CS162
Operating Systems and Systems Programming
Lecture 3

Concurrency and Thread Dispatching

September 7th, 2011

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http://inst.eecs.berkeley.edu/~cs162

Review: Execution Stack Example

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  .     A(1);
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```

- Stack holds function arguments, return address
- Permits recursive execution
- Crucial to modern languages

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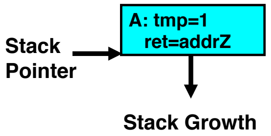

Stack Pointer

A: tmp=1
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Stack Growth

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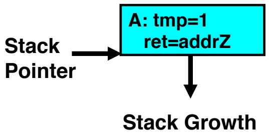

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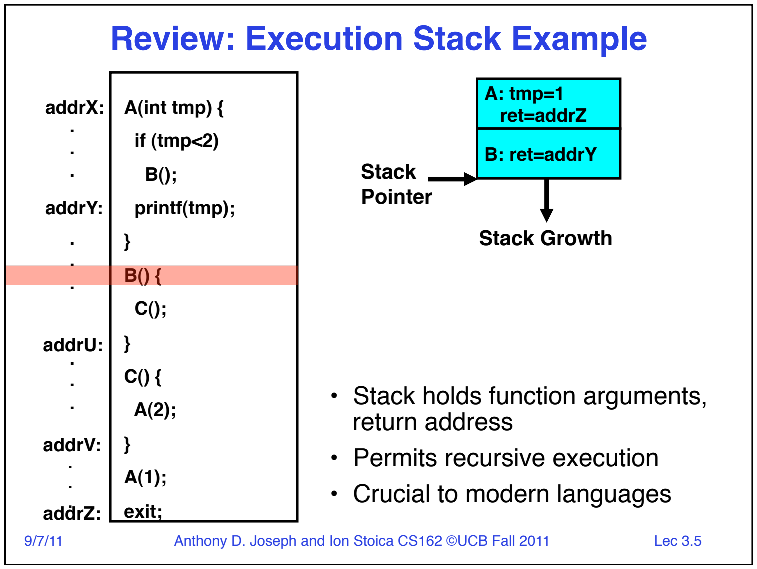

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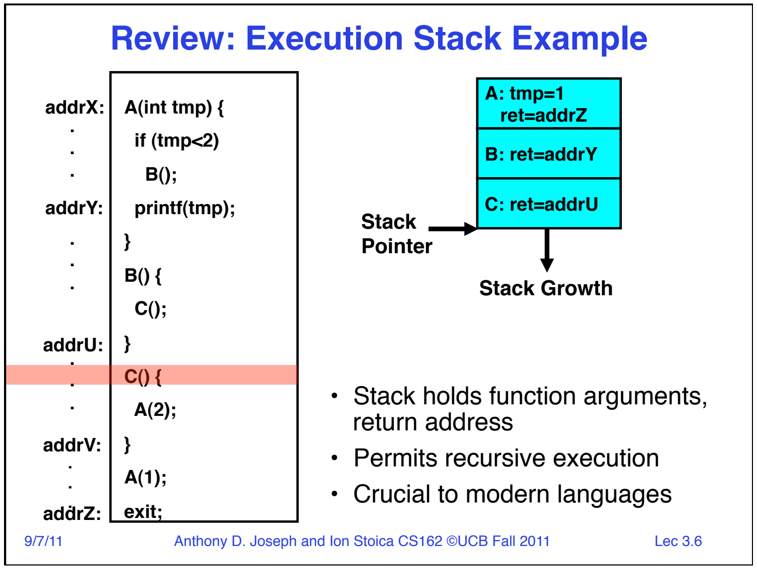

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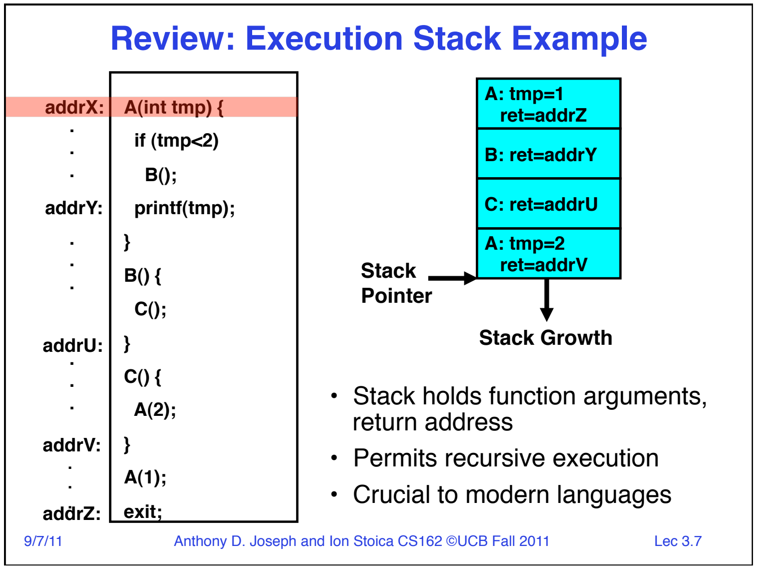

