CIS 631
Parallel Processing

Lecture 9: Shared Memory Parallel Programming

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Acknowledgements

Portions of the lectures slides were adopted from:

- I. Foster, “Designing and Building Parallel Programs,” 1995
- Vijay Pai, COMP 422, “Parallel Programming,” Rice University, 2002
- John Mellor-Crummey, COMP 422, “Parallel Programming,” Rice University, 2010
- A. Grama, A. Gupta, G. Karypis, and V. Kumar, “Introduction to Parallel Computing,” 2003
Outline

- Shared memory parallelism and programming
- Process-based vs. thread-based programming
- Pthreads programming
Shared Memory Multiprocessors

- All processes share the same **physical memory** space
- Processes generally do not share **virtual memory** space

How to program for parallel execution?

Diagram:

- Shared Physical Memory
- Processes P1, P2, P3, ..., Pn
- VM backing store
Shared Address Space Programming Taxonomy

- Process model
  - Each process’s data is private, but can create shared space
  - Example: Linux shared memory segments

- Lightweight process (LWP) / thread model
  - Virtual memory is global, shared between LWP / threads
  - Example: Pthreads, Cilk (lazy, lightweight threads)

- Language-based model
  - Threads have shared/private data, built on runtime system
  - Example: OpenMP, Java

- Global address space (for distributed memory)
  - Language or library supported
Shared Memory Programming – IPC (Really!?)

- Multiple processes can run in parallel concurrently
- Multiple processes can be used in a parallel execution
- How?
  - Inter-process communication (IPC)
    - Sockets
  - Message passing (MPI)
    - IPC
    - Memory mapping implementation
  - Through file system (yucky, but possible)
- Effectively programming as a multi-computer system
- BUT, get advantage of shared file system, devices, ... !!!
Shared Memory Programming – Process

- Shared memory parallel programming possible only if processes can access same virtual memory space (some)
- One way is to use OS VM address sharing mechanisms
  - Linux (shm) memory mapping and synchronization
  - Incur overheads of using OS support
    - Less than going through IPC and network interfaces though!

Why might you use this?
Shared Memory Programming – Multithreading

- Process-level parallel programming via virtual memory space sharing suffers from overheads
  - Processes are heavy-weight and cost more to switch
  - Interaction with OS mechanisms not very clean
- Desire way to:
  - Create lighter-weight units of computation
  - Program light-weight computation interaction
- Must be able to address shared data directly
  - Object $x$ is the same object $x$ no matter which computation unit references it
  - The virtual memory space (or some portion) is shared
Multi-threading

- Creation of “threads of execution” that share process VM

- Threads inherit process’s VM address space
- All global data AND instructions are shared
- Thread-private data possible
  - Through memory allocation and local variables
Multi-threading: Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages

- Light-weight computation
- Fast thread switching
- Shared data through memory addressing
- Synchronization support through shared memory
- Low overhead
- User has control over threads of execution

Disadvantages

- User has control over threads of execution and memory
- Prone to concurrent programming (synchronization) errors
- Performance of memory system may be harder to optimize
Shared Memory Parallel Programming

- What does the user have to do?
  - Decide how to decompose computation into parallel parts
  - Create (and destroy) threads to support decomposition
  - Add synchronization to satisfy dependences

- In some sense, similar to message passing programming
  - Think distributed memory, then program share memory

- Execution on a shared memory multiprocessor
  - OS can run threads on available processors
  - Threads run concurrently and can run in parallel
  - Cache coherency kicks in to support consistency model

- Synchronization programming is the hard part!
What’s a thread?

- Control perspective
  - A thread is a single stream of control in a program
  - A thread can execute an instruction stream

- State perspective
  - A thread embodies a state of execution
  - It contains an instruction pointer, a stack, registers, …

- “Thread of execution”
  - Control plus state

- Threads inherit from parent process
  - Virtual address space, file descriptors, …
  - Threads are peers, only have parent relationship to process
General Thread Structure

- Typically, a thread is the execution of a piece of code
  - Represents a portion of the program (light-weight)
  - Given a well-defined entry point (e.g., routine)
  - Inherits process’ symbol table (e.g., to get to libraries)

- Task-based parallelism
  - Parallel parts form separate procedures or functions
  - Kick off thread with specific routine
  - Kick off thread with a common routine and then specialize

- Data-based parallelism
  - Invoke threads to work on different data
  - Automatic with shared memory support
Why threads?

