

**DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL AND COMPUTER ENGINEERING  
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
CPEN 311 – Digital Systems Design  
Winter 2018 Term 2**

**Lab 4: Memory, Scheduling, and Decryption**

**Overview**

This lab was originally written by Prof. Steve Wilton for CPEN311 in Summer 2015 Term 2 and perhaps also used for earlier terms. It is essentially unchanged from Prof. Wilton's lab except that I have changed the grading scheme.

Additionally, and read this carefully, for this lab and for this lab only, I am allowing you to work in groups of 2 (group MUST be formed people from the same lab section - otherwise it will be a logistical nightmare for the TAs). However, if you do decide to work in groups of 2, there is a price for this, as follows: You must implement the lab using modular design with multiple FSMs that communicate with each other using the start-finish protocol or another standardized protocol that you can explain and justify. I recommend doing this anyway, always, even if you are working alone. But for those working in groups of 2, this is mandatory.

Prof. Wilton solved this lab using just one FSM that he incrementally made more capable. I solved it using the modular FSM approach which resulted in 5 FSMs being written. Both approaches are valid as long as the FSMs are built reliably. If you choose to solve this lab as a 1-person lab group like other labs, then you are free to choose your implementation method. If you are part of a 2-person group, this means that you must choose the modular FSM approach in order to be able to efficiently divide the work among team members. I am doing this because I want to promote modular design, standardized protocols between FSMs, and team design as part of this course.

In this lab, you will get experience creating a design that contains several on-chip memories. The circuit you will create is an RC4 Decryption circuit. RC4 is a popular stream cypher, and until recently was widely used in encrypting web traffic among other uses. RC4 has now been deemed insecure and has been replaced by several variants. Still, RC4 is an important algorithm and provides a good vehicle for studying digital circuits that made extensive use of on-chip memory. It also provides a basis for implementing some of these variants that are more secure.

In this lab, you will first design an RC4 decryption circuit. The secret key will be obtained from a bank of switches on your board, and the encrypted message will be given to you as a ROM initialization file. In Task 1 and 2, you will build the basic decryption circuit. In Task 3, you will extend this to build an RC4 cracking circuit; the circuit will implement a 'brute-force' attack on RC4 by cycling through the entire key space and stopping when a successful decryption is performed. Those of you that want to go further can consider building multiple functional units, each of which cycles through a portion of the key space in parallel for faster cracking (Bonus Task).

Do not be fooled by the complexity of this lab. Although it is more complicated than previous labs, we are still talking about an algorithm that can be expressed in a flowchart (or, in the case of the modular FSM approach, multiple flowcharts). You already know from the lectures and Lab 2 how to reliably convert any proper FSM flowchart to an FSM. In essence, therefore, this is not fundamentally different from Lab 2 except that the algorithm and flowcharts will be much more complicated.

## **Background: RC4 Decryption**

This section describes the RC4 decryption algorithm. You can find more information by doing a Google Search, but the information here should be sufficient to complete this lab. Interestingly, the same algorithm is used for both encryption and decryption, but we will only use it for decryption in this lab.

RC4 is a stream cipher. Based on a key, the algorithm generates a series of bytes. Each byte is XOR'ed with one byte of a message to produce the decoded text.

The basic RC4 algorithm is shown on the following page:

```

// Input:
//     secret_key [] : array of bytes that represent the secret key. In our implementation,
//                     we will assume a key of 24 bits, meaning this array is 3 bytes long
//     encrypted_input []: array of bytes that represent the encrypted message. In our
//                          implementation, we will assume the input message is 32 bytes
// Output:
//     decrypted_output []: array of bytes that represent the decrypted result. This will
//                          always be the same length as encrypted_input [].

// initialize s array. You will build this in Task 1
for i = 0 to 255 {
    s[i] = i;
}
// shuffle the array based on the secret key. You will build this in Task 2
j = 0
for i = 0 to 255 {
    j = (j + s[i] + secret_key[i mod keylength] ) mod 256 //keylength is 3 in our impl.
    swap values of s[i] and s[j]
}
// compute one byte per character in the encrypted message. You will build this in Task 2
i = 0, j=0
for k = 0 to message_length-1 { // message_length is 32 in our implementation
    i = (i+1) mod 256
    j = (j+s[i]) mod 256
    swap values of s[i] and s[j]
    f = s[ (s[i]+s[j]) mod 256 ]
    decrypted_output[k] = f xor encrypted_input[k] // 8 bit wide XOR function
}

