Lecture 24: Java Threads, Java synchronized statement

Zoran Budimlić and Mack Joyner
{zoran, mjoyner}@rice.edu

http://comp322.rice.edu
Consider a three-stage pipeline of actors (as in slide 5), set up so that P0.nextStage = P1, P1.nextStage = P2, and P2.nextStage = null. The process() method for each actor is shown below. Assume that 100 non-null messages are sent to actor P0 after all three actors are started, followed by a null message. What will the total WORK and CPL be for this execution? Recall that each actor has a sequential thread.
Solution: WORK = 300, CPL = 102

```
1. protected void process(final Object msg) {
2.     if (msg == null) {
3.         exit(); //actor will exit after returning from process()
4.     } else {
5.         doWork(1); // unit work
6.     }
7.     if (nextStage != null) {
8.         nextStage.send(msg);
9.     }
10. } // process()
```
Introduction to Java Threads and the `java.lang.Thread` class

- Execution of a Java program begins with an instance of Thread created by the Java Virtual Machine (JVM) that executes the program's main() method.
- Parallelism can be introduced by creating additional instances of class Thread that execute as parallel threads.

```
public class Thread extends Object implements Runnable {
    Thread() { ... } // Creates a new Thread
    Thread(Runnable r) { ... } // Creates a new Thread with Runnable object r
    void run() { ... } // Code to be executed by the thread
    // Case 1: If this thread was a subclass of Thread
    // then that object’s run method
    // Case 2: If this class is subclassed, the
    // in the subclass is called
    void start() { ... } // Causes this thread to
    void join() { ... } // Wait for this thread to die
    void join(long m) // Wait at most m milliseconds for thread to die
    static Thread currentThread() // Returns currently executing thread
    ...
    }
```

A lambda can be passed as a Runnable
start() and join() methods

• A Thread instance starts executing when its start() method is invoked
  – start() can be invoked at most once per Thread instance
  – As with async, the parent thread can immediately move to the next statement after invoking t.start()

• A t.join() call forces the invoking thread to wait till thread t completes.
  – Lower-level primitive than finish since it only waits for a single thread rather than a collection of threads
  – No restriction on which thread performs a join on which thread, so it is possible to create a deadlock cycle using join() even when there are no data races
  – Declaring thread references as final does not help because the new() and start() operations are separated for threads (unlike futures, where they are integrated)
Two-way Parallel Array Sum using Java Threads

1. // Start of main thread
2. sum1 = 0; sum2 = 0; // sum1 & sum2 are static fields
3. Thread t1 = new Thread(() -> {
4.     // Child task computes sum of lower half of array
5.     for(int i=0; i < X.length/2; i++) sum1 += X[i];
6. });
7. t1.start();
8. // Parent task computes sum of upper half of array
9. for(int i=X.length/2; i < X.length; i++) sum2 += X[i];
10. // Parent task waits for child task to complete (join)
11. t1.join();
12. return sum1 + sum2;
1. // Start of Task T0 (main program)
2. sum1 = 0; sum2 = 0; // sum1 & sum2 are static fields
3. finish(() -> {
4.   async(() -> {
5.     // Child task computes sum of lower half of array
6.     for(int i=0; i < X.length/2; i++) sum1 += X[i];
7.   });
8.   // Parent task computes sum of upper half of array
9.   for(int i=X.length/2; i < X.length; i++) sum2 += X[i];
10. });
11. // Parent task waits for child task to complete (join)
12. return sum1 + sum2;

Compare with Two-way Parallel Array Sum using HJ-Lib’s finish & async API’s
HJlib runtime uses Java threads as workers

- HJlib runtime creates a small number of worker threads in a *thread pool*, typically one per core
- Workers push async‘s/continuations into a logical work queue
  - when an async operation is performed
  - when an end-finish operation is reached
- Workers pull task/continuation work item when they are idle

Static & instance fields are *shared* among tasks
Objects and Locks in Java — synchronized statements and methods

• Every Java object has an associated lock acquired via:
  – synchronized statements
    - synchronized( foo ) { // acquire foo’s lock
      // execute code while holding foo’s lock
    } // release foo’s lock
  – synchronized methods
    - public synchronized void op1() { // acquire ‘this’ lock
      // execute method while holding ‘this’ lock
    } // release ‘this’ lock

• Java language does not enforce any relationship between the object used for locking and objects accessed in isolated code
  — If same object is used for locking and data access, then the object behaves like a monitor

• Locking and unlocking are automatic
  — Locks are released when a synchronized block exits
    • By normal means: end of block reached, return, break
    • When an exception is thrown and not caught
Locking guarantees in Java

• It is preferable to use java.util.concurrent.atomic or HJlib isolated constructs, since they cannot deadlock.