- Portable, widely-available programming model
  - Requires OS support, but practically all OSes do
- Easier to program (some say)
- Efficiencies in scheduling
  - Versus processes (Why?)
- Efficiencies in latency hiding
  - I/O, communication (How?)
- More dynamic concurrency
- Requires code to be thread-safe
POSIX Pthreads

- POSIX standard multi-threading interface
  - For general multi-threaded concurrent programming
  - Largely independent across implementations
  - Broadly supported on different platforms
  - Common target for library and language implementation

- Provides primitives for
  - Thread creation and management
  - Synchronization

- We will only look at a subset of Pthreads
- See webpage for links to Pthreads programming
Thread Creation

```c
#include <pthread.h>
int pthread_create(
    pthread_t *thread_id,
    const pthread_attr_t *attribute,
    void (*)(*thread_function) (void *),
    void *arg);
```

- **thread_id**
  - thread’s unique identifier
- **attribute**
  - contain details on scheduling policy, priority, stack, ...
- **thread_function**
  - function to be run in parallel (entry point)
- **arg**
  - arguments for function `func`
**Example of Thread Creation**

```c
void *func(void *arg) {
    int *I=arg;
    ...
}

void main()
{
    int X;
    pthread_t id;
    ...
    pthread_create(&id, NULL, func, &X);
    ...
}
```
**Pthread Termination**

```c
void pthread_exit(void *status)
```

- Terminates the currently running thread
- Implicitly called when function called in `pthread_create` returns
Thread Joining

```c
int pthread_join(
    pthread_t thread_id,
    void ***status);
```

- Waits for thread `thread_id` to terminate
  - Either by returning
  - Or by calling `pthread_exit()`
- Status receives the return value or the value given as argument to `pthread_exit()`
**Thread Joining Example**

```c
void *func(void *){
    ...
}

pthread_t    id;
int          X;
...

pthread_create(&id, NULL, func, &X);
...

pthread_join(id, NULL);
...
```

Diagram:
- `main()`
  - `pthread_create(func)`
  - `func()`
    - `pthread_join(id)`
  - `pthread_exit()`
General Program Structure

- Encapsulate parallel parts in functions
- Use function arguments to parameterize thread behavior
- Call `pthread_create()` with the function
- Call `pthread_join()` for each thread created
- Need to take care to make program “thread safe”
Matrix Multiply

- \( A \times B = C \)
- \( A[i,:] \cdot B[:,j] = C[i,j] \)

```
for( i=0; i<n; i++ )
  for( j=0; j<n; j++ ) {
    c[i][j] = 0.0;
    for( k=0; k<n; k++ )
      c[i][j] += a[i][k]*b[k][j];
  }
```
Parallel Matrix Multiply

- All i- or j-iterations can be run in parallel
- If we have p processors, n/p rows to each processor
- Corresponds to partitioning i-loop

\[ A \times B = C \]
Matrix Multiply: Parallel Part

```c
void mmult(void* s)
{
    int slice = (int) s;
    int from = (slice*n)/p;
    int to = ((slice+1)*n)/p;
    for(i=from; i<to; i++)
        for(j=0; j<n; j++) {
            c[i][j] = 0.0;
            for(k=0; k<n; k++)
                c[i][j] += a[i][k]*b[k][j];
        }
}
```
**Matrix Multiply: Main**

```c
int main()
{
    pthread_t thrd[p];

    for( i=0; i<p; i++ )
        pthread_create(&thrd[i], NULL, mmult,(void*) i);

    for( i=0; i<p; i++ )
        pthread_join(thrd[i], NULL);
}
```
Pthread Process Management

- **pthread_create()**
  - Creates a parallel thread executing a given function
  - Passes function arguments
  - Returns thread identifier

- **pthread_exit()**
  - Terminates thread.