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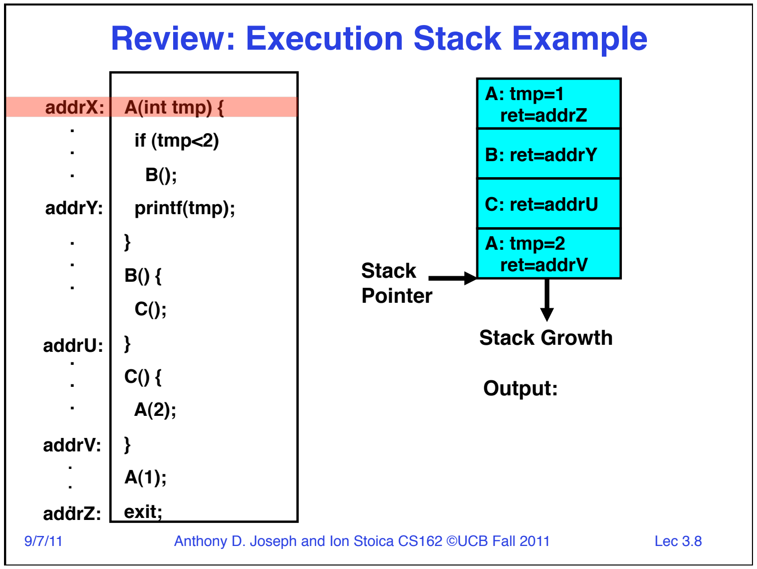

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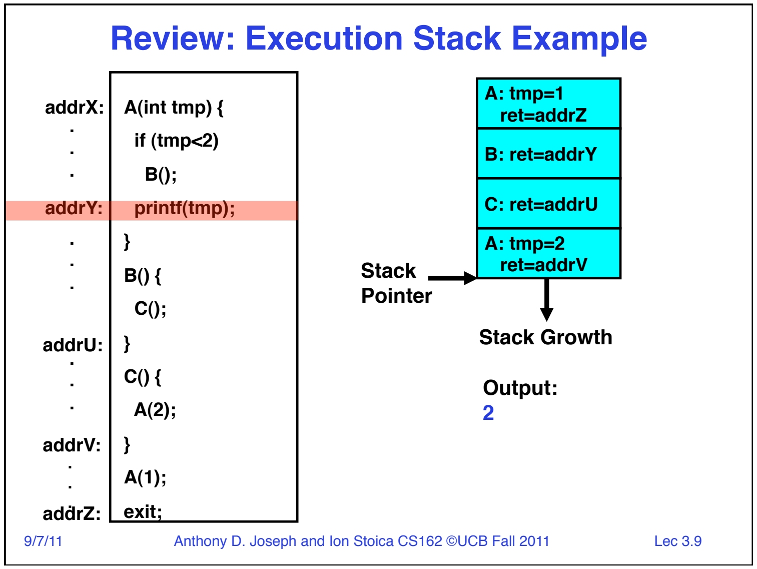

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A: tmp=1
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B: ret=addrY

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A: tmp=2
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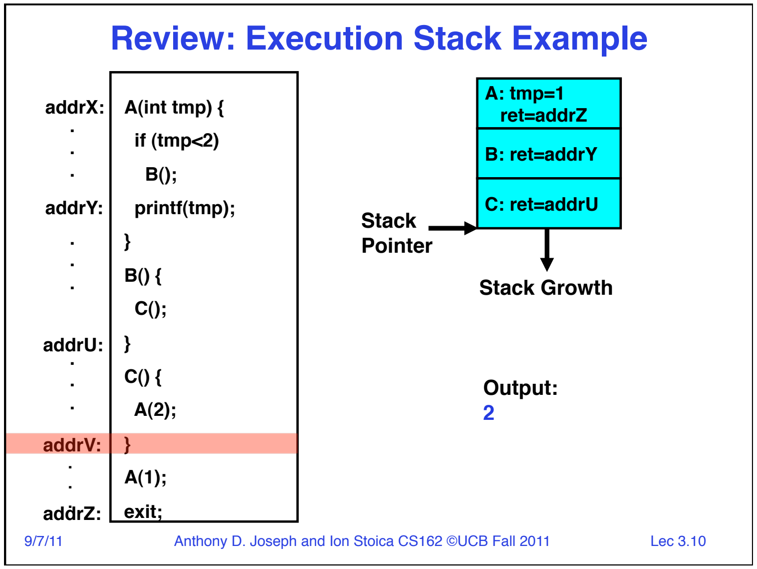
Stack Pointer

