15-213

"The course that gives CMU its Zip!"

Synchronization
December 4, 2007

Topics

- Synchronizing with semaphores
- Races and deadlocks
- Thread safety and reentrancy

badcnt.c: An Improperly Synchronized Threaded Program

```
/* shared */
volatile unsigned int cnt = 0;
#define NITERS 100000000

int main() {
    pthread_t tid1, tid2;
    Pthread_create(&tid1, NULL,
                   count, NULL);
    Pthread_create(&tid2, NULL,
                   count, NULL);

    Pthread_join(tid1, NULL);
    Pthread_join(tid2, NULL);

    if (cnt != (unsigned)NITERS*2)
        printf("BOOM! cnt=%d\n",
               cnt);
    else
        printf("OK cnt=%d\n",
               cnt);
}
```

```
/* thread routine */
void *count(void *arg) {
    int i;
    for (i=0; i<NITERS; i++)
        cnt++;
    return NULL;
}
```

```
linux> ./badcnt
BOOM! cnt=198841183

linux> ./badcnt
BOOM! cnt=198261601

linux> ./badcnt
BOOM! cnt=198059774
```

cnt should be equal to 200,000,000. What went wrong?!

Assembly Code for Counter Loop

C code for counter loop

```
for (i=0; i<NITERS; i++)
    cnt++;
```

Corresponding asm code

```
.L9:
        movl -4(%ebp),%eax
        cmpl $99999999,%eax
        jle .L12
        jmp .L10
.L12:
        movl cnt,%eax        # Load
        leal 1(%eax),%edx    # Update
        movl %edx,cnt        # Store
.L11:
        movl -4(%ebp),%eax
        leal 1(%eax),%edx
        movl %edx,-4(%ebp)
        jmp .L9
.L10:
```

Head (H_i)

Load cnt (L_i)

Update cnt (U_i)

Store cnt (S_i)

Tail (T_i)

Concurrent Execution

Key Idea: In general, any sequentially consistent interleaving is possible, but some are incorrect!

- I_i denotes that thread i executes instruction I
- $\%eax_i$ is the contents of %eax in thread i's context

I (thread)	$instr_i$	$\%eax_1$	$\%eax_2$	cnt
1	H_1	-	-	0
1	L_1	0	-	0
1	U_1	1	-	0
1	S_1	1	-	1
2	H_2	-	-	1
2	L_2	-	1	1
2	U_2	-	2	1
2	S_2	-	2	2
2	T_2	-	2	2
1	T_1	1	-	2

OK

Concurrent Execution (cont)

Incorrect ordering: two threads increment the counter, but the result is 1 instead of 2

I (thread)	$instr_i$	$\%eax_1$	$\%eax_2$	cnt
1	H_1	-	-	0
1	L_1	0	-	0
1	U_1	1	-	0
2	H_2	-	-	0
2	L_2	-	0	0
1	S_1	1	-	1
1	T_1	1	-	1
2	U_2	-	1	1
2	S_2	-	1	1
2	T_2	-	1	1

Oops!

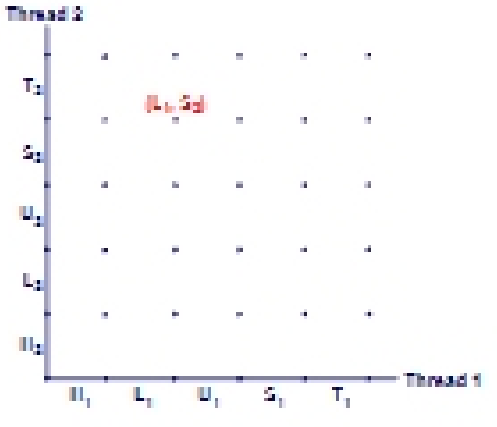
Concurrent Execution (cont)

How about this ordering?

