Concurrency

Motivation

- Operating systems (and application programs) often need to be able to handle multiple things happening at the same time
  - Process execution, interrupts, background tasks, system maintenance
- Humans are not very good at keeping track of multiple things happening simultaneously
- Threads are an abstraction to help bridge this gap

Why Concurrency?

- Servers
  - Multiple connections handled simultaneously
- Parallel programs
  - To achieve better performance
- Programs with user interfaces
  - To achieve user responsiveness while doing computation
- Network and disk bound programs
  - To hide network/disk latency

Definitions

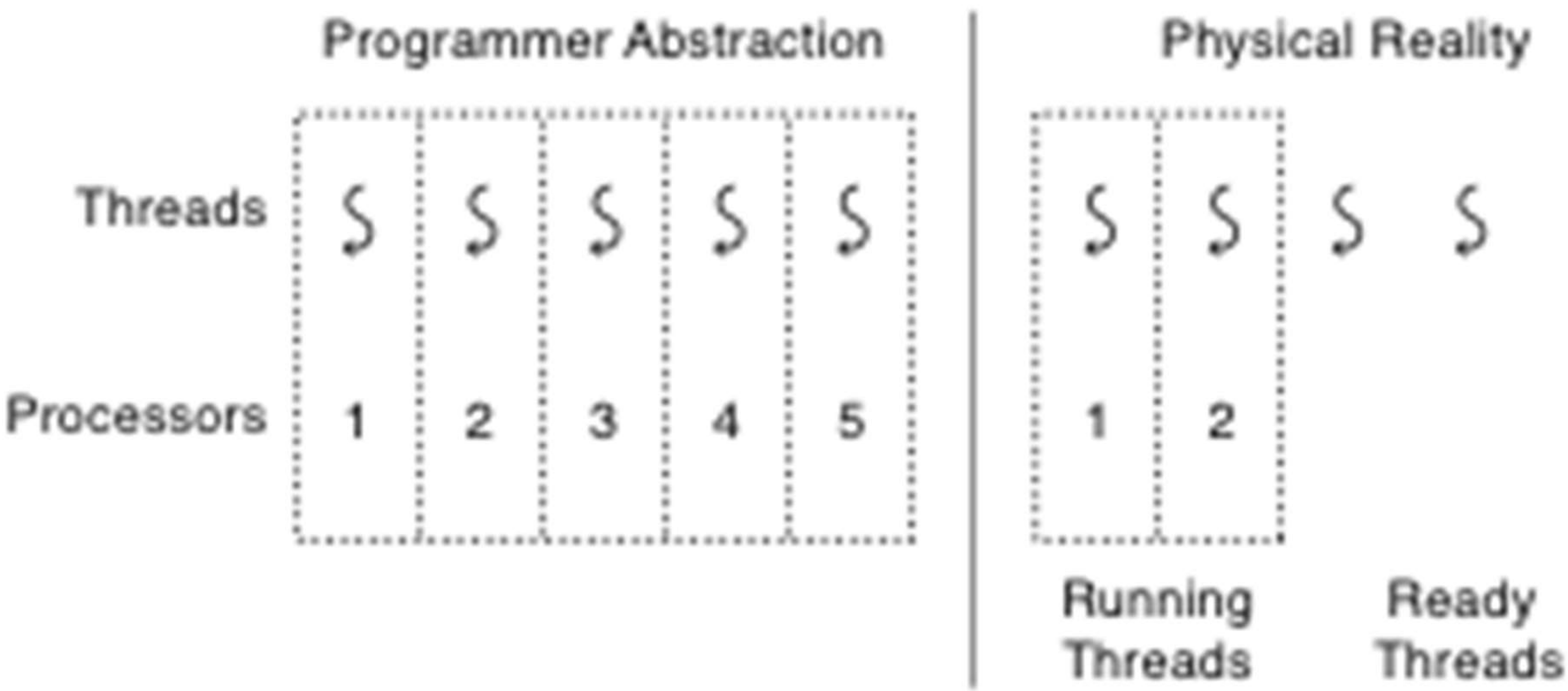
- A thread is a single execution sequence that represents a separately schedulable task
  - Single execution sequence: familiar programming model
  - Separately schedulable: OS can run or suspend a thread at any time
- Protection is an orthogonal concept
  - Can have one or many threads per protection domain