Stack Growth

Output:
2



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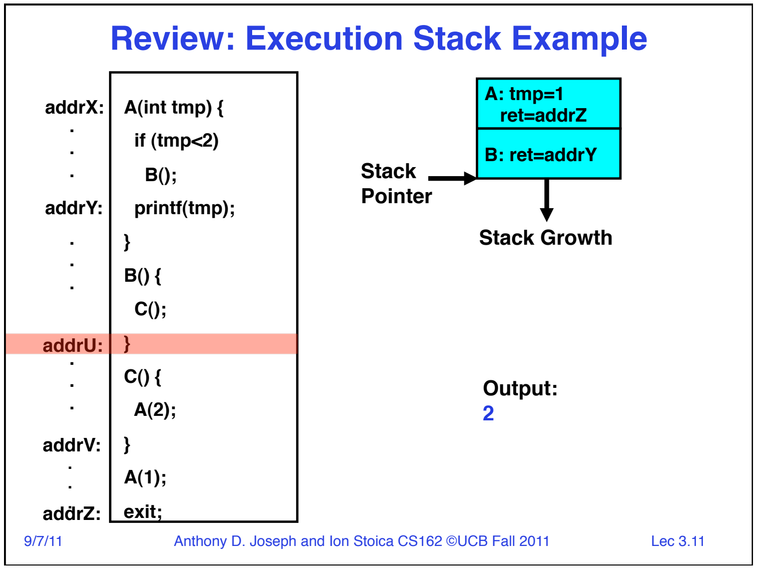

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Stack Pointer

Stack Growth

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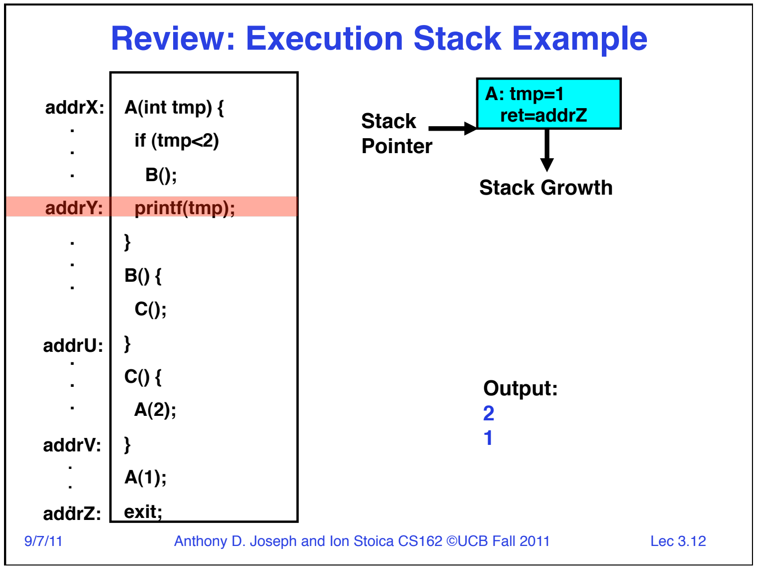

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Output:
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Goals for Today

- Thread Dispatching
- Cooperating Threads
- Concurrency examples
- Need for synchronization

Note: Some slides and/or pictures in the following are adapted from slides ©2005 Silberschatz, Galvin, and Gagne. Many slides generated from lecture notes by Kubiatowicz.

Single-Threaded Example

- Imagine the following C program:

```
main() {
    ComputePI("pi.txt");
    PrintClassList("clist.text");
}
```

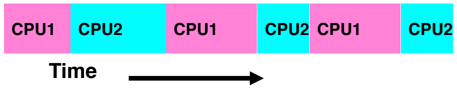
- What is the behavior here?
  – Program would never print out class list
  – Why? ComputePI would never finish

Use of Threads

- Version of program with Threads:

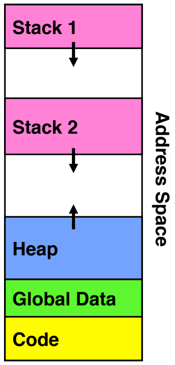
```
main() {
    CreateThread(ComputePI("pi.txt"));
    CreateThread(PrintClassList("clist.text"));
}
```

- What does "CreateThread" do?
  – Start independent thread running given procedure
- What is the behavior here?
  – Now, you would actually see the class list
  – This *should* behave as if there are two separate CPUs



Memory Footprint of Two-Thread Example

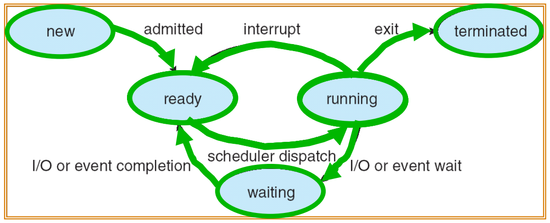
- If we stopped this program and examined it with a debugger, we would see
  - Two sets of CPU registers
  - Two sets of Stacks
- Questions:
  - How do we position stacks relative to each other?
  - What maximum size should we choose for the stacks?
  - What happens if threads violate this?
  - How might you catch violations?



