Practical Concurrent and Parallel Programming IV

Shared Memory II

Raúl Pardo

Poll on programming languages

- We are deciding on the last lecture of the course and would like to understand your background on languages other than Java

- Please go to the following mentimeter poll

  https://www.menti.com/qny81u4ohv

Q&A forum

- We are very happy to see the activity in the forum
- Please keep up with the level of activity
- We are very happy to see and address the discussions

Exam

- We will reply in the forum later this week
- In a nutshell
  - We can ask questions about any part of the syllabus (mandatory readings and slides)
  - It will be similar to an oral feedback session, so the best way to prepare is to do all assignments

Agenda

- Thread-safe classes
- Safe publication
- Immutability
- Instance confinement
- Synchronization primitives (synchronizers)
  - Semaphores
  - Barriers
- Producer-consumer problem

Thread safety

- We have already covered the basic concepts to analyse concurrent programs

- Analysing concurrent programs is tricky
  - You have experienced this already in the assignments where you work with programs consisting in a few lines of code

- Imagine having to reason about applications with hundreds of lines of code and many classes
  - Server applications
  - Operating Systems
  - GUIs
  - …

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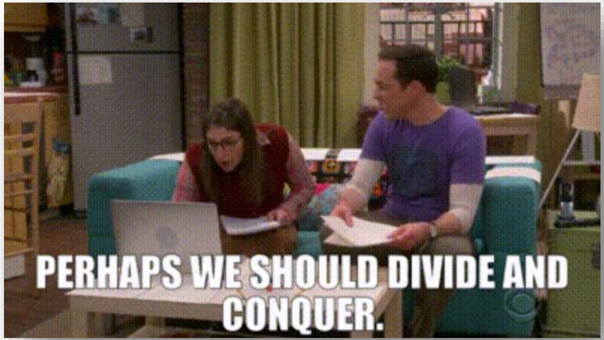

Thread-safe classes

- It is more manageable to separately analyse parts of the code and then combine them in safe ways

- In Object Oriented languages (such as Java) we can focus on analysing thread-safety for classes

- This reduces the analysis to concurrent method calls and field accesses

Thread-safe classes

*A **class** is said to be **thread-safe** if and only if*
no concurrent execution of
method calls or field accesses (read/write)
result in race conditions

PCPP teaching team

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method calls or field accesses (read/write)
result in race conditions

Note that this definition is independent of class invariants as opposed to Goetz Chapter 4. This definition is more similar to Goetz Chapter 2, page 18.

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Thread-safe classes

WARNING: Note that, in this course, *thread-safety* is not an umbrella term for code that seem to behave correctly in concurrent environments.

*A **class** is said to be **thread-safe** if and only if no concurrent execution of method calls or field accesses (read/write) result in race conditions*

Note that this definition is independent of class invariants as opposed to Goetz Chapter 4. This definition is more similar to Goetz Chapter 2, page 18.

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Thread-safe program

A concurrent ***program*** *is said to be* ***thread-safe***
if and only if it is race condition free

Do not confuse thread-safe classes with thread-safe programs.
Thread-safe programs are not defined in Goetz.

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Thread-safety

It is very important to note that:

thread-safe *class* $\not\Rightarrow$ *thread-safe* *program*

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$$\textit{thread-safe } \underline{\textit{class}} \not\Rightarrow \textit{thread-safe } \underline{\textit{program}}$$

Programs using thread-safe classes may contain race conditions.

Thread-safety

It is very

Does this hold?

thread-safe <u>program</u> $\not\Rightarrow$ *thread-safe <u>class</u>*

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Programs using thread-safe classes may contain race conditions.

Thread-safe classes

- To analyse whether a class is thread-safe, we must identify/consider:
  - Class state
  - Escaping
  - (Safe) publication
  - Immutability
  - Mutual exclusion

Class state

- As we have seen, (uncontrolled) concurrent access to the shared state (variables) may lead to race conditions
- So, the first thing we need to do is to identify the fields that may be shared by several threads
- The state of a class involves the fields defined in the class
  - In a nutshell, our goal is to ensure that concurrent manipulation of the class state is race condition free

```
class C {
     // class state (variables)
     T s1;
     T s2;
     T s3;
     T s4;
     …

     // class methods
     T m1(…) {…}
     T m2(…) {…}
     T m3(…) {…}
     …
}
```

Class state

If a class has no state (variables), is it thread-safe?

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      …
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```

Escaping


```
class Counter {
      // class state (variables)
      int i=0;

      // class methods
      public synchronized void inc(){i++;}
}
```

Is the class **Counter** thread-safe?

