

# Modeling caches in gem5



# Cache Hierarchy in gem5

1. **Classic Cache:** Simplified, faster, and less flexible
2. **Ruby:** Models cache coherence in detail


 Placement of the Cache Hierarchy in gem5

# Outline

- Background on cache coherency
- Simple Cache
  - Coherency protocol in simple cache
  - How to use simple cache
- Ruby cache
  - Ruby components
  - Example of MESI two level protocol


# What is Coherency

A coherence problem can arise if multiple cores have access to multiple copies of a data (e.g., in multiple caches) and at least one access is a write

 Cores and Coherency across caches


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 Cores and Coherency across caches with write request

- Coherency protocols
  1. Snooping
  2. Directory

# Snoop Protocol

- Each processor snoops the bus to verify whether it has a copy of a requested cache line
- Before a processor writes data, other processor cache copies must be invalidated
- The coherence requests typically travel on an ordered broadcast network such as a bus
- **This technique does not scale since it requires an all-to-all broadcast**

 Snoop protocol

# Directory Protocol

- Directory tracks which processor have data when in the shared state
  - Local node where a request originates (interact with CPU cache)
  - Home node where the memory location of an address resides
  - Remote node has a copy of a cache block whether exclusive or shared (interact with CPU cache)
- A general interconnection network allows processor to communicate

 Directory protocol





# Simple Cache

Snooping Based

## Classic Cache: Coherence protocol (Snooping)

# Classic Cache: Coherent Crossbar

- Has snooping request and response bus
- Each core uses the snooping bus to fetch or invalidate a cache line

# Classic Cache: Snoop Filter

- Instead of using a snooping bus to find a cache line each Private cache has a snooping directory
- It keeps track of which connected port has a particular line of data
- Instead of snooping the caches it snoops the directory

## Example of system with simple cache



# Classic Cache: Parameters

- src/mem/cache/Cache.py
  - src/mem/cache/cache.cc
  - src/mem/cache/noncoherent\_cache.cc

Parameters:

- size
- associativity
- number of miss status handler register (MSHR) entries
- prefetcher
- replacement policy



# Ruby

Directory Based



# Ruby Cache

1. Coherence Controller
2. Caches + Interface
3. Interconnect



# Ruby



# Ruby Components

- **Controller models** (cache controller, directory controller)
- **Controller topology** (Mesh, all-to-all, etc.)
- **Network models**
- **Interface** (classic ports)

# Ruby Cache: Controller Models

Code for controllers is "generated" via SLICC compilers



## Ruby Cache: Example of Controller

# Ruby Cache: Caches + Memory



# Ruby Cache: Caches + Memory



# Ruby Cache: Caches + Memory

## Ruby Cache: Caches + CPU



## Ruby Cache: Caches + CPU



# Ruby Cache System

# How to use Ruby

1. Create controllers
2. Create sequencers
3. Connect L1 controllers to sequencers
4. Connect Sequencers to CPUs
5. Connect directories to memory controllers

# Example

- Ruby - MESI Two level coherency protocol
- Private L1 cache
- 4 CPUs, 4 private L1 caches
- 1 Shared L2 cache
- 1 Memory channel