Per Thread State

- Each Thread has a *Thread Control Block* (TCB)
  - Execution State: CPU registers, program counter, pointer to stack
  - Scheduling info: State, priority, CPU time
  - Various Pointers (for implementing scheduling queues)
  - Pointer to enclosing process? (PCB)?
  - Etc (add stuff as you find a need)
- OS Keeps track of TCBs in protected memory
  - In Array, or Linked List, or …

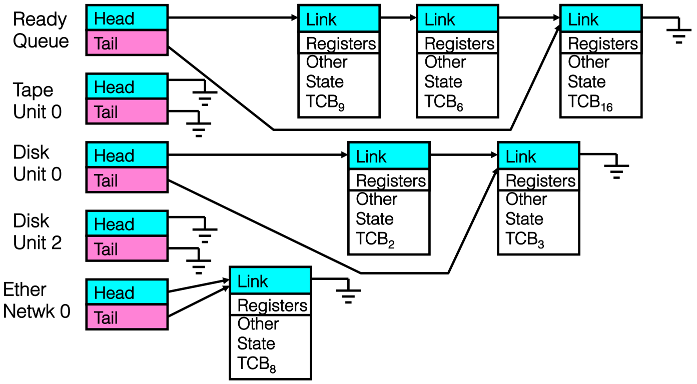
Lifecycle of a Thread (or Process)



- As a thread executes, it changes state:
  - new: The thread is being created
  - ready: The thread is waiting to run
  - running: Instructions are being executed
  - waiting: Thread waiting for some event to occur
  - terminated: The thread has finished execution
- "Active" threads are represented by their TCBs
  - TCBs organized into queues based on their state

Ready Queue And Various I/O Device Queues

- Thread not running ⇒ TCB is in some scheduler queue
  - Separate queue for each device/signal/condition
  - Each queue can have a different scheduler policy



Dispatch Loop

- Conceptually, the dispatching loop of the operating system looks as follows:

```
Loop {
   RunThread();
   ChooseNextThread();
   SaveStateOfCPU(curTCB);
   LoadStateOfCPU(newTCB);
}
```

- This is an *infinite* loop
  - One could argue that this is all that the OS does

Running a thread

Consider first portion: `RunThread()`

- How do I run a thread?
  - Load its state (registers, PC, stack pointer) into CPU
  - Load environment (virtual memory space, etc)
  - Jump to the PC
- How does the dispatcher get control back?
  - Internal events: thread returns control voluntarily
  - External events: thread gets *preempted*

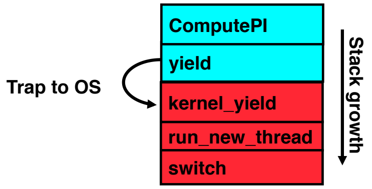
Review: Yielding through Internal Events

- Blocking on I/O
  - The act of requesting I/O implicitly yields the CPU
- Waiting on a “signal” from other thread
  - Thread asks to wait and thus yields the CPU
- Thread executes a `yield()`
  - Thread volunteers to give up CPU

```
computePI() {
   while(TRUE) {
      ComputeNextDigit();
      yield();
   }
}
```

  - Note that `yield()` must be called by programmer frequently enough!

Review: Stack for Yielding Thread

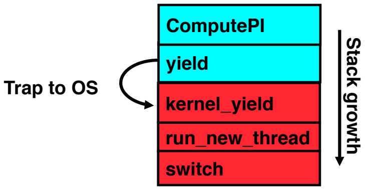


- How do we run a new thread?

```
run_new_thread() {
  newThread = PickNewThread();
  switch(curThread, newThread);
  ThreadHouseKeeping(); /* deallocates finished threads */
}
```

- Finished thread not killed right away. Why?
  - Move them in “exit/terminated” state
  - ThreadHouseKeeping() deallocates finished threads

Review: Stack for Yielding Thread



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```

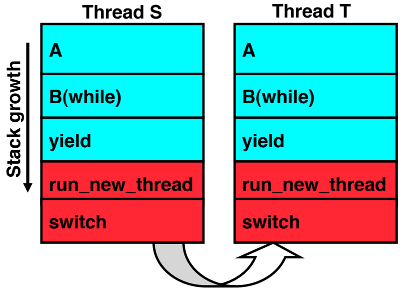
- How does dispatcher switch to a new thread?
  - Save anything next thread may trash: PC, regs, stack
  - Maintain isolation for each thread