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class Counter {
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Is the class `Counter` thread-safe?

```
class Counter {
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```
// program using Counter

Counter c = new Counter();
new Thread(() -> {
      c.inc();
}).start();

new Thread(() -> {
      c.i++; // escaped the lock in inc()
}).start();
```

Escaping

- It is important to not expose shared state variables
- Otherwise, threads may use them without proper locking
  - Thus, we allow several threads in the critical section

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class Counter {
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Escaping

- It is important to not expose shared state variables
- Otherwise, threads may use them without proper locking
  - Thus, we allow several threads in the critical section
- Defining all (shared) class state (primitive) variables as private ensures that these variables will only be accessed through public methods.
  - Thus, it is easier to control and reason about concurrent access

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class Counter {
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Escaping


```
class IntArrayList {
    // class state
    private List<Integer> a = new ArrayList<Integer>();

    public synchronized void set(Integer index, Integer elem)
        {  a.set(index,elem); }

    public synchronized List<Integer> get() { return a; }
}
```

Is the class `IntArrayList` thread-safe?

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```
IntArrayList array = new IntArrayList();
new Thread(() -> {
    array.set(0,1); // access state with lock
}).start();
new Thread(() -> {
    array.get().set(0,42); // access state without locks
}).start();
```

Escaping

- Remember that when a method returns an object, we get a *reference* to that object

- Therefore, even if obtain the reference using locks, later we can modify the content of the object without locks

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Is this ***program*** thread-safe?

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public class UnsafeLazyInitialization {
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    public static Resource getInstance() {
        if (resource == null)
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Is this class thread-safe?

Object initialization & visibility

- Visibility issues may appear during initialization of objects

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```
public class UnsafeInitialization {
    private int x;
    private Object o;
    public UnsafeInitialization() {
        x = 42;
        o = new Object();
    }
}
```

- For the thread executing the constructor, there are no visibility issues, but if a reference to an instance of UnsafeInitialization object is accessible to another thread, it might not see **`x==42`** or **`o`** completely initialized

Object initialization & visibility

- We can address visibility issues during initialization as follows

```
public class UnsafeInitialization {
    private volatile int x;
    private final Object o;
    public UnsafeInitialization() {
        x = 42;
        o = new Object();
    }
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```

Object initialization & visibility

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For complex objects, we can:

- Declare them as **`final`**
- Use the **`AtomicReference`** class
- Declare them as **`static`** (this only works if the field is supposed to be static)

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For primitive types, we can:

- Declare them as **`volatile`**
- Declare them as **`final`** (only works if the content is never modified)
- Declare them as **`static`** (this only works if the field is supposed to be static)
- Use corresponding atomic class from Java standard library: **`AtomicInteger`**

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Why do these solutions solve visibility issues?

Object initialization & visibility

- The previous suggestions ensure safe publication because:
  - They established a *happens-before* relation between initialization and access the object's reference (publication)
  - In the case of **`final`** and **`static`**, the java memory model disallows caching and reordering during initialization

- See Goetz page 52 for additional advice on safe publication idioms

Object initialization & visibility

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- See Goetz page 52 for additional advice on safe publication idioms

<u>NOTE</u>: For clarity and simplicity, up to now, we did not take initialization concerns into account. But from now on we will.

Immutability

- An immutable object is one whose state cannot be changed after initialization
  - You can think of it as a constant
  - The **`final`** keyword in Java prevents modification of fields
    – Remember that variables assigned to an object only hold a reference to the object

- A immutable class is one whose instances are immutable objects

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Are immutable classes thread-safe?

Immutable class & `final`

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Does defining all fields as `final` ensure that the class is immutable?

Immutable class & `final`

Does defining all fields as `final` ensure that the class is immutable?

If in a class, no fields are defined as `final`, is possible to make it immutable?

Immutability

- To ensure thread-safety of immutable classes you simply need to make sure:
    - No fields can be modified after publication
    - Objects are safely published
    - Access to inner mutable object do not escape

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```
public final class ThreeStooges {
  private final Set<String> stooges = new HashSet<String>();

  public ThreeStooges () {
    stooges.add("Moe");
    stooges.add("Larry");
    stooges.add("Curly");
  }

  public Boolean isStooge(String name) {
    return stooges.contains(name)
  }
}
```

Goetz p. 47

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Why is this class thread-safe?
(tip: there are 3 main reasons)

Goetz p. 47

Mutual exclusion

- Whenever shared <u>mutable</u> state is accessed by several threads is must be protected by locks

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Are Monitors a thread-safe class?
(when implemented as a class in OO languages)

Is it always necessary to use locks in the methods of thread-safe classes?