• Locks are needed for more general cases. Basic idea is for JVM to implement synchronized(a) <stmt> as follows:
  1. Acquire lock for object a
  2. Execute <stmt>
  3. Release lock for object a

• The responsibility for ensuring that the choice of locks correctly implements the semantics of isolation lies with the programmer.

• The main guarantee provided by locks is that only one thread can hold a given lock at a time, and the thread is blocked when acquiring a lock if the lock is unavailable.
Deadlock example with Java synchronized statement

- The code below can deadlock if `leftHand()` and `rightHand()` are called concurrently from different threads
  - Because the locks are not acquired in the same order

```java
public class ObviousDeadlock {
    // ...
    public void leftHand() {
        synchronized(lock1) {
            synchronized(lock2) {
                for (int i=0; i<10000; i++)
                    sum += random.nextInt(100);
            }
        }
    }
    
    public void rightHand() {
        synchronized(lock2) {
            synchronized(lock1) {
                for (int i=0; i<10000; i++)
                    sum += random.nextInt(100);
            }
        }
    }
}
```
Deadlock avoidance in HJ with object-based isolation

- HJ implementation ensures that all locks are acquired in the same order
- => no deadlock

```java
public class ObviousDeadlock {
    . . .

    public void leftHand() {
        isolated(lock1, lock2) {
            for (int i=0; i<10000; i++)
                sum += random.nextInt(100);
        }
    }

    public void rightHand() {
        isolated(lock2, lock1) {
            for (int i=0; i<10000; i++)
                sum += random.nextInt(100);
        }
    }
}
```
Dynamic Order Deadlocks

- There are even more subtle ways for threads to deadlock due to inconsistent lock ordering.
  - Consider a method to transfer a balance from one account to another:
    ```java
    public class SubtleDeadlock {
        public void transferFunds(Account from, Account to, int amount) {
            synchronized (from) {
                synchronized (to) {
                    from.subtractFromBalance(amount);
                    to.addToBalance(amount);
                }
            }
        }
    }
    ``
  - What if one thread tries to transfer from A to B while another tries to transfer from B to A?
    Inconsistent lock order again – Deadlock!
Avoiding Dynamic Order Deadlocks

- The solution is to **induce** a lock ordering.
  - Here, uses an existing unique numeric key, `acctId`, to establish an order.

```java
public class SafeTransfer {
    public void transferFunds(Account from, Account to, int amount) {
        Account firstLock, secondLock;
        if (fromAccount.acctId == toAccount.acctId)
            throw new Exception("Cannot self-transfer");
        else if (fromAccount.acctId < toAccount.acctId) {
            firstLock = fromAccount;
            secondLock = toAccount;
        } else {
            firstLock = toAccount;
            secondLock = fromAccount;
        }
        synchronized (firstLock) {
            synchronized (secondLock) {
                from.subtractFromBalance(amount);
                to.addToBalance(amount);
            }
        }
    }
}
```
Java’s Object Locks are Reentrant

- Locks are granted on a per-thread basis
  - Called reentrant or recursive locks
  - Promotes object-oriented concurrent code
- A synchronized block means execution of this code requires the current thread to hold this lock
  - If it does — fine
  - If it doesn’t — then acquire the lock
- Reentrancy means that recursive methods, invocation of `super` methods, or local callbacks, don’t deadlock

```java
public class Widget {
    public synchronized void doSomething() { ... }
}

public class LoggingWidget extends Widget {
    public synchronized void doSomething() {
        Logger.log(this + ": calling doSomething()");
        super.doSomething(); // Doesn't deadlock!
    }
}
```