Review: Two Thread Yield Example

- Consider the following code blocks:

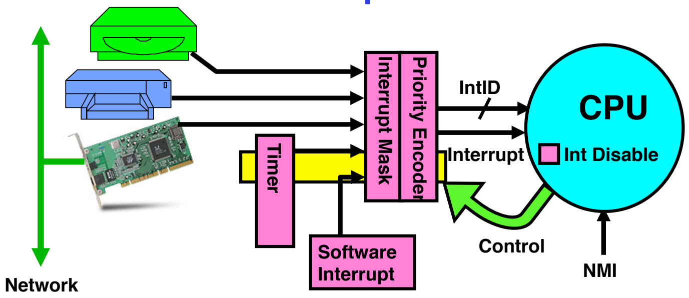
```
proc A() {
   B();

}
proc B() {
   while(TRUE) {
      yield();
   }
}
```



- Suppose we have 2 threads:
  - Threads S and T

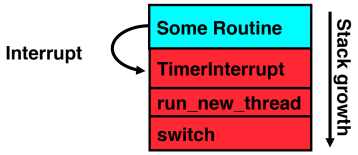
Detour: Interrupt Controller



- Interrupts invoked with interrupt lines from devices
- Interrupt controller chooses interrupt request to honor
  - Mask enables/disables interrupts
  - Priority encoder picks highest enabled interrupt
  - Software Interrupt Set/Cleared by Software
  - Interrupt identity specified with ID line
- CPU can disable all interrupts with internal flag
- Non-maskable interrupt line (NMI) can't be disabled

Review: Preemptive Multithreading

- Use the timer interrupt to force scheduling decisions



- Timer Interrupt routine:

```
TimerInterrupt() {
   DoPeriodicHouseKeeping();
   run_new_thread();
}
```

- This is often called preemptive multithreading, since threads are preempted for better scheduling
  - Solves problem of user who doesn't insert yield();

Announcements

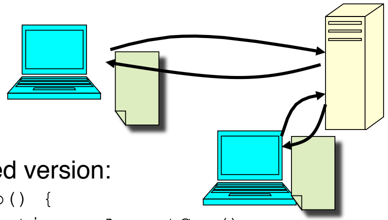
- Please sign-up **again**: **one** signup per group
  - http://www-inst.eecs.berkeley.edu/~cs162/fa11/section-signup.html
  - Deadline Thursday, noon (12pm)
  - If you don't have group please mail to cs162@cory.eecs.berkeley.edu
- Go Club @ Berkeley
  - Meets at Games of Berkeley (2151 Shattuck)
  - Mondays 6-9pm
  - Thursdays 7-10pm
- Waitlist is closed

5min Break

Why allow cooperating threads?

- People cooperate; computers help/enhance people's lives, so computers must cooperate
  - By analogy, the non-reproducibility/non-determinism of people is a notable problem for "carefully laid plans"
- Advantage 1: Share resources
  - One computer, many users
  - One bank balance, many ATMs
    - » What if ATMs were only updated at night?
  - Embedded systems (robot control: coordinate arm & hand)
- Advantage 2: Speedup
  - Overlap I/O and computation
  - Multiprocessors – chop up program into parallel pieces
- Advantage 3: Modularity
  - Chop large problem up into simpler pieces
    - » To compile, for instance, gcc calls cpp | cc1 | cc2 | as | ld
    - » Makes system easier to extend

Threaded Web Server



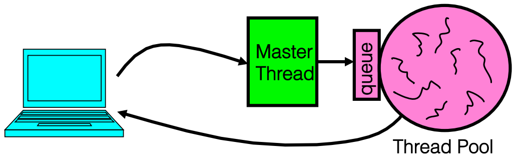
- Multithreaded version:

```
serverLoop() {
     connection = AcceptCon();
     ThreadCreate(ServiceWebPage(),connection);
}
```

- Advantages of threaded version:
  - Can share file caches kept in memory, results of CGI scripts, other things
  - Threads are *much* cheaper to create than processes, so this has a lower per-request overhead
- What if too many requests come in at once?