- **pthread_join()**
  - Waits for particular thread to terminate
Pthreads Synchronization

- Create/exit/join
  - Provide some coarse form of synchronization
  - “Fork-join” parallelism
  - Requires thread creation/destruction
- Need for finer-grain synchronization
  - Mutex locks
  - Condition variables
Pthreads "Hello World"

```c
#include <pthread.h>
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
#include <assert.h>

#define NUM_THREADS 5

void *TaskCode(void *argument)
{
    int tid;
    tid = *(int *) argument;
    printf("Hello World! It's me, thread %d!\n", tid);

    /* optionally: insert more useful stuff here */

    return NULL;
}

int main(void)
{
    pthread_t threads[NUM_THREADS];
    int thread_args[NUM_THREADS];
    int rc, i;

    /* create all threads */
    for (i=0; i<NUM_THREADS; ++i) {
        thread_args[i] = i;
        printf("In main: creating thread %d\n", i);
        rc = pthread_create(&threads[i], NULL, TaskCode, (void *) &thread_args[i]);
        assert(0 == rc);
    }

    /* wait for all threads to complete */
    for (i=0; i<NUM_THREADS; ++i) {
        rc = pthread_join(threads[i], NULL);
        assert(0 == rc);
    }

    exit(EXIT_SUCCESS);
}
```
Mutex Locks – Create, Destroy

- Creates a new mutex lock `mutex`
  ```c
  pthread_mutex_init(
      pthread_mutex_t * mutex,
      const pthread_mutex_attr *attr);
  ```

- Destroys the mutex specified by `mutex`.
  ```c
  pthread_mutex_destroy(
      pthread_mutex_t *mutex);
  ```
Mutex Locks – Lock

- Tries to acquire the lock specified by mutex
  
  ```c
  pthread_mutex_lock(
      pthread_mutex_t *mutex)
  ```

- If mutex is already locked
  - Calling thread blocks until mutex is unlocked

- If mutex is not locked
  - Mutex is locked and calling thread returned

- Mutually exclusive
Mutex Locks – Unlock

- Unlock mutex lock

  ```c
  pthread_mutex_unlock(
      pthread_mutex_t *mutex);
  ```

- If calling thread has mutex currently locked
  - Mutex will be unlocked
  - If other threads are blocked waiting on this mutex
    - one will unblock and acquire mutex
    - which one is determined by the scheduler
Use of Mutex Locks

- Pthreads provides only exclusive locks
- Other systems allow other types of locks
  - Shared-read, exclusive-write locks
- Critical sections
  - Code sections only to be executed by one thread
- Applications
  - Update of shared variables
  - Queues
  - Stacks
- Problem is that mutex locks can be inefficient
  - Excessive polling
**Condition Variables**

- Condition variables are objects for thread synchronization.
- Allows a thread to block itself until specified data reaches a predefined state.
- A condition variable is associated with a predicate.
  - When predicate become true, the condition variable is used to signal thread(s) waiting on the condition.
- A condition variable always has an associated mutex.
- A thread locks the mutex and tests the predicate.
  - If not true, threads waits on condition variable.
- A blocked thread is released on a signal.
  - It then acquires the mutex before resuming.
Condition variables – Init, Destroy

- Creates a new condition variable \texttt{cond}
  
  \begin{verbatim}
  pthread_cond_init(
      pthread_cond_t *cond,
      pthread_cond_attr *attr)
  \end{verbatim}

- Destroys the condition variable \texttt{cond}
  
  \begin{verbatim}
  pthread_cond_destroy(
      pthread_cond_t *cond)
  \end{verbatim}
Condition Variables – Wait

- Wait on cond
  
  ```c
  pthread_cond_wait(
      pthread_cond_t *cond,
      pthread_mutex_t *mutex)
  ```

- Blocks the calling thread
- Unlocks the mutex on success
Condition Variables – Signal

- Unblocks one thread waiting on cond
  
  `pthread_cond_signal`
  
  `pthread_cond_t *cond`

- Which one is determined by scheduler
- If no thread waiting, then signal is a no-op
Condition Variables – Broadcast

- Unblocks all threads waiting on cond

  ```c
  pthread_cond_broadcast(
      pthread_cond_t *cond)
  ```