Thread-safe classes

- To analyse thread-safe in a class, we must identify/consider:
  - Identify the class state
  - Make sure that mutable class state does not escape
  - Ensure safe publication
  - Whenever possible define class state as immutable
  - If class state must be mutable, ensure mutual exclusion

Interesting section (4.5) on documenting synchronization in Goetz. Unfortunately, not widespread.

Instance confinement

- *Instance confinement* refers to encapsulating access to a thread-unsafe object into a thread-safe class

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```
public class PersonSet {
  private final Set<Person> mySet = new HashSet<Person>();

  public synchronized void addPerson (Person p) {
    mySet.add(p);
  }

  public synchronized boolean contains(Person p) {
    return mySet.contains(p);
  }
}
```

Goetz p. 59

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Goetz p. 59

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Synchronized collections

- Java's standard library provides a method to convert ordinary collections in to "synchronized" collections
  - **`synchronizedCollection(Collection<T> c)`**, **`synchronizedList(List<T> l)`**, **`synchronizedSet(Set<T> s)`**, …, **`synchronizedXXX(XXX<T> x)`** with **`XXX`** a Java collection.
  - Internally, these methods turn all the methods in the collection into synchronized
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Are synchronized collections thread-safe?

Let's look at the Javadoc (https://docs.oracle.com/javase/8/docs/api/java/util/Collections.html#synchronizedList-java.util.List-)

Remember: *thread-safe <u>class</u>* $\not\Rightarrow$ *thread-safe <u>program</u>*

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```
List<Integer> l = new ArrayList<Integer>();
List<Integer> lSync = Collections.synchronizedList(l);

…

new Thread(() -> { addIfAbsent(lSync,1); }).start();
new Thread(() -> { addIfAbsent(lSync,1); }).start();

…

public void add1IfAbsent(List l, Integer e) {
  if (!l.contains(e))
    l.add(e);
}
```

Remember: *thread-safe <u>class</u>* $\nRightarrow$ *thread-safe <u>program</u>*

Is this <u>program</u> thread-safe?

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Extending thread-safe classes

- Thread-safe classes may be extended to include compound actions
  - Intuitively, compound actions can be seen as critical sections executing more than one method or field access
  - A common examples are: *check-and-set,* iteration, navigation (*contains*)

```
public void addIfAbsent(List l, Integer e) {
  synchronized (l) {
    if (!l.contains(e))
      l.add(e);
  }
}
```

Thread uses the intrinsic lock of a synchronized collection

```
class ThreadSafeList {
  …
  public void synchronized addIfAbsent(T e) {
    if (!l.contains(e))
        l.add(e);
  }
  …
}
```

Thread-safe class is extended with a custom method to perform the action

Other synchronization primitives (synchronizers)

Semaphores

- Semaphores are synchronization primitives that allow at most *c* number of threads in the critical section where *c* is called the *capacity*
  - First introduced by Dijkstra
- A semaphore consists of:
  - An integer capacity (*c*), [permits in Java]
    - Initial number of threads allowed in the critical section
  - A method **`acquire()`**
    - Checks if $c > 0$, if so, it decrements capacity by one (c--) and allows the calling thread to make progress, otherwise it blocks the thread
    - It is a blocking call
  - A method **`release()`**
    - It checks whether there are waiting threads, if so, it wakes up one of them, otherwise it increases the capacity by one (c++)
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Synchronization primitives that only allow one thread in the critical section are called ***mutex*** (which is short for mutual exclusion)

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Semaphores | Intuition

- You can think of a semaphore as a "bouncer" to enter a critical section or to be allowed to used a shared resource