Thread Pools

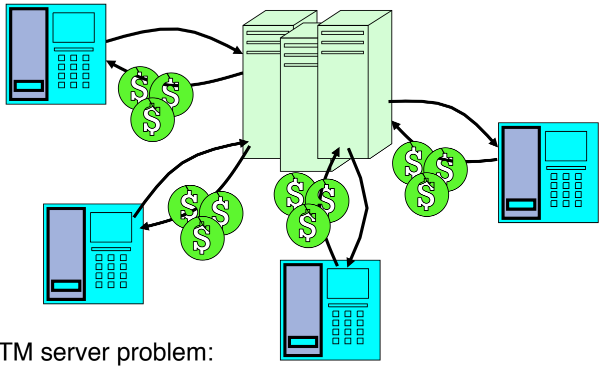
- Problem with previous version: Unbounded Threads
  - When web-site becomes too popular – throughput sinks
- Instead, allocate a bounded "pool" of threads, representing the maximum level of multiprogramming



```
master() {
   allocThreads(slave,queue);
   while(TRUE) {
      con=AcceptCon();
      Enqueue(queue,con);
      wakeUp(queue);
   }
}
```

```
slave(queue) {
   while(TRUE) {
      con=Dequeue(queue);
      if (con==null)
         sleepOn(queue);
      else
         ServiceWebPage(con);
   }
}
```

ATM Bank Server



- ATM server problem:
  - Service a set of requests
  - Do so without corrupting database
  - Don't hand out too much money

ATM bank server example

- Suppose we wanted to implement a server process to handle requests from an ATM network:

```
BankServer() {
   while (TRUE) {
      ReceiveRequest(&op, &acctId, &amount);
      ProcessRequest(op, acctId, amount);
   }
}
ProcessRequest(op, acctId, amount) {
   if (op == deposit) Deposit(acctId, amount);
   else if …
}
Deposit(acctId, amount) {
   acct = GetAccount(acctId); /* may use disk I/O */
   acct->balance += amount;
   StoreAccount(acct); /* Involves disk I/O */
}
```

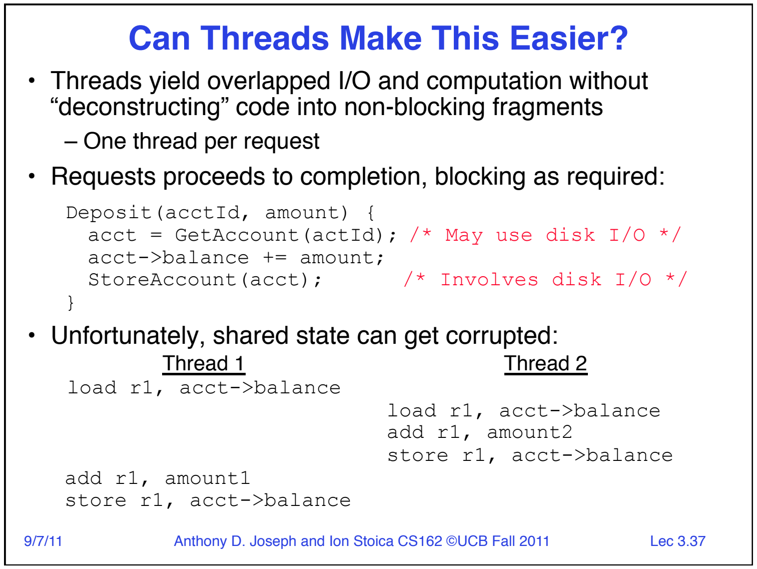
- How could we speed this up?
  - More than one request being processed at once
  - Event driven (overlap computation and I/O)
  - Multiple threads (multi-proc, or overlap comp and I/O)

Event Driven Version of ATM server

- Suppose we only had one CPU
  - Still like to overlap I/O with computation
  - Without threads, we would have to rewrite in event-driven style
- Example

```
BankServer() {
   while(TRUE) {
      event = WaitForNextEvent();
      if (event == ATMRequest)
         StartOnRequest();
      else if (event == AcctAvail)
         ContinueRequest();
      else if (event == AcctStored)
         FinishRequest();
   }
}
```

  - What if we missed a blocking I/O step?
  - What if we have to split code into hundreds of pieces which could be blocking?
  - This technique is used for graphical programming



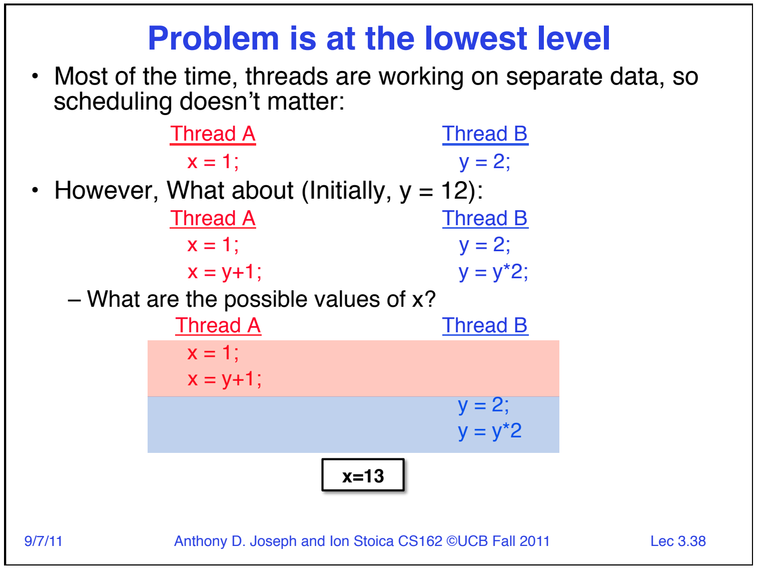
Can Threads Make This Easier?

