

# Review: Thread package API

- `tid thread_create (void (*fn) (void *), void *arg);`
  - Create a new thread that calls `fn` with `arg`
- `void thread_exit ();`
- `void thread_join (tid thread);`
- **The execution of multiple threads is interleaved**
- **Can have *non-preemptive threads*:**
  - One thread executes exclusively until it makes a blocking call
- **Or *preemptive threads*:**
  - May switch to another thread between any two instructions.
- **Using multiple CPUs is inherently preemptive**
  - Even if you don't take  $CPU_0$  away from thread  $T$ , another thread on  $CPU_1$  can execute "between" any two instructions of  $T$

# Program A

```
int flag1 = 0, flag2 = 0;

void p1 (void *ignored) {
    flag1 = 1;
    if (!flag2) { critical_section_1 (); }
}

void p2 (void *ignored) {
    flag2 = 1;
    if (!flag1) { critical_section_2 (); }
}

int main () {
    tid id = thread_create (p1, NULL);
    p2 ();
    thread_join (id);
}
```

Q: Can both critical sections run?

# Program B

```
int data = 0, ready = 0;

void p1 (void *ignored) {
    data = 2000;
    ready = 1;
}

void p2 (void *ignored) {
    while (!ready)
        ;
    use (data);
}

int main () { ... }
```

Q: Can use be called with value 0?

# Program C

```
int a = 0, b = 0;

void p1 (void *ignored) {
    a = 1;
}

void p2 (void *ignored) {
    if (a == 1)
        b = 1;
}

void p3 (void *ignored) {
    if (b == 1)
        use (a);
}
```

Q: If p1-3 run concurrently, can use be called with value 0?

# Correct answers

# Correct answers

- **Program A: I don't know**

# Correct answers

- **Program A: I don't know**
- **Program B: I don't know**

# Correct answers

- Program A: I don't know
- Program B: I don't know
- Program C: I don't know
- Why don't we know?
  - It depends on what machine you use
  - If a system provides *sequential consistency*, then answers all No
  - But not all hardware provides sequential consistency
- Note: Examples, other content from [\[Adve & Gharachorloo\]](#)
- Another great reference: [Why Memory Barriers](#)



# Sequential Consistency

## Definition

*Sequential consistency*: The result of execution is as if all operations were executed in some sequential order, and the operations of each processor occurred in the order specified by the program.

– Lamport

- **Boils down to two requirements:**
  1. Maintaining *program order* on individual processors
  2. Ensuring *write atomicity*
- **Without SC (Sequential Consistency), multiple CPUs can be “worse”—i.e., less intuitive—than preemptive threads**
  - Result may not correspond to *any* instruction interleaving on 1 CPU
- **Why doesn't all hardware support sequential consistency?**

# SC thwarts hardware optimizations

- **Complicates write buffers**
  - E.g., read  $\text{flag}_n$  before  $\text{flag}_{(2-n)}$  written through in [Program A](#)
- **Can't re-order overlapping write operations**
  - Concurrent writes to different memory modules
  - Coalescing writes to same cache line
- **Complicates non-blocking reads**
  - E.g., speculatively prefetch  $\text{data}_a$  in [Program B](#)
- **Makes cache coherence more expensive**
  - Must delay write completion until invalidation/update ([Program B](#))
  - Can't allow overlapping updates if no globally visible order ([Program C](#))

# SC thwarts compiler optimizations

- **Code motion**
- **Caching value in register**
  - Collapse multiple loads/stores of same address into one operation
- **Common subexpression elimination**
  - Could cause memory location to be read fewer times
- **Loop blocking**
  - Re-arrange loops for better cache performance
- **Software pipelining**
  - Move instructions across iterations of a loop to overlap instruction latency with branch cost

# x86 consistency [intel 3a, §8.2]

- **x86 supports multiple consistency/caching models**
  - Memory Type Range Registers (MTRR) specify consistency for ranges of physical memory (e.g., frame buffer)
  - Page Attribute Table (PAT) allows control for each 4K page
- **Choices include:**
  - **WB:** Write-back caching (the default)
  - **WT:** Write-through caching (all writes go to memory)
  - **UC:** Uncacheable (for device memory)
  - **WC:** Write-combining – weak consistency & no caching (used for frame buffers, when sending a lot of data to GPU)
- **Some instructions have weaker consistency**
  - String instructions (written cache-lines can be re-ordered)
  - Special “non-temporal” store instructions (`movnt*`) that bypass cache and can be re-ordered with respect to other writes

# x86 WB consistency

- **Old x86s (e.g, 486, Pentium 1) had almost SC**
  - Exception: A read could finish before an earlier write to a different location
  - Which of Programs **A**, **B**, **C** might be affected?

