

# 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 & 2.5

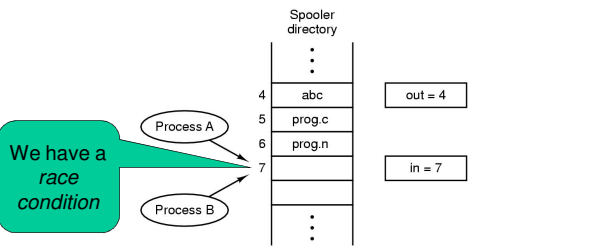
# Concurrency Example

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

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

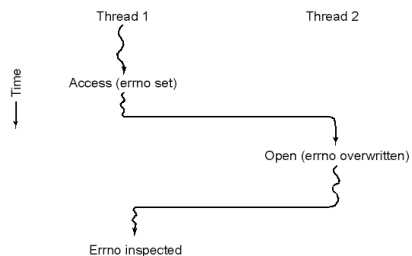
void decrement ()
{
  int t;
  t = count;
  t = t - 1;
  count = t;
}
```

# Inter-Thread and Process Communication



Two processes want to access shared memory at same time

# Making Single-Threaded Code Multithreaded

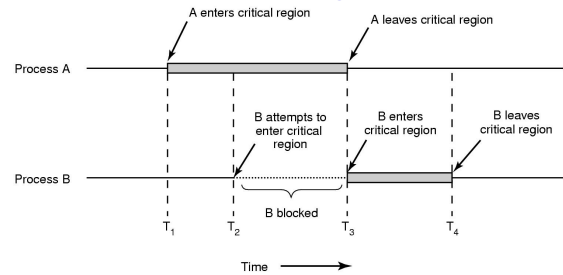


Conflicts between threads over the use of a global variable

## 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,...

## Critical Regions



Mutual exclusion using critical regions

## 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.

## Example critical regions

```

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

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

void init(void)
{
    head = NULL;
}

void 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

```

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

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

## Example critical regions

```

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

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

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

- Critical sections

## Critical Regions Solutions

Also called *critical sections*

Conditions required of any solution to the critical region problem

- **Mutual Exclusion:**
  - No two processes simultaneously in critical region
- **No assumptions made about speeds or numbers of CPUs**
- **Progress**
  - No process running outside its critical region may block another process
- **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

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

while(TRUE) {
    while(lock == 1);
    lock = 1;
    critical();
    lock = 0;
    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.

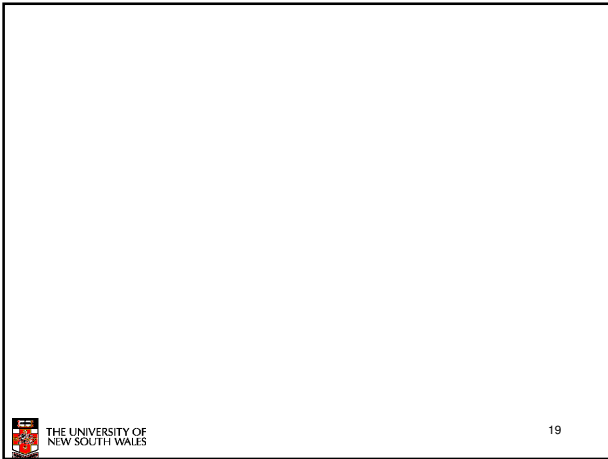
## Mutual Exclusion by Taking Turns

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

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

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

## Peterson's Solution

- See the textbook

## 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

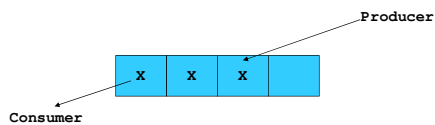
- Pros
  - Simple (easy to show it's correct)
  - Available at user-level
    - To any number of processors
    - To implement any number of lock variables
- Cons
  - Busy waits (also termed a *spin lock*)
    - Consumes CPU
    - Livelock in the presence of priorities
      - If a low priority process has the lock and a high priority process attempts to get it, the high priority process will busy-wait forever.
    - 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 the event happens, the event generator (another process) calls wakeup to unblock the sleeping process.