```

However, if you define the variables i, j, and f as 8-bit registers, and since s[i] and s[j] are also 8-bit numbers, then due to the "automatic" modulo-256 that we get by having an 8-bit number, we can drop all the "mod 256" and simply write:

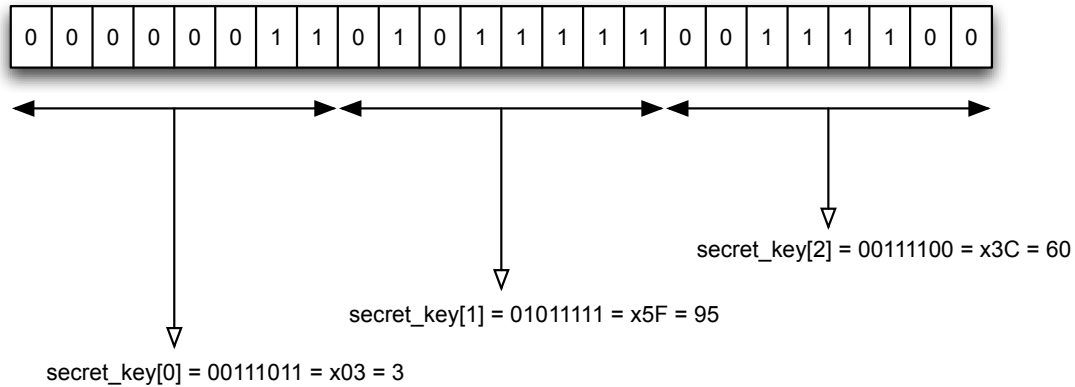
```

// initialize s array. You will build this in Task 1
for i = 0 to 255 {
    s[i] = i;
}
// shuffle the array based on the secret key. You will build this in Task 2
j = 0
for i = 0 to 255 {
    j = (j + s[i] + secret_key[i mod keylength] ) //keylength is 3 in our impl.
    swap values of s[i] and s[j]
}
// compute one byte per character in the encrypted message. You will build this in Task 2
i = 0, j=0
for k = 0 to message_length-1 { // message_length is 32 in our implementation
    i = i+1
    j = j+s[i]
    swap values of s[i] and s[j]
    f = s[ (s[i]+s[j]) ]
    decrypted_output[k] = f xor encrypted_input[k] // 8 bit wide XOR function
}

```

This is a significant simplification since the modulo operations could be synthesized by the compiler using divisions, which we know takes up a lot of resources.

The length of the secret key can vary in different applications, but is typically 40 bits (8 bytes). In our implementation, we will assume a 24 bit (3 byte) key. We are using a smaller key to ensure that you can “crack” the implementation in Task 3 in a reasonable amount of time. Note that in the second loop above, `secret_key[0]` refers to the first *byte* of the key, `secret_key[1]` refers to the second *byte* of the secret key, and `secret_key[2]` refers to the third *byte* of the secret key. This is illustrated below; in this example, the 24-bit secret key is 00000011010111100111100 = x035F3C. The diagram shows how each of `secret_key[0]`, `secret_key[1]`, and `secret_key[2]` are found.



The encrypted message (the input) consists of 32 bytes, and in the above pseudo-code, **encrypted\_input[k]** refers to the kth byte in the encrypted input. The decrypted message (the output) will also be 32 bytes; in the above pseudo-code, **decrypted\_output[k]** refers to the kth byte in the encrypted output.

## Task 1: Creating a memory, instantiating it, and writing to it (20% of functionality)

To get started, download the template and open the Quartus project. In this task, you will get started by creating a RAM using the Megafunction Wizard, creating circuitry to fill the memory, and observing the memory contents using the In-System Memory Content Editor.

### a) Creating a RAM block using the Wizard

**(If you have a DE2 and are using Quartus 13.0sp1)** Choose **Tools->MegaWizard Plug In Manager**. Choose to create a new custom megafunction variation. In the left panel, expand **Memory Compiler**, and choose **RAM: 1-Port**.

**(If you have a DE1-SoC and are using Quartus 14.1)** Choose **Tools->IP Catalog**. In the IP Catalog, select **Basic Functions->On Chip Memory->RAM: 1-Port**.

Create an output file called **s\_memory.vhd** in your project directory and hit **next**. In the next few panels, customize your Megafunction as indicated below.