# x86 WB consistency

- **Old x86s (e.g, 486, Pentium 1) had almost SC**
  - Exception: A read could finish before an earlier write to a different location
  - Which of Programs **A, B, C** might be affected? *Just A*
- **Newer x86s also let a CPU read its own writes early**

```
volatile int flag1;
```

```
int p1 (void)
```

```
{
```

```
    register int f, g;
```

```
    flag1 = 1;
```

```
    f = flag1;
```

```
    g = flag2;
```

```
    return 2*f + g;
```

```
}
```

```
volatile int flag2;
```

```
int p2 (void)
```

```
{
```

```
    register int f, g;
```

```
    flag2 = 1;
```

```
    f = flag2;
```

```
    g = flag1;
```

```
    return 2*f + g;
```

```
}
```

- E.g., *both* p1 and p2 can return 2:
- Older CPUs would wait at “f = ...” until store complete

# x86 atomicity

- **lock prefix makes a memory instruction atomic**
  - Usually locks bus for duration of instruction (expensive!)
  - Can avoid locking if memory already exclusively cached
  - All lock instructions totally ordered
  - Other memory instructions cannot be re-ordered with locked ones
- **xchg instruction is always locked (even without prefix)**
- **Special barrier (or “fence”) instructions can prevent re-ordering**
  - `lfence` – can’t be reordered with reads (or later writes)
  - `sfence` – can’t be reordered with writes  
(e.g., use after non-temporal stores, before setting a *ready* flag)
  - `mfence` – can’t be reordered with reads or writes

# Assuming sequential consistency

- Often we reason about concurrent code assuming SC
- But for low-level code, **know your memory model!**
  - May need to sprinkle barrier/fence instructions into your source
  - Or may need compiler barriers to restrict optimization
- For most code, avoid depending on memory model
  - Idea: If you obey certain rules ([discussed later](#))  
...system behavior should be indistinguishable from SC
- Let's for now say we have sequential consistency
- Example concurrent code: Producer/Consumer
  - `buffer` stores `BUFFER_SIZE` items
  - `count` is number of used slots
  - `out` is next empty buffer slot to fill (if any)
  - `in` is oldest filled slot to consume (if any)



```
void producer (void *ignored) {
    for (;;) {
        item *nextProduced = produce_item ();
        while (count == BUFFER_SIZE)
            /* do nothing */;
        buffer [in] = nextProduced;
        in = (in + 1) % BUFFER_SIZE;
        count++;
    }
}
```

```
void consumer (void *ignored) {
    for (;;) {
        while (count == 0)
            /* do nothing */;
        item *nextConsumed = buffer[out];
        out = (out + 1) % BUFFER_SIZE;
        count--;
        consume_item (nextConsumed);
    }
}
```

Q: What can go wrong in above threads (even with SC)?

# Data races

- `count` may have wrong value
- Possible implementation of `count++` and `count--`

`register ← count`

`register ← register + 1`

`count ← register`

`register ← count`

`register ← register - 1`

`count ← register`

- Possible execution (count one less than correct):

`register ← count`

`register ← register + 1`

`count ← register`

`register ← count`

`register ← register - 1`

`count ← register`

# Data races (continued)

- **What about a single-instruction add?**
  - E.g., i386 allows single instruction `addl $1, _count`
  - So implement `count++/--` with one instruction
  - Now are we safe?

# Data races (continued)

- **What about a single-instruction add?**
  - E.g., i386 allows single instruction `addl $1, _count`
  - So implement `count++/--` with one instruction
  - Now are we safe?
- **Not atomic on multiprocessor! (operation  $\neq$  instruction)**
  - Will experience exact same race condition
  - Can potentially make atomic with `lock` prefix
  - But `lock` potentially very expensive
  - Compiler won't generate it, assumes you don't want penalty
- **Need solution to *critical section* problem**
  - Place `count++` and `count--` in critical section
  - Protect critical sections from concurrent execution

# Desired properties of solution

- **Mutual Exclusion**
  - Only one thread can be in critical section at a time
- **Progress**
  - Say no process currently in critical section (C.S.)
  - One of the processes trying to enter will eventually get in
- **Bounded waiting**
  - Once a thread  $T$  starts trying to enter the critical section, there is a bound on the number of times other threads get in
- **Note progress vs. bounded waiting**
  - If no thread can enter C.S., don't have progress
  - If thread  $A$  waiting to enter C.S. while  $B$  repeatedly leaves and re-enters C.S. *ad infinitum*, don't have bounded waiting

# Peterson's solution

- Still assuming sequential consistency
- Assume two threads,  $T_0$  and  $T_1$
- Variables
  - int not\_turn; // not this thread's turn to enter C.S.
  - bool wants[2]; // wants[i] indicates if  $T_i$  wants to enter C.S.
- Code:

```
for (;;) { /* assume i is thread number (0 or 1) */
    wants[i] = true;
    not_turn = i;
    while (wants[1-i] && not_turn == i)
        /* other thread wants in and not our turn, so loop */;
    Critical_section ();
    wants[i] = false;
    Remainder_section ();
}
```

# Does Peterson's solution work?

```
for (;;) { /* code in thread i */
    wants[i] = true;
    not_turn = i;
    while (wants[1-i] && not_turn == i)
        /* other thread wants in and not our turn, so loop */;
    Critical_section ();
    wants[i] = false;
    Remainder_section ();
}
```

- **Mutual exclusion – can't both be in C.S.**
  - Would mean `wants[0] == wants[1] == true`, so `not_turn` would have blocked one thread from C.S.
- **Progress – given demand, one thread can always enter C.S.**
  - If  $T_{1-i}$  doesn't want C.S., `wants[1-i] == false`, so  $T_i$  won't loop
  - If both threads want in, one thread is not the `not_turn` thread
- **Bounded waiting – similar argument to progress**
  - If  $T_i$  wants lock and  $T_{1-i}$  tries to re-enter,  $T_{1-i}$  will set `not_turn = 1 - i`, allowing  $T_i$  in

# Mutexes

- **Peterson expensive, only works for 2 processes**
  - Can generalize to  $n$ , but for some fixed  $n$
- **Must adapt to machine memory model if not SC**
  - If you need machine-specific barriers anyway, might as well take advantage of other instructions helpful for synchronization
- **Want to insulate programmer from implementing synchronization primitives**
- **Thread packages typically provide *mutexes*:**

```
void mutex_init (mutex_t *m, ...);  
void mutex_lock (mutex_t *m);  
int mutex_trylock (mutex_t *m);  
void mutex_unlock (mutex_t *m);
```

  - Only one thread acquires  $m$  at a time, others wait



# Thread API contract

- **All global data should be protected by a mutex!**
  - Global = accessed by more than one thread, at least one write
  - Exception is initialization, before exposed to other threads
  - This is the responsibility of the application writer
- **If you use mutexes properly, behavior should be indistinguishable from Sequential Consistency**
  - This is the responsibility of the threads package (& compiler)
  - Mutex is broken if you use properly and don't see SC
- **OS kernels also need synchronization**
  - Some mechanisms look like mutexes
  - But interrupts complicate things (incompatible w. mutexes)

# Same concept, many names

- **Most popular application-level thread API: Pthreads**

- Function names in this lecture all based on Pthreads
- Just add `pthread_` prefix
- E.g., `pthread_mutex_t`, `pthread_mutex_lock`, ...

- **Same abstraction in Pintos under different name**

```
struct lock;  
void lock_init (struct lock *);  
void lock_acquire (struct lock *);  
bool lock_try_acquire (struct lock *);  
void lock_release (struct lock *);
```

- **Extra Pintos feature:**

- Release checks that lock was acquired by same thread
- `bool lock_held_by_current_thread (struct lock *lock);`

# Improved producer

```
mutex_t mutex = MUTEX_INITIALIZER;

void producer (void *ignored) {
    for (;;) {
        item *nextProduced = produce_item ();

        mutex_lock (&mutex);
        while (count == BUFFER_SIZE) {
            mutex_unlock (&mutex); /* <--- Why? */
            thread_yield ();
            mutex_lock (&mutex);
        }

        buffer [in] = nextProduced;
        in = (in + 1) % BUFFER_SIZE;
        count++;
        mutex_unlock (&mutex);
    }
}
```

# Improved consumer

```
void consumer (void *ignored) {
    for (;;) {
        mutex_lock (&mutex);
        while (count == 0) {
            mutex_unlock (&mutex);
            thread_yield ();
            mutex_lock (&mutex);
        }

        item *nextConsumed = buffer[out];
        out = (out + 1) % BUFFER_SIZE;
        count--;
        mutex_unlock (&mutex);

        consume_item (nextConsumed);
    }
}
```

# Condition variables

- **Busy-waiting in application is a bad idea**
  - Consumes CPU even when a thread can't make progress
  - Unnecessarily slows other threads/processes or wastes power
- **Better to inform scheduler of which threads can run**
- **Typically done with *condition variables***
- `struct cond_t;` (`pthread_cond_t` or `condition` in Pintos)
- `void cond_init (cond_t *, ...);`
- `void cond_wait (cond_t *c, mutex_t *m);`
  - Atomically unlock `m` and sleep until `c` signaled
  - Then re-acquire `m` and resume executing
- `void cond_signal (cond_t *c);`  
`void cond_broadcast (cond_t *c);`
  - Wake one/all threads waiting on `c`

# Improved producer

```
mutex_t mutex = MUTEX_INITIALIZER;
cond_t nonempty = COND_INITIALIZER;
cond_t nonfull = COND_INITIALIZER;

void producer (void *ignored) {
    for (;;) {
        item *nextProduced = produce_item ();

        mutex_lock (&mutex);
        while (count == BUFFER_SIZE)
            cond_wait (&nonfull, &mutex);

        buffer [in] = nextProduced;
        in = (in + 1) % BUFFER_SIZE;
        count++;
        cond_signal (&nonempty);
        mutex_unlock (&mutex);
    }
}
```

# Improved consumer

```
void consumer (void *ignored) {
    for (;;) {
        mutex_lock (&mutex);
        while (count == 0)
            cond_wait (&nonempty, &mutex);

        item *nextConsumed = buffer[out];
        out = (out + 1) % BUFFER_SIZE;
        count--;
        cond_signal (&nonfull);
        mutex_unlock (&mutex);

        consume_item (nextConsumed);
    }
}
```

# Re-check conditions

- Always re-check condition on wake-up

```
while (count == 0) /* not if */  
    cond_wait (&nonempty, &mutex);
```

- Otherwise, breaks with spurious wakeup or two consumers
  - Start where Consumer 1 has mutex but buffer empty, then:

## Consumer 1

```
cond_wait (...);
```

## Consumer 2

```
mutex_lock (...);  
if (count == 0)  
    ⋮  
USE buffer[out] ...  
count--;  
mutex_unlock (...);
```

## Producer

```
mutex_lock (...);  
    ⋮  
count++;  
cond_signal (...);  
mutex_unlock (...);
```

USE buffer[out] ... ← No items in buffer



## Condition variables (continued)

- Why must `cond_wait` both release mutex & sleep?
- Why not separate mutexes and condition variables?

```
while (count == BUFFER_SIZE) {  
    mutex_unlock (&mutex);  
    cond_wait (&nonfull);  
    mutex_lock (&mutex);  
}
```

# Condition variables (continued)

- Why must `cond_wait` both release mutex & sleep?
- Why not separate mutexes and condition variables?

```
while (count == BUFFER_SIZE) {  
    mutex_unlock (&mutex);  
    cond_wait (&nonfull);  
    mutex_lock (&mutex);  
}
```

- Can end up stuck waiting when bad interleaving

## Producer

```
while (count == BUFFER_SIZE)  
    mutex_unlock (&mutex);  
  
cond_wait (&nonfull);
```

## Consumer

```
mutex_lock (&mutex);  
...  
count--;  
cond_signal (&nonfull);
```

- **Problem:** `cond_wait` & `cond_signal` do not commute

## Other thread package features

- Alerts – cause exception in a thread
- Timedwait – timeout on condition variable
- Shared locks – concurrent read accesses to data
- Thread priorities – control scheduling policy
  - Mutex attributes allow various forms of *priority donation* (will be familiar concept after lab 1)
- Thread-specific global data
  - Need for things like `errno`
- **Different synchronization primitives** (in a few slides)

# Implementing synchronization

- **User-visible mutex is straight-forward data structure**

```
typedef struct mutex {  
    bool is_locked;           /* true if locked */  
    thread_id_t owner;       /* thread holding lock, if locked */  
    thread_list_t waiters;   /* threads waiting for lock */  
  
    lower_level_lock_t lk;   /* Protect above fields */  
};
```

- **Need lower-level lock lk for mutual exclusion**

- Internally, `mutex_*` functions bracket code with `lock(&mutex->lk) ... unlock(&mutex->lk)`
- Otherwise, data races! (E.g., two threads manipulating `waiters`)

- **How to implement `lower_level_lock_t`?**

- Could use Peterson's algorithm, but typically a bad idea (too slow and don't know maximum number of threads)

# Approach #1: Disable interrupts

- **Only for apps with  $n : 1$  threads (1 kthread)**
  - Cannot take advantage of multiprocessors
  - But sometimes most efficient solution for uniprocessors
- **Typical setup: periodic timer signal caught by thread scheduler**
- **Have per-thread “do not interrupt” (DNI) bit**
- `lock (lk)`: **sets thread’s DNI bit**
- **If timer interrupt arrives**
  - Check interrupted thread’s DNI bit
  - If DNI clear, preempt current thread
  - If DNI set, set “interrupted” (I) bit & resume current thread
- `unlock (lk)`: **clears DNI bit *and* checks I bit**
  - If I bit is set, immediately yields the CPU

## Approach #2: Spinlocks

- Most CPUs support atomic read-[modify-]write
- **Example:** `int test_and_set (int *lockp);`
  - Atomically sets `*lockp = 1` and returns old value
  - Special instruction – can't be implemented in portable C (<C11)
- **Use this instruction to implement *spinlocks*:**

```
#define lock(lockp) while (test_and_set (lockp))
#define trylock(lockp) (test_and_set (lockp) == 0)
#define unlock(lockp) *lockp = 0
```
- **Spinlocks implement mutex's `lower_level_lock_t`**
- **Can you use spinlocks instead of mutexes?**
  - Wastes CPU, especially if thread holding lock not running
  - Mutex functions have short C.S., less likely to be preempted
  - On multiprocessor, sometimes good to spin for a bit, then yield

# Synchronization on x86

- **Test-and-set only one possible atomic instruction**
- **x86 `xchg` instruction, exchanges reg with mem**
  - Can use to implement test-and-set

```
_test_and_set:
    movl    4(%esp), %edx # %edx = lockp
    movl    $1, %eax      # %eax = 1
    xchgl   %eax, (%edx)  # swap (%eax, *lockp)
    ret
```

- **CPU locks memory system around read and write**
  - Recall `xchgl` always acts like it has implicit `lock` prefix
  - Prevents other uses of the bus (e.g., DMA)
- **Usually runs at memory bus speed, not CPU speed**
  - Much slower than cached read/buffered write

# Synchronization on alpha

- `ldl_l` – load locked

`stl_c` – store conditional (reg ← 0 if not atomic w. `ldl_l`)

```
_test_and_set:
```

```
    ldq_l   v0, 0(a0)           # v0 = *lockp (LOCKED)
    bne     v0, 1f              # if (v0) return
    addq    zero, 1, v0         # v0 = 1
    stq_c   v0, 0(a0)           # *lockp = v0 (CONDITIONAL)
    beq     v0, _test_and_set   # if (failed) try again
    mb
    addq    zero, zero, v0      # return 0
1:
    ret     zero, (ra), 1
```