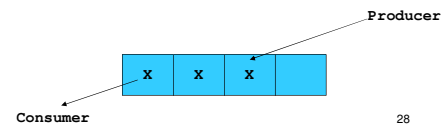
## The Producer-Consumer Problem

- Also called the *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
    - can 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
    - Can 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



## Pseudo-code for producer and consumer

```

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);
    }
}
    
```

## Problems

```

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 buffer

## Problems

```

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?

```

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

```

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

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

```

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  $\Rightarrow$  count will never change

## 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

```
wait(S):
    S.count--;
    if (S.count < 0) {
        add this process to S.L;
        sleep;
    }

signal(S):
    S.count++;
    if (S.count <= 0) {
        remove a process P from S.L;
        wakeup(P);
    }
```

- Each primitive is atomic

## 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:

```

Pi           Pj
⋮             ⋮
A             wait(flag)
signal(flag)  B
```

## 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

```
#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

```

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

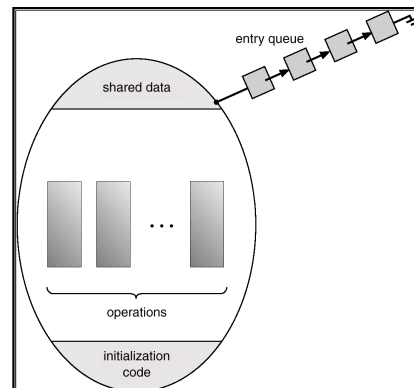
- Semaphores can be used to solve a variety of concurrency problems
- However, programming with them can be error-prone
  - E.g. must *signal* for every *wait* for mutexes
    - Too many, or too few signals or waits, or signals and waits in the wrong order, can have catastrophic results

## 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

```

monitor example
  integer i;
  condition c;

  procedure producer();
  .
  .
  .
end;

  procedure consumer();
  .
  .
  .
end;
end monitor;

```

Example of a monitor

## Simple example

```

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.



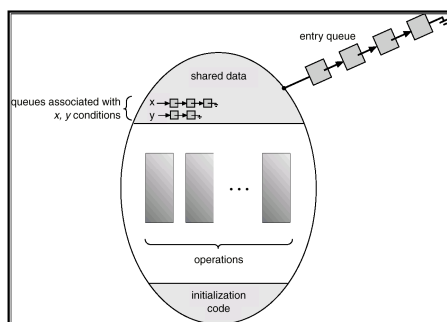
## How do we block waiting for an event?

- 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 **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



## Monitors

```

monitor PproducerConsumer
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;
            PproducerConsumer.insert(item);
        end;
end;
procedure consumer;
begin
    while true do
        begin
            item = PproducerConsumer.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

```

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

- Functions to acquire and release them

```

void lock_acquire(struct lock *);
void lock_release(struct lock *);
    
```

## Example use of locks

```
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

```
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

<p><b>Non-solution</b></p> <pre>lock_acquire(c_lock) if (count == 0)     sleep(); remove_item(); count--; lock_release(c_lock);</pre>	<p><b>Solution</b></p> <pre>lock_acquire(c_lock) while (count == 0)     cv_wait(c_cv, c_lock); remove_item(); count--; lock_release(c_lock);</pre>
---	--

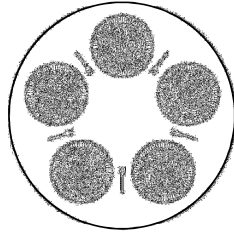
## A Producer-Consumer Solution Using OS/161 CVs

```
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++;
        if (count == 1)
            cv_signal(empty,l);
        lock_release(l)
    }
}

con() {
    while(TRUE) {
        lock_acquire(l)
        while (count == 0)
            cv_wait(empty,l);
        item = remove_item();
        count--;
        if (count == N-1)
            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) { /* repeat forever */
        think(); /* philosopher is thinking */
        take_forks(i); /* acquire two forks or block */
        eat(); /* yum-yum, spaghetti */
        put_forks(i); /* put both forks back on table */
    }
}
```



Solution to dining philosophers problem (part 1)

## Dining Philosophers

```
#define N 5 /* number of philosophers */

void philosopher(int i) /* i: philosopher number, from 0 to 4 */
{
    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

```
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 */
    try_to_acquire_2_forks(i); /* try to acquire 2 forks */
    up(&mutex); /* exit critical region */
}

void put_forks(int i) /* i: philosopher number, from 0 to N-1 */
{
    down(&mutex); /* enter critical region */
    state[i] = THINKING; /* philosopher i has finished eating */
    state[LEFT] = EATING; /* state of left neighbor's state */
    state[RIGHT] = EATING; /* state of right neighbor's state */
    up(&mutex); /* exit critical region */
}

void main() /* i is philosopher number, from 0 to N-1 */
{
    state = { HUNGRY, HUNGRY, HUNGRY, HUNGRY, HUNGRY };
    mutex = EATING;
}

/* End of file */
```



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

```
/* Reads the characters
   characters[0..N-1],
   characters[0] = '\0',
   N = 5.
   */
void reader(void)
{
    while (!feof(stdin)) {
        char c;
        if (scanf("%c", &c) != EOF)
            putchar(c);
        else
            break;
    }
}

/* Writes the characters
   characters[0..N-1],
   characters[0] = '\0',
   N = 5.
   */
void writer(void)
{
    while (!feof(stdin)) {
        char c;
        if (scanf("%c", &c) != EOF)
            putchar(c);
        else
            break;
    }
}
```



A solution to the readers and writers problem