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Semaphores | Example

- Semaphores are typically used to controlled the number of threads that can access a resource

```
ReadWriteMonitor m = new ReadWriteMonitor();
Semaphore semReaders = new Semaphore(5,true);
Semaphore semWriters = new Semaphore(5,true);
for (int i = 0; i < 10; i++) {
    // start a reader
    new Thread(() -> {
            semReaders.acquire();
            m.readLock();
            // read
            m.readUnlock();
            semReaders.release();
    }).start();

    // start a writer
    new Thread(() -> {
            semWriters.acquire();
            m.writeLock();
            // write
            m.writeUnlock();
            semWriters.acquire();
    }).start();
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Java semaphores have a fair flag so that their entry queue prioritizes the longest waiting thread

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```

Java semaphores have a fair flag so that their entry queue prioritizes the longest waiting thread

What would happen if we acquire and release the semaphore in side the lock

See **`ReadersWritersSemaphore.java`**

Barriers

- *Barriers* are synchronization primitives used to wait until several thread reach some point in their computation

Barriers | Intuition

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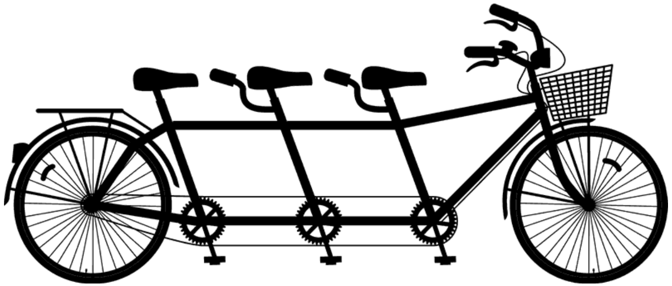

Barriers | Intuition

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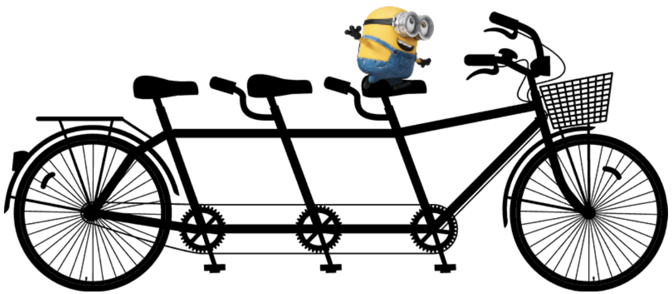

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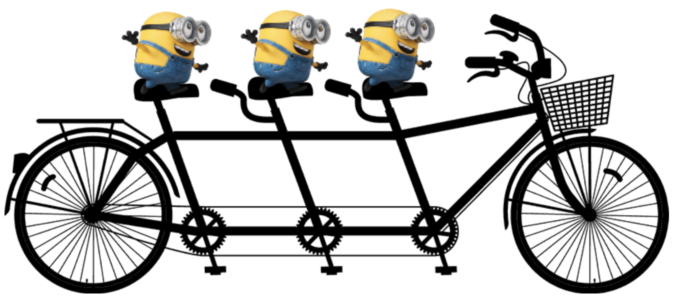

Barriers

- *Barriers* are synchronization primitives used to wait until several thread reach some point in their computation

- Barriers consists of
  - A number *parties* to wait for
  - A method **`await()`**
    - If the number of waiting threads is less than *parties*, then the calling thread blocks, otherwise all waiting threads wake up and the calling thread is allowed to make progress

- Java includes the class **`CyclicBarrier`**
  - After *parties* called **`await()`**, then the state is reset and the barrier behaves as initially

Barrier Example | Parallel initialization

- Several threads a used to initialize an array (each a different position), the barrier is used for threads to know when the initialization is finished
  - This example is a bit artificial, but it illustrates the use of barriers.

```
int parties         = 10;
CyclicBarrier cb    = new CyclicBarrier(parties);
int[] shared_array = new int[parties];
…
for (int i = 0; i < parties; i++) {
  new SetterClass(i).start();
}
…
public class SetterClass extends Thread {
  int index;
  public SetterClass(int index) {this.index = index;}

  public void run() {
    shared_array[index] = index+1;
    cb.await();
    // After this point the array is initialized and it is safe to read it
  }
}
```

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See `BarrierExample.java`

Producer-consumer problem

- Consider a shared data structure of fixed size from which threads may add and remove elements
- *Producer* threads may add elements to the structure as long as it is not full
  - If the structure is full and a producer tries to add an element, it must block until there an element is removed
- *Consumer* threads remove elements to the structure as long as it is not empty
  - If the structure is empty and a consumer tries to remove an element, then it must block until an element is added
- A good solution to the problem must be deadlock free and (possibly) starvation free

Producer-consumer problem | Intuition

- Perhaps more intuitive example

Consumers

Producers

Shared data structure of fixed size

Producer-consumer problem

- The producer-consumer problem appears in many multi-threaded situates
  - Handling access to a shared bounded data structure
  - Controlling access to limited computational resources
    - E.g., thread pools
  - Asynchronous I/O operations
    - External devices may at as producers providing data to the system (keyboard, mouse, etc…), or consumer obtaining tasks to perform (IoT devices)

Agenda

- Thread-safe classes
- Safe publication
- Immutability
- Instance confinement
- Synchronization primitives (synchronizers)
  - Semaphores
  - Barriers
- Producer-consumer problem