Finite size of N entries
 - A producer process inserts an entry into it
 - A consumer process removes an entry from it
- Processes are concurrent
 - We must use a synchronisation mechanism to control access to shared variables describing buffer state



Producer-Consumer Single Buffer

- Simplest case
 - Single producer process, single consumer process
 - Single shared buffer between the Producer and the Consumer
- Requirements
 - Consumer must wait for Producer to fill buffer
 - Producer must wait for Consumer to empty buffer (if filled)



Semaphores can be Hard to Use

- Complex patterns of resource usage
 - Cannot capture relationships with semaphores alone
 - Need extra state variables to record information
- \Rightarrow Produce buggy code that is hard to write
 - If one coder forgets to do V()/signal() after critical section, the whole system can deadlock



Monitors

- Need a higher level construct:
 - Groups the responsibility for correctness
 - Supports controlled access to shared data
- Monitors: an extension of the monolithic monitor used in OS to allocate memory.
 - A programming language construct that supports controlled access to shared data
 - Synchronisation code added by compiler, enforced at runtime (Less work for programmer!)
- Monitors keep track of <u>who</u> is allowed to access the shared data and <u>when</u> they can do it
- Monitors Encapsulate
 - Shared data structures
 - Procedures that operate on shared data
 - Synchronisation between concurrent processes that invoke these procedures



Detection and Protection of Deadlock



Requirements for Deadlock

All 4 conditions must hold for deadlock to occur:

- 1. Mutex: at least one held resource must be non-shareable
- 2. No pre-emption: resources cannot be pre-empted (no way to break priority or take a resource away once allocated
 - Locks have this property
- **3.** Hold and wait: there exists a process holding a resource and waiting for another resource
- **4. Circular wait**: there exists a set of processes P_1 , P_2 ,..., P_N such that P_1 is waiting for P_2 , P_2 is waiting for P_3 ,... and P_N is waiting for P_1

If only 3 conditions hold then:

• you can get starvation



 Make code more efficient, hence, we want them

Need to avoid circular wait

Sample Deadlock

- Acquire locks in different orders
- Example:

Process 1	Process 2
lock(x);	lock(y);
A=A+10;	B=B+10;
lock(y);	lock(x);
B=B+20;	A=A+20;
A=A+30;	B=B+30;
unlock(y);	unlock(x);
unlock (x)	unlock(y);



Sample Deadlock – Check for Deadlock

• Example:

Process 1	Process 2
lock(x);	lock(y);
A=A+10;	B=B+10;
lock(y);	lock(x);
B=B+20;	A=A+20;
A=A+30;	B=B+30;
unlock(y);	unlock(x);
unlock (x)	unlock(y);

- 1. Do we have mutex?
- 2. Do we have hold and wait?
- 3. Do we have no pre-emption?
- 4. Do we have a circular wait?



Deadlocks without Locks

- Deadlocks can occur for any resource or any time a process waits, e.g.
 - Messages: waiting to receive a message before sending a message
 - i.e., hold and wait
 - Allocation: waiting to allocate resources before freeing another resource
 - i.e., hold and wait



Testing for Real World Deadlock

- How do cars do it?
 - We have rules to avoid it/recover from it
 - E.g.,
 - Never block an intersection
 - Must backup if you find yourself doing so (a form of pre-emption)
- Why does this work?
 - Breaks a "hold and wait"
 - Shows that refusing to hold a resource while waiting for something else is a key element of avoiding deadlock



Dealing With Deadlocks: Ignore

- Strategy 1: Ignore the fact that deadlocks may occur
 - Write code, put nothing special in
 - Sometimes you have to re-boot the system
 - May work for some unimportant or simple applications where deadlock does not occur often
- Quite a common approach!



Dealing with Deadlock: Reactive

- Periodically check for evidence of deadlock
 - E.g., add timeouts to acquiring a lock, if you timeout then it implies deadlock has occurred and you must do something
- Recovery actions:
 - Blue screen of death and reboot computer
 - Pick a process to terminate, e.g., a low priority one
 - Only works with some types of applications
 - May corrupt data so process needs to do clean-up when terminated



Dealing with Deadlock: Proactive

- Prevent 1 of the 4 necessary conditions for deadlock
- No single approach is appropriate (or possible) for all circumstances
 - Need techniques for each of the four conditions



Solution 1: No Mutual Exclusion

- Make resources shareable
- Example: read-only files
 - No need for locks
- Example: per-process variables
 - Counters per process instead of global counter
- Not possible for all bits of code/applications



Fixing our Sample Deadlock Code

Original code:	
Process 1	Process 2
lock(x);	lock(y);
A=A+10;	B=B+10;
lock(y);	lock(x);
B=B+20;	A=A+20;
A=A+30;	B=B+30;
unlock(y);	unlock(x);
unlock (x)	unlock(y);



Solution 1: Avoid Hold and Wait

Only request a resource when you have none

• I.e., release a resource before requesting another

Process 1	Process 2
lock(x);	lock(y);
A=A+10;	B=B+10;
unlock(x);	unlock(y);
lock(y);	lock(x);
B=B+20;	A=A+20;
unlock(y);	unlock(x);
lock(x);	lock(y);
A=A+30;	B=B+30;
unlock (x);	unlock(y);