I (thread)	$instr_i$	$\%eax_1$	$\%eax_2$	cnt
1	H_1			
1	L_1			
2	H_2			
2	L_2			
2	U_2			
2	S_2			
1	U_1			
1	S_1			
1	T_1			
2	T_2			

We can clarify our understanding of concurrent execution with the help of the *progress graph*

Progress Graphs



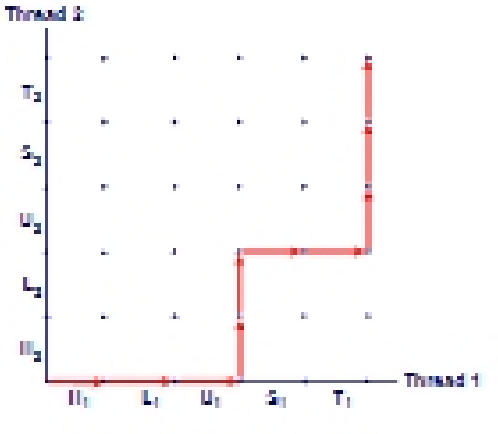
A *progress graph* depicts the discrete execution state space of concurrent threads.

Each axis corresponds to the sequential order of instructions in a thread.

Each point corresponds to a possible execution state $(Inst_1, Inst_2)$.

E.g., (L_1, S_2) denotes state where thread 1 has completed L_1 and thread 2 has completed S_2.

Trajectories in Progress Graphs

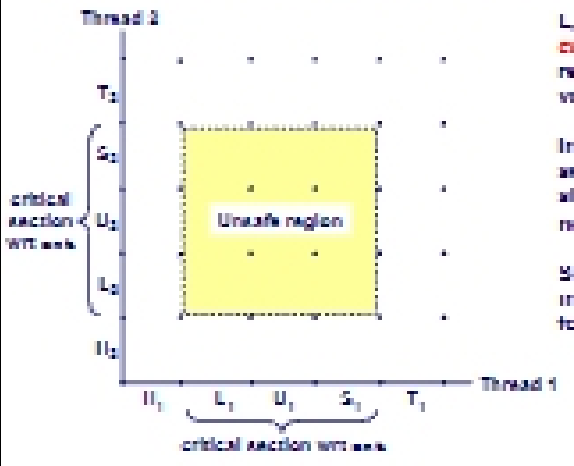


A *trajectory* is a sequence of legal state transitions that describes one possible concurrent execution of the threads.

Example:

H1, L1, U1, H2, L2, S1, T1, U2, S2, T2

Critical Sections and Unsafe Regions

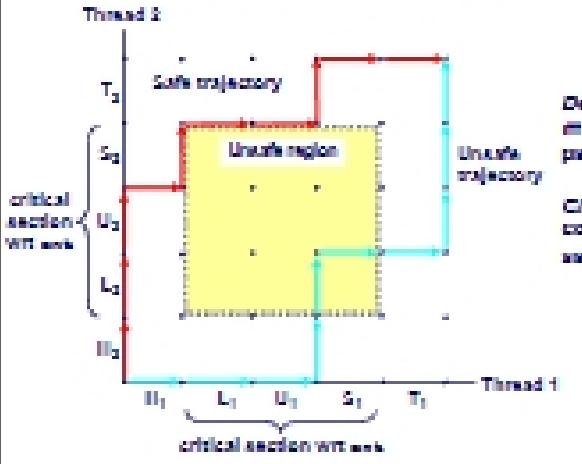


L_i, U_i and S_i form a *critical section* with respect to the shared variable cnt.

Instructions in critical sections (wrt to some shared variable) should not be interleaved.

Sets of states where such interleaving occurs form *unsafe regions*.

Safe and Unsafe Trajectories



Def: A trajectory is *safe* iff it doesn't touch any part of an unsafe region.

Claim: A trajectory is correct (wrt cnt) iff it is safe.

Semaphores

Question: How can we guarantee a safe trajectory?

- We must *synchronize* the threads so that they never enter an unsafe state.

Classic solution: Dijkstra's P and V operations on *semaphores*.

- *semaphore:* non-negative integer synchronization variable.
  - P(s): [while (s == 0) wait(); s--;]
    - Dutch for "Proberen" (test)
  - V(s): [s++;]
    - Dutch for "Verhogen" (increment)
- OS guarantees that operations between brackets [ ] are executed indivisibly.
  - Only one P or V operation at a time can modify s.
  - When while loop in P terminates, only that P can decrement s.