How wide should the 'q' output bus be? 8 bits  
How many 8-bit words of memory? 256 words  
What should the memory block type be? M4K (DE2), or M10K (DE1-SoC)  
What clocking method would you like to use? Single clock  
Which ports should be registered: Make sure 'q' output port is unselected  
Create one clock enable signal... : do not select  
Create an 'aclr' asynchronous clear... : do not select  
Create a 'rden' read enable... : do not select  
(DE1-SoC only) What should the q output be...: New Data  
Do you want to specify the initial contents? No  
Allow In-System Memory Content Editor to capture and update.. Select this option  
The 'Instance ID' of this RAM is S  
Generate netlist: do not select  
Output files: select s\_memory.cmp (VHDL Component declaration file)  
Do you want to add the Quartus II File to the project? Yes

When you finish this, you will find the file **s\_memory.qip** in your project file list. Click on the triangle beside **s\_memory.qip** to expand, and you will see **s\_memory.vhd**. Open this file and examine it. Near the top of your file, you will find the Entity declaration for **s\_memory**, which will look something like this:

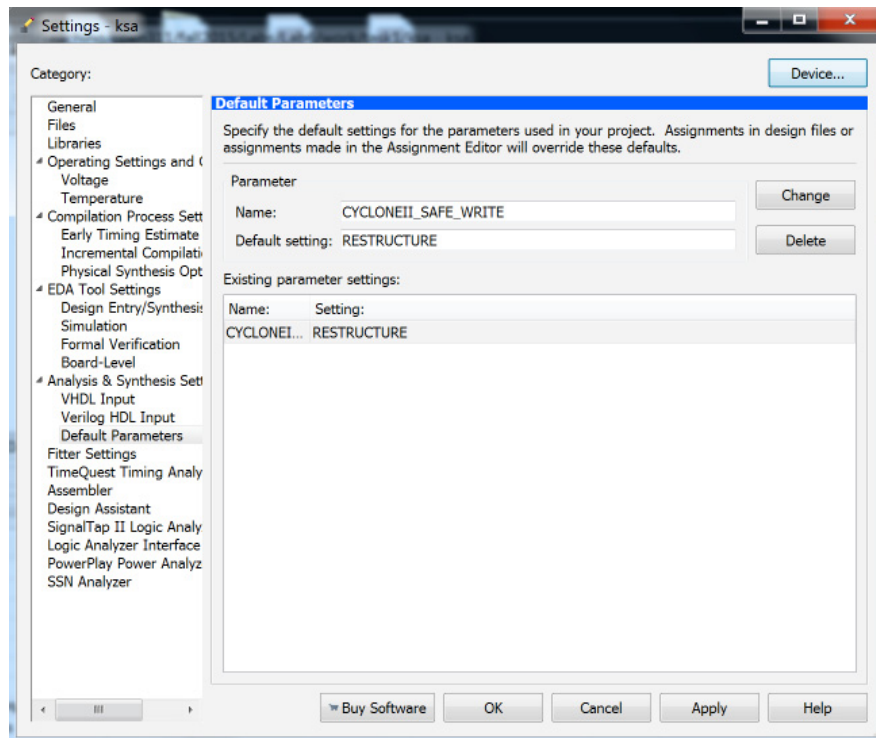
```
ENTITY s_memory IS
  PORT
  (
    address      : IN STD_LOGIC_VECTOR (7 DOWNTO 0);
    clock        : IN STD_LOGIC := '1';
    data         : IN STD_LOGIC_VECTOR (7 DOWNTO 0);
    wren         : IN STD_LOGIC;
    q            : OUT STD_LOGIC_VECTOR (7 DOWNTO 0)
  );
END s_memory;
```

Be sure your declaration matches the above. This is the entity you will include as a component in your design.

### b) Setting Assignment (if you are using a DE1-SoC, skip this step)

Because you are going to use the In-System Memory Content Editor, you must make one additional setting in your project. Choose **Assignments->Settings** and open **Analysis And Synthesis Settings->Default Parameters**.

Type the parameter name `CYCLONEII_SAFE_WRITE` and assign the value `RESTRUCTURE` as shown in the following diagram (be sure to spell it exactly right). Click ADD and then OK.