Never hold x when want y:

- Works in many cases
- But you cannot maintain a relationship between x and y



Original code:	
Process 1	Process 2
lock(x);	lock(y);
A=A+10;	B=B+10;
lock(y);	lock(x);
B=B+20;	A=A+20;
A=A+30;	B=B+30;
unlock(y);	unlock(x);
unlock (x)	unlock(y);

Solution 2: Avoid Hold and Wait

Acquire all resources at once

- E.g., use a single lock to protect all data
- Having fewer locks is called lock coarsening

			<u> </u>
Process 1	Process 2	lock(x);	lock(y);
lock(z);	lock(z);	A=A+10;	B=B+10;
		lock(y);	lock(x);
A=A+10;	B=B+10;		· • • •
B=B+20;	A=A+20;	A=A+30;	B=B+30;
A=A+30;	B=B+30;	unlock(y);	unlock(x);
unlock (z);	unlock(z);	unlock (x)	unlock(y);
B=B+20; A=A+30;	A=A+20; B=B+30;	unlock(y);	unlock(x);

Problem: low concurrency

- All processes accessing A or B cannot run at the same time
- Even if they don't access both variables!

Process 2

Original code:

Process 1

Prevention: Adding Pre-emption

- Locks cannot be pre-empted but other pre-emptive methods are possible
- Strategy: pre-empt resources
- Example:
 - If process A is waiting for a resource held by process B, then take the resource from B and give it to A
- Problems:
 - Only works for some resources
 - E.g., CPU and memory (using virtual memory)
 - Not possible if a resource cannot be saved and restored
 - Otherwise, taking away a lock causes issues
 - Also, there is an overhead cost for "pre-empt" and "restore"



Prevention: Eliminate Circular Waits

Strategy: Impose an ordering on resources

• Processes must acquire the highest ranked resource first

Process 1	Process 2	Original code:	
lock(x);	lock(x);	Process 1	Process 2
lock(y);	lock(y);	lock(x);	lock(y);
A=A+10;	B=B+10;	A=A+10;	B=B+10;
B=B+20;	A=A+20;	lock(y);	lock(x);
A = A+B;	A=A+B;	B=B+20;	A=A+20;
unlock(y);	unlock(x);	A=A+30;	B=B+30;
A=A+30;	B=B+30;	unlock(y);	unlock(x);
unlock (x);	unlock(y);	unlock (x)	unlock(y);

Locks are always acquired in the same order

- We have eliminated the circular dependency
- Means you will need to lock a resource for a longer period



Preventing Circular Wait: Lock Hierarchy

Strategy: Define an ordering of <u>all</u> locks in your program

• Always acquire locks in that order

Problem: Sometimes you do not know the order that the events will be used

• Recall our code for transferring money from 1 account to another

```
transfer(acc1, acc2, amount){
    acquire(acc1.a_lock);
    acquire(acc2.a_lock);
    acc1.balance -= amount;
    acc2.balance += amount;
    release(acc1.a_lock);
    release(acc2.a_lock);
```

How do we know the global order?

Need extra code to find this out and then acquire them In the right order

≻It could get worse



Lock Hierarchy Problems

Solution 1.1:

• Order based on hash code of variable

Problem?

• What about same account with the same hash code?

transfer(acc1, acc2, amount) { acc1Hash = hashCode(acc1);acc2Hash = hashCode(acc2);if (acc1Hash < acc2Hash) { acquire(acc1.a lock); acquire(acc2.a lock); acc1.balance -= amount; acc2.balance += amount; release(acc1.a lock); release(acc2.a lock); }else{ acquire(acc2.a lock); acquire(acc1.a lock); acc1.balance -= amount; acc2.balance += amount; release(acc2.a lock); release(acc1.a lock);



Lock Hierarchy Problems

Solution 1.2:

- Order based on hash code of the locked variable
- Deal with ties

lock tieLock; // a global lock

```
transfer(acc1, acc2, amount) {
    acc1Hash = hashCode(acc1);
    acc2Hash = hashCode(acc2);
    if (acc1Hash < acc2Hash) {
         acquire(acc1.a lock);
        acquire(acc2.a lock);
         acc1.balance -= amount;
         acc2.balance += amount;
        release(acc1.a lock);
        release(acc2.a lock);
    }else if (acc1Hash > acc2Hash) {
        acquire(acc2.a lock);
        acquire(acc1.a lock);
         acc1.balance -= amount;
        acc2.balance += amount;
        release(acc2.a lock);
        release(acc1.a lock);
    } else {
        acquire(tieLock);
         acquire(acc1.a lock);
        acquire(acc2.a lock);
         acc1.balance -= amount;
         acc2.balance += amount;
        release(acc1.a lock);
        release(acc2.a lock);
        release(tieLock);
```



Extra Resources:

Mike Swift Concurrency videos:

<u>https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBRYU9uye8e-ZuWQMPBAoYA/videos</u>