- If no thread waiting, then broadcast is a no-op
Use of Condition Variables

- To implement signal-wait synchronization
- Be careful
  - A signal is “forgotten” if there is no corresponding wait that has already happened.
**PIPE Example**

- Send picture images into a pipeline
- Transformations performed at each pipeline stage
- Separate flag for each picture image

```c
P1: for( i=0; i<num_pics; i++ ) {
    int_pic_1[i] = trans1( in_pic );
    signal( event_1_2[i] );
}

P2: for( i=0; i<num_pics; i++ ) {
    wait( event_1_2[i] );
    int_pic_2[i] = trans2( int_pic_1[i] );
    signal( event_2_3[i] );
}
```
PIPE Using Pthreads

- Replace by Pthreads condition variable wait/signal
  - Will not work
  - Signals before a wait are forgotten
  - Need to remember a signal
- Create a signal semaphore

```c
semaphore_signal(i) {
    pthread_mutex_lock(&mutex_rem[i]);
    arrived[i] = 1;
    pthread_cond_signal(&cond[i]);
    pthread_mutex_unlock(&mutex_rem[i]);
}
```
PIPE Using Pthreads

```c
sempahore_wait(i) {
    pthreads_mutex_lock(&mutex_rem[i]);
    if( arrived[i] == 0 ) {
        pthreads_cond_wait(&cond[i],
                           mutex_rem
                           [i]);
    }
    arrived[i] = 0;
    pthreads_mutex_unlock(&mutex_rem[i]);
}
```
PIPE with Pthreads

P1:
for( i=0; i<num_pics, read(in_pic); i++ ) {
    int_pic_1[i] = trans1( in_pic );
    semaphore_signal( event_1_2[i] );
}

P2:
for( i=0; i<num_pics; i++ ) {
    semaphore_wait( event_1_2[i] );
    int_pic_2[i] = trans2( int_pic_1[i] );
    semaphore_signal( event_2_3[i] );
}
Note on Semaphores

- Many shared memory programming systems (other than Pthreads) have semaphores as basic primitive.
- If they do, you should use it, not construct it yourself.
- Implementation may be more efficient than what you can do yourself.
Reality Bites ...

- Thread create/exit/join is not so cheap
- More efficient if could have a parallel program where
  - Create/exit/join would happen rarely (once!)
  - Cheaper synchronization were used
- We need something that makes all threads wait
  - Barrier synchronization
Barrier Synchronization

- A wait at a barrier causes a thread to wait until all threads have performed a wait at the barrier.
- At that point, they all proceed.
Implementing Barriers in Pthreads

- Count the number of arrivals at the barrier
- Wait if this is not the last arrival
- Make everyone unblock if this is the last arrival
- Since the arrival count is a shared variable, enclose the whole operation in a mutex lock-unlock
Implementing Barriers in Pthreads

```c
void barrier()
{
    pthread_mutex_lock(&mutex_arr);
    arrived++;  
    if (arrived<N) {
        pthread_cond_wait(
                   &cond, &mutex_arr);
    }
    else {
        pthread_cond_broadcast(&cond);
        arrived=0;  /* next barrier */
    }
    pthread_mutex_unlock(&mutex_arr);
}
```
Note on Barriers

- Many shared memory programming systems (other than Pthreads) have barriers as basic primitive.
- If they do, you should use it, not construct it yourself.
- Implementation may be more efficient than what you can do yourself.
Busy Waiting

- Not an explicit part of the API
- Available in shared memory programming environment

Initially: flag = 0;

P1: produce data;
    flag = 1;

P2: while( !flag ) ;
    consume data;
Use of Busy Waiting

- On the surface, simple and efficient
- In general, not a recommended practice
- Often leads to messy and unreadable code
  - Blurs data/synchronization distinction
- On some architectures, may be inefficient
- May not even work as intended
  - Depending on consistency model
Private Data in Pthreads

- To make a variable private in Pthreads, you need to make an array out of it
- Index the array by thread identifier, which you can get by the pthreads_self() call
- Not very elegant or efficient
Other Primitives in Pthreads

- Set the attributes of a thread
- Set the attributes of a mutex lock
- Set scheduling parameters
Next Class

☐ Shared memory parallel programming
☐ OpenMP