*c) Creating a VHDL module that writes to your memory*

Look at the top-level file **ksa.vhd**. You are to add code to implement the following algorithm (this is the very first part of RC4).

```
for i = 0 to 255 {
    s[i] = i;
}
```

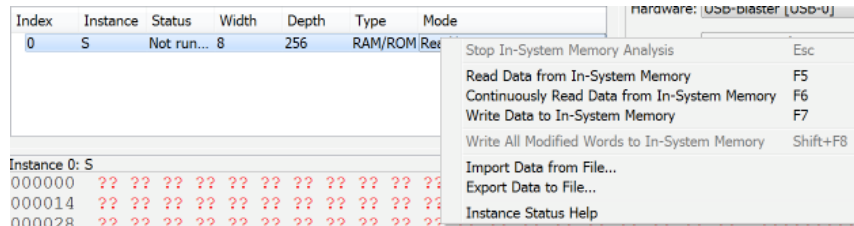
If you see a message something like

“Error (15684): M4K memory block WYSIWYG primitive  
 "s\_memory:u0|altsyncram:altsyncram\_component|altsyncram\_5ee1:auto\_generated|altsyncram\_l2a2:altsyncram1|ram\_block3a1" utilizes the dual-port dual-clock mode. However, this mode is not supported in Cyclone II device family in this version of Quartus II software. Please refer to the Cyclone II FPGA Family Errata Sheet for more information on this feature.

Then it is probably because you either forgot step (b) above, or else mistyped the name or default setting. Open the settings again and verify that it is correct. Be sure your design compiles without errors before going on.

*d) Running your code.*

Program your design and run it as usual. The circuit will fill the on-chip memory with the numbers 0-255. To examine the contents of the memory, you can choose **Tools->In System Memory Content Editor** (while your circuit is running). This will open a window that shows the memory contents. In the instance manager window (left) you should see a list of memories in your design (in this case, it is only S). Right click S, and choose **Read Data from In-System Memory**.



This memory contents will be read and displayed. You should see something like:

Instance 0: S	
000000	00 01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 0A 0B 0C 0D 0E 0F 10 11 12 13 .....
000014	14 15 16 17 18 19 1A 1B 1C 1D 1E 1F 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 ..... !"#%&'
000028	28 29 2A 2B 2C 2D 2E 2F 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 3A 3B ..... ()*+,-./0123456789:;
00003c	3C 3D 3E 3F 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 4A 4B 4C 4D 4E 4F ..... <=>?@ABCDEFGHIJKLMNO
000050	50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 5A 5B 5C 5D 5E 5F 60 61 62 63 ..... PQRSTUVWXYZ[\]^_`abc
000064	64 65 66 67 68 69 6A 6B 6C 6D 6E 6F 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 ..... defghijklmnopqrstuvw
000078	78 79 7A 7B 7C 7D 7E 7F 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 8A 8B ..... xyz{ }~.....
00008c	8C 8D 8E 8F 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 9A 9B 9C 9D 9E 9F .....
0000a0	A0 A1 A2 A3 A4 A5 A6 A7 A8 A9 AA AB AC AD AE AF B0 B1 B2 B3 .....
0000b4	B4 B5 B6 B7 B8 B9 BA BB BC BD BE BF C0 C1 C2 C3 C4 C5 C6 C7 .....
0000c8	C8 C9 CA CB CC CD CE CF D0 D1 D2 D3 D4 D5 D6 D7 D8 D9 DA DB .....
0000dc	DC DD DE DF E0 E1 E2 E3 E4 E5 E6 E7 E8 E9 EA EB EC ED EE EF .....
0000f0	F0 F1 F2 F3 F4 F5 F6 F7 F8 F9 FA FB FC FD FE FF .....