- Threads yield overlapped I/O and computation without "deconstructing" code into non-blocking fragments
  - One thread per request
- Requests proceeds to completion, blocking as required:

```
Deposit(acctId, amount) {
  acct = GetAccount(actId); /* May use disk I/O */
  acct->balance += amount;
  StoreAccount(acct);       /* Involves disk I/O */
}
```

- Unfortunately, shared state can get corrupted:

```
        Thread 1                         Thread 2
load r1, acct->balance
                             load r1, acct->balance
                             add r1, amount2
                             store r1, acct->balance
add r1, amount1
store r1, acct->balance
```



Problem is at the lowest level

- Most of the time, threads are working on separate data, so scheduling doesn't matter:

Thread A	Thread B
x = 1;	y = 2;

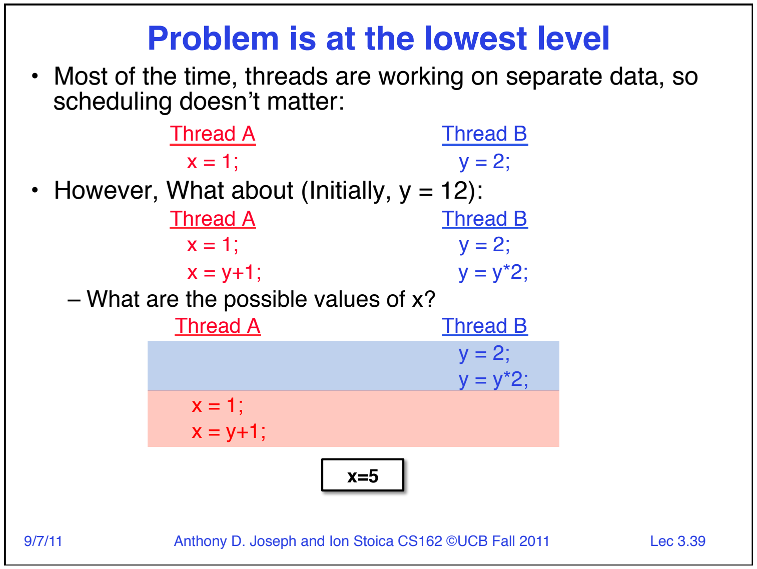
- However, What about (Initially, y = 12):

Thread A	Thread B
x = 1;	y = 2;
x = y+1;	y = y*2;

  - What are the possible values of x?

Thread A	Thread B
x = 1;	
x = y+1;	
	y = 2;
	y = y*2

x=13



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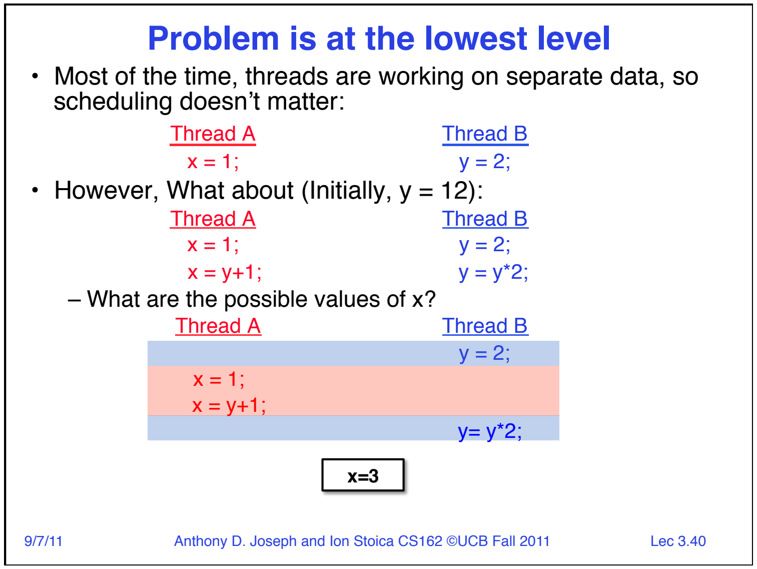
Thread A	Thread B
	y = 2;
	y = y*2;
x = 1;	
x = y+1;	

x=5



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Thread A	Thread B
	y = 2;
x = 1;	
x = y+1;	
	y= y*2;

x=3

Atomic Operations

- To understand a concurrent program, we need to know what the underlying indivisible operations are!
- Atomic Operation: an operation that always runs to completion or not at all
  - It is *indivisible:* it cannot be stopped in the middle and state cannot be modified by someone else in the middle
  - Fundamental building block – if no atomic operations, then have no way for threads to work together
- On most machines, memory references and assignments (i.e. loads and stores) of words are atomic
- Many instructions are not atomic
  - Double-precision floating point store often not atomic
  - VAX and IBM 360 had an instruction to copy a whole array