Threads in the Kernel and at User-Level

- Multi-threaded kernel
  - multiple threads, sharing kernel data structures, capable of using privileged instructions
- Multiprocess kernel
  - Multiple single-threaded processes
  - System calls access shared kernel data structures
- Multiple multi-threaded user processes
  - Each with multiple threads, sharing same data structures, isolated from other user processes

Thread Abstraction

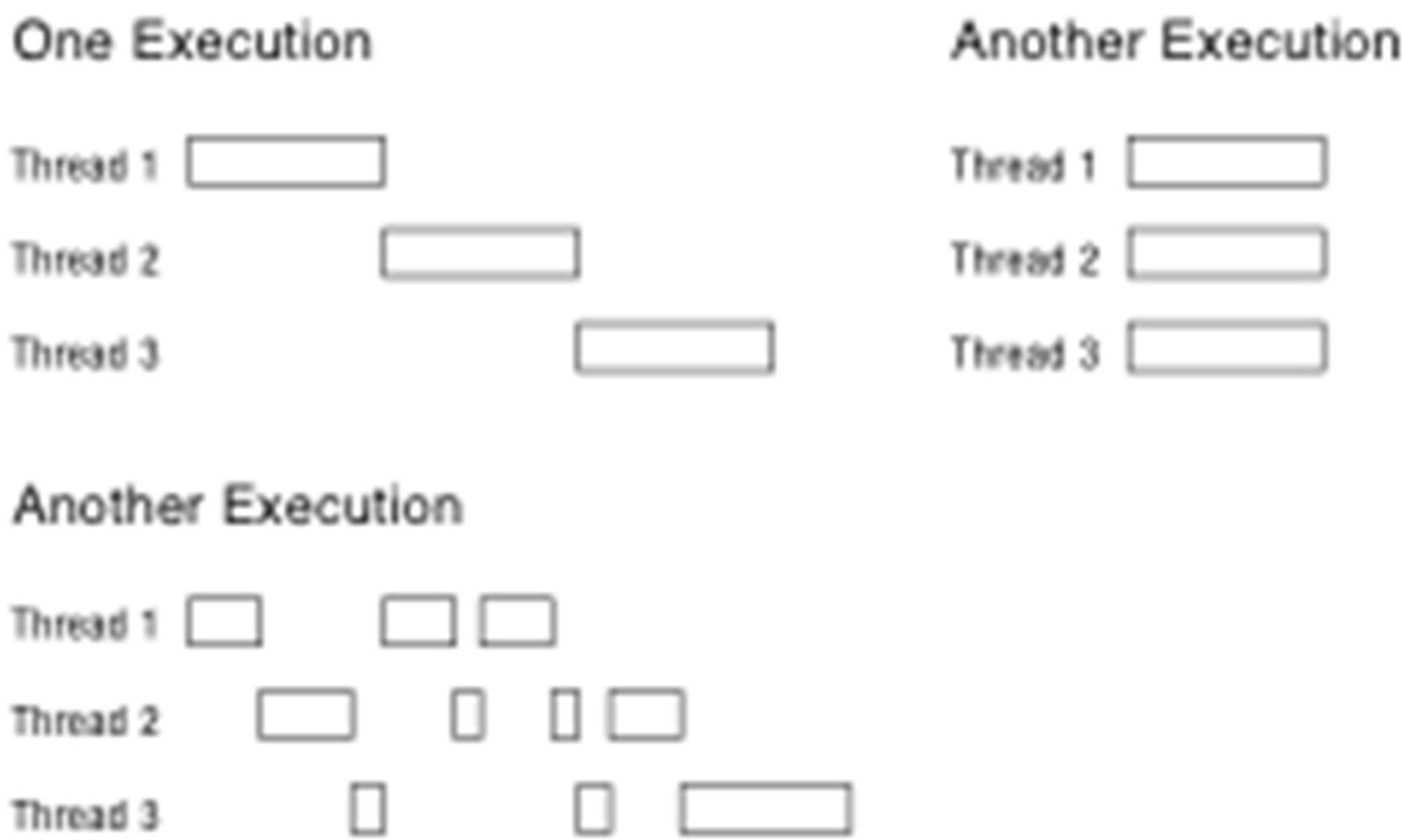
- Infinite number