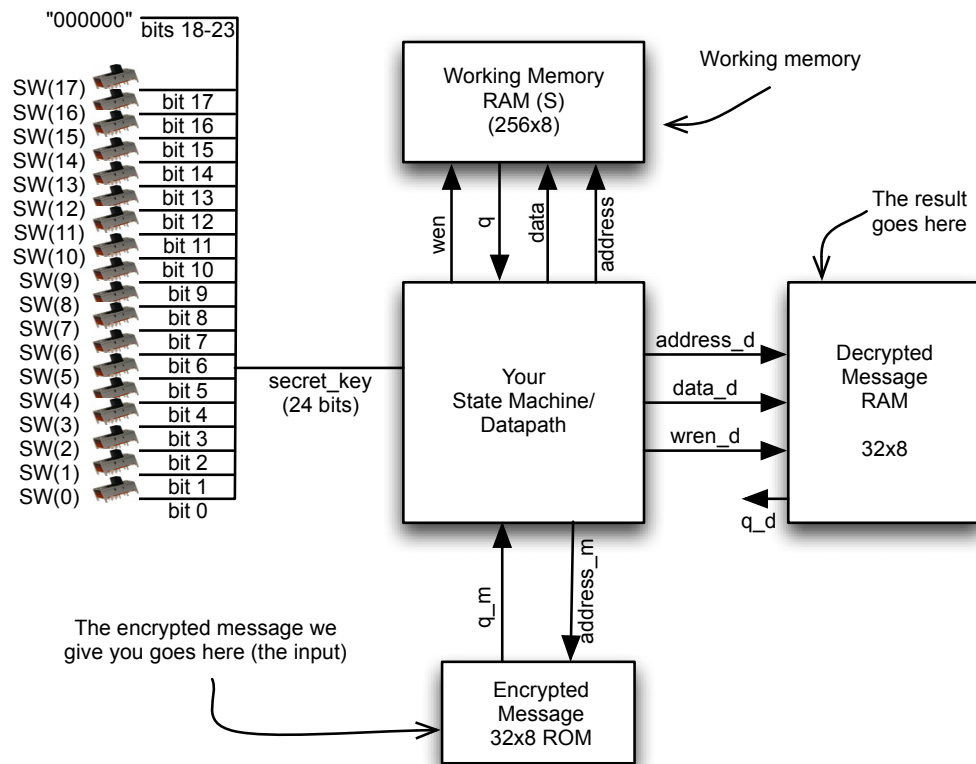
As you can see, the memory has been filled. Each location  $i$  contains the value  $i$ . Be sure that your program has filled the memory as expected. You will use the In-System Memory Content Editor to help you debug your lab in Task 2, so be sure you are able to get this working before moving on.

## Task 2: Building a Single Decryption Core (40% of functionality)

In this task, you are to continue your design from Task 1 to implement a single decryption core. Given a 24 bit key, and an encrypted message in a ROM, your algorithm will decrypt the message and store the result in another memory. You will then use the In-System Memory Content Editor to read the result to ensure the encryption occurred as expected.

As shown below, your system will consist of three memories and a state machine/datapath. The initial encrypted message is stored in a 32-word ROM (which you will initialize using a .mif file when you compile the design). The result is stored in a 32-word RAM (which you can examine using the In-System Memory Content Editor after the decryption is complete. In addition, you will use a 256x8 bit S memory (the same memory you used in Task 2). The secret key is set using the slider switches. Note that the secret key should be 24 bits long, but you only have 18 slider switches on the DE2 board (and only 10 on the DE1-SoC board). *For this task only* (not Task 3), you can hardwire the upper 14 bits of the secret key to 0.

The diagram below shows the design of your system. **Although it shows bits 23-18 of the key are “0” and the switches are used for bits 17-0, you should set bits 23-10 to “0” and just use bits 9-0 from the switches.**



#### Task 2a) Second Loop in algorithm

Starting with your Task 2 code, add hardware to implement the second loop from the algorithm on the second page of this handout. That is, add code to implement the following (**remember what I said about being able to omit the "mod 256" operation in the "Background" section if you define the relevant quantities as 8-bit wide. However you still need to implement "i mod keylength". The Verilog keyword for mod is "%"**)

```

j = 0
for i = 0 to 255 {
    j = (j + s[i] + secret_key[i mod keylength] ) mod 256 //keylength is 3 in our impl.
    swap values of s[i] and s[j]
}

```

This code does not use the encoded message ROM or the decoded message RAM (you will add that in part b below). Test your code as follows. Set the secret key to 00000000 00000010 01001001 = x000249 (remember you can set the lower order 10 bits of secret key using the slider switches as in the above diagram) and examine the `s` array using the in-system memory content editor as before. Note that in this example `secret_key[0] = 0x0`, `secret_key[1] = 0x2`, `secret_key[2] = 0x49`. Do not mix up the order of these or you will not get the right results! You should see the following. If you do, your code is likely correct; if not, you have some debugging to do. Don't move on until you have this right.