Correctness Requirements

- Threaded programs must work for all interleavings of thread instruction sequences
  - Cooperating threads inherently non-deterministic and non-reproducible
  - Really hard to debug unless carefully designed!
- Example: Therac-25
  - Machine for radiation therapy
    - Software control of electron accelerator and electron beam/ Xray production
    - Software control of dosage
  - Software errors caused the death of several patients
    - A series of race conditions on shared variables and poor software design
    - "They determined that data entry speed during editing was the key factor in producing the error condition: If the prescription data was edited at a fast pace, the overdose occurred."

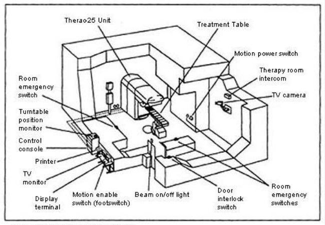
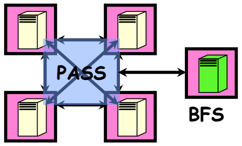


Figure 1. Typical Therac-25 facility

Space Shuttle Example

- Original Space Shuttle launch aborted 20 minutes before scheduled launch
- Shuttle has five computers:
  - Four run the "Primary Avionics Software System" (PASS)
    - Asynchronous and real-time
    - Runs all of the control systems
    - Results synchronized and compared 440 times per second
  - The Fifth computer is the "Backup Flight System" (BFS)
    - Stays synchronized in case it is needed
    - Written by completely different team than PASS
- Countdown aborted because BFS disagreed with PASS
  - A 1/67 chance that PASS was out of sync one cycle
  - Bug due to modifications in initialization code of PASS
    - A delayed init request placed into timer queue
    - As a result, timer queue not empty at expected time to force use of hardware clock
  - Bug not found during extensive simulation

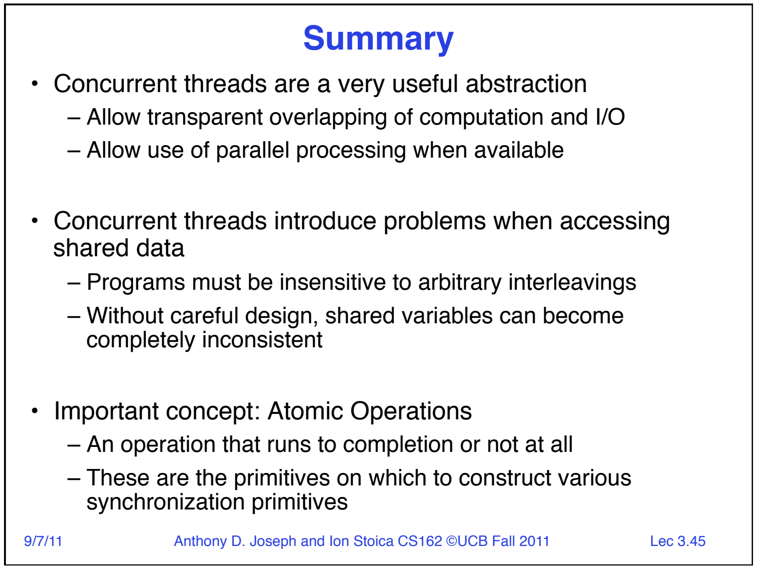


Another Concurrent Program Example

- Two threads, A and B, compete with each other
  - One tries to increment a shared counter
  - The other tries to decrement the counter

```
Thread A                    Thread B
i = 0;                      i = 0;
while (i < 10)              while (i > -10)
  i = i + 1;                  i = i – 1;
printf("A wins!");          printf("B wins!");
```

- Assume that memory loads and stores are atomic, but incrementing and decrementing are *not* atomic
- Who wins? Could be either
- Is it guaranteed that someone wins? Why or why not?
- What it both threads have their own CPU running at same speed? Is it guaranteed that it goes on forever?



Summary

- Concurrent threads are a very useful abstraction
  - Allow transparent overlapping of computation and I/O
  - Allow use of parallel processing when available
- Concurrent threads introduce problems when accessing shared data
  - Programs must be insensitive to arbitrary interleavings
  - Without careful design, shared variables can become completely inconsistent
- Important concept: Atomic Operations
  - An operation that runs to completion or not at all
  - These are the primitives on which to construct various synchronization primitives