- **Note: Alpha memory consistency weaker than x86**

- Want all CPUs to think memory accesses in C.S. happened after acquiring lock, before releasing
- *Memory barrier* instruction, `mb`, ensures this, like `mfence` on x86



# Kernel Synchronization

- **Should kernel use locks or disable interrupts?**
- **Old UNIX had non-preemptive threads, no mutexes**
  - Interface designed for single CPU, so `count++` etc. not data race
  - ...*Unless* memory shared with an interrupt handler

```
int x = splhigh (); /* Disable interrupts */
/* touch data shared with interrupt handler ... */
splx (x);          /* Restore previous state */
```

- C.f., `intr_disable / intr_set_level` in Pintos, and `preempt_disable / preempt_enable` in linux
- **Used arbitrary pointers like condition variables**
  - `int [t]sleep (void *ident, int priority, ...)`;  
put thread to sleep; will wake up at `priority` (`~cond_wait`)
  - `int wakeup (void *ident)`;  
wake up all threads sleeping on `ident` (`~cond_broadcast`)

# Kernel locks

- **Nowadays, should design for multiprocessors**
  - Even if first version of OS is for uniprocessor
  - Someday may want multiple CPUs and need *preemptive* threads
  - That's why Pintos uses sleeping locks  
(*sleeping* locks means mutexes, as opposed to *spinlocks*)
- **Multiprocessor performance needs fine-grained locks**
  - Want to be able to call into the kernel on multiple CPUs
- **If kernel has locks, should it ever disable interrupts?**

# Kernel locks

- **Nowadays, should design for multiprocessors**
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  - Someday may want multiple CPUs and need *preemptive* threads
  - That's why Pintos uses sleeping locks  
(*sleeping* locks means mutexes, as opposed to *spinlocks*)
- **Multiprocessor performance needs fine-grained locks**
  - Want to be able to call into the kernel on multiple CPUs
- **If kernel has locks, should it ever disable interrupts?**
  - Yes! Can't sleep in interrupt handler, so can't wait for lock
  - So even modern OSes have support for disabling interrupts
  - Often uses **DNI** trick when cheaper than masking interrupts in hardware

# Semaphores [Dijkstra]

- **A Semaphore is initialized with an integer  $N$**
- **Provides two functions:**
  - `sem_wait (S)` (originally called  $P$ , called `sema_down` in Pintos)
  - `sem_signal (S)` (originally called  $V$ , called `sema_up` in Pintos)
- **Guarantees `sem_wait` will return only  $N$  more times than `sem_signal` called**
  - Example: If  $N == 1$ , then semaphore acts as a mutex with `sem_wait` as lock and `sem_signal` as unlock
- **Semaphores give elegant solutions to some problems**
- **Linux primarily uses semaphores for sleeping locks**
  - `sema_init, down_interruptible, up, ...`
  - Also weird reader-writer semaphores, `rw_semaphore` [Love]

# Semaphore producer/consumer

- Initialize full to 0 (block consumer when buffer empty)
- Initialize empty to  $N$  (block producer when queue full)

```
void producer (void *ignored) {
    for (;;) {
        item *nextProduced = produce_item ();
        sem_wait (&empty);
        buffer [in] = nextProduced;
        in = (in + 1) % BUFFER_SIZE;
        sem_signal (&full);
    }
}

void consumer (void *ignored) {
    for (;;) {
        sem_wait (&full);
        item *nextConsumed = buffer[out];
        out = (out + 1) % BUFFER_SIZE;
        sem_signal (&empty);
        consume_item (nextConsumed);
    }
}
```

# Various synchronization mechanisms

- **Other more esoteric primitives you might encounter**
  - Plan 9 used a **rendezvous** mechanism
  - Haskell uses MVars (like channels of depth 1)
- **Many synchronization mechanisms equally expressive**
  - Pintos implements locks, condition vars using semaphores
  - Could have been vice versa
  - Can even implement condition variables in terms of mutexes
- **Why base everything around semaphore implementation?**
  - High-level answer: no particularly good reason
  - If you want only one mechanism, can't be condition variables (interface fundamentally requires mutexes)
  - Unlike condition variables, `sem_wait` and `sem_signal` commute, eliminating **problem of condition variables w/o mutexes**