### Task 3: Cracking RC-4 (40% of functionality)

In this task, you are going to modify your design from Task 2 to “crack” a message that has been encrypted using RC4. In this case, you have the encrypted message, but you do not know the key. You will implement a brute-force algorithm which cycles through all possible keys. For each key, if the result string is a readable message, then you will assume the string is correct. More precisely, your circuit will search through the key space until it finds a result in which, for every character in the decoded output, the character is in the range [97,122] (corresponding to the characters ‘a’ to ‘z’) or the value 32 (which is a space). All characters in the correct output will either be a lower case letter or a space; the correct message will contain no upper character letters or punctuation. Note that it is *not* enough that just one character is a lower case letter or space; *all* 32 characters in the decoded output must be lower case letters or a space before you deem it correct. Of course, there is a chance that even though a key leads to an ASCII string, the string is not actually correct, but if you work out the math you will see that the odds of this are extremely low.

Prof. Wilton's implementation of this Task takes about 10 minutes to cycle through the entire key space (I haven't timed my solution over the entire key space, but it will likely take longer since my solution is slower than Prof. Wilton's). To make your life easier in the lab, I will tell you that, for every test case we will give you, the two most significant bits in the correct key are 0. This reduces the size of the keyspace you have to search, meaning you should be able to search the entire keyspace in a few minutes.

When your circuit finds a correct message, it should put the message in the result RAM and enter an endless loop in which it does nothing. You can use the In System Memory Content editor to view the output to make sure it is correct. You should also turn on an LED to indicate that the search has complete. If you search the entire keyspace and do not find a correct message, then you should turn on a different LED.

The key that is being considered should be displayed on the HEX displays. The project contains a module in SevenSegmentDisplayDecoder.v which can be used for this purpose. The input to this module is a 4-bit value, and the output is a 7-bit value which is used to drive the 7-segment display on the DE2/DE1-SoC board. Since your key is 24 bits, it will require 6 digits of display. Use HEX0 to HEX5. As your design quickly searches through the keyspace, the HEX displays should be updated in real time, and show the key that is currently being considered.

There are encoded messages available within the project directory, in the **secret\_messages/msg\_\*\_for\_task3** folders. You can test your design on these messages; you should be able to “crack” each test case. For your demonstration, the TA will give you a new encoded message that you have never seen before, so make sure your design works before demoing!

### Challenge Task: Multi-Core Cracking (this qualifies for the full 15% Creativity Bonus)

In the challenge task, you will accelerate the keyspace search by using multiple instantiations of the decryption circuit (core) in Task 3, and using each one to search a subset of the keyspace simultaneously. For example, if you have two cores, one core could search all even keys and one could search all odd keys. If you have 4 cores, each could search  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the search space. When one unit finds a correct message, all units should stop.

For the challenge task, modify your design so that it contains at least four decryption cores that operate simultaneously.

### Marking: What to demo depends on how far you get.

If you get the challenge task done, demo that, and explain to the TA how you parallelized the code across multiple cores. The TA will likely give you a new encrypted message for you to solve. If your implementation is successful, you do not need to demo Tasks 2 or 3.

If you get Task 3 done, but not the challenge task, demo a working Task 3. The TA will likely give you a new encrypted message for you to solve. In this works, you do not need to demo Task 2.

If you only get Task 2 done, demo that. If you have Task 2 plus parts of Task 3 done (but not a complete working system), demo Task 2 and show the TA what you have for Task 3 for possible part marks.

If you only get Task 1 done, demo that. If you have Task 1 plus parts of Task 2 done (but not a complete working system), demo Task 1 and show the TA what you have for Task 2 for possible part marks.

If you didn't get Task 1 done, show the TA what you have for possible part marks.

### Specific grading requirements for this lab

To receive full points for simulation, you need to simulate all FSMs that you write, and demonstrate/explain those simulations to the TA.

Do not forget the rules of good design:

- Always design while thinking about the hardware implementation
- Use simple structures
- Incremental design and test
- Modular design: divide the work, work in parallel in the group
- Use the RTL viewer
- Verification and test: Use simulations, LEDs, 7-segments, SignalTap, LCD scope (or SignalTap equivalent)
- Write Clean, Neat, and Legible code
- Give meaningful names to variables, use comments
- Go over and understand the warnings given by Quartus during compilation
- The circuit should be correct by **design**, not just by simulation.
- The code should be **verifiable** by **inspection**
- Design in a **modular** fashion, always thinking about future **reutilization** of the module.
- **Re-use** proven modules, instead of re-inventing the wheel all the time