Semaphore invariant: (s >= 0)

Safe Sharing with Semaphores

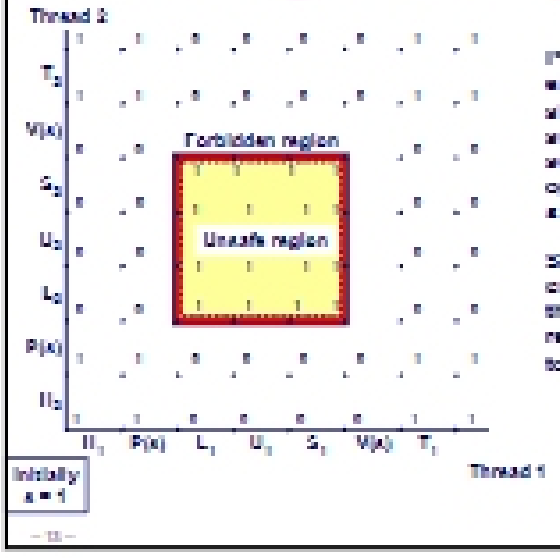
Here is how we would use P and V operations to synchronize the threads that update cnt.

```
/* Semaphore s is initially 1 */

/* Thread routine */
void *count(void *arg)
{
    int i;

    for (i=0; i<NITERS; i++) {
        P(s);
        cnt++;
        V(s);
    }
    return NULL;
}
```

Safe Sharing With Semaphores



Provide mutually exclusive access to shared variable by surrounding critical section with P and V operations on semaphore s (initially set to 1).

Semaphore invariant creates a forbidden region that encloses unsafe region and is never touched by any trajectory.

Wrappers on POSIX Semaphores

```
/* Initialize semaphore sem to value */
/* pshared=0 if thread, pshared=1 if process */
void Sem_init(sem_t *sem, int pshared, unsigned int value) {
    if (sem_init(sem, pshared, value) < 0)
        unix_error("Sem_init");
}

/* P operation on semaphore sem */
void P(sem_t *sem) {
    if (sem_wait(sem))
        unix_error("P");
}

/* V operation on semaphore sem */
void V(sem_t *sem) {
    if (sem_post(sem))
        unix_error("V");
}
```


Sharing With POSIX Semaphores

```
/* properly synced semaphore program */
#include "csapp.h"
#define NITERS 100000000

volatile unsigned int cnt;
sem_t sem;          /* semaphore */

int main() {
    pthread_t tid1, tid2;

    Sem_init(&sem, 0, 1); /* sem=1 */

    /* create 2 threads and wait */
    ...

    if (cnt != (unsigned)NITERS*2)
        printf("BOOM! cnt=%d\n", cnt);
    else
        printf("OK cnt=%d\n", cnt);
    exit(0);
}
```

```
/* thread routine */
void *count(void *arg)
{
    int i;

    for (i=0; i<NITERS; i++) {
        P(&sem);
        cnt++;
        V(&sem);
    }
    return NULL;
}
```


Races

A race occurs when the correctness of the program depends on one thread reaching point x before another thread reaches point y.

```
/* a threaded program with a race */
int main() {
    pthread_t tid[N];
    int i;
    for (i = 0; i < N; i++)
        Pthread_create(&tid[i], NULL, thread, &i);
    for (i = 0; i < N; i++)
        Pthread_join(tid[i], NULL);
    exit(0);
}

/* thread routine */
void *thread(void *vargp) {
    int myid = *((int *)vargp);
    printf("Hello from thread %d\n", myid);
    return NULL;
}
```


Deadlock

- Processes wait for condition that will never be true

Typical Scenario

- Processes 1 and 2 needs recources A and B to proceed
- Process 1 aquires A, waits for B
- Process 2 aquires B, waits for A
- Both will wait forever!

Deadlocking With POSIX Semaphores

```
int main()
{
    pthread_t tid[2];
    Sem_init(&mutex[0], 0, 1);  /* mutex[0] = 1 */
    Sem_init(&mutex[1], 0, 1);  /* mutex[1] = 1 */
    Pthread_create(&tid[0], NULL, count, (void*) 0);
    Pthread_create(&tid[1], NULL, count, (void*) 1);
    Pthread_join(tid[0], NULL);
    Pthread_join(tid[1], NULL);
    printf("cnt=%d\n", cnt);
    exit(0);
}
```

```
void *count(void *vargp)
{
    int i;
    int id = (int) vargp;
    for (i = 0; i < NITERS; i++) {
        P(&mutex[id]); P(&mutex[1-id]);
        cnt++;
        V(&mutex[id]); V(&mutex[1-id]);
    }
    return NULL;
}
```

Tid[0]:	Tid[1]:
P(s0);	P(s1);
P(s1);	P(s0);
cnt++;	cnt++;
V(s0);	V(s1);
V(s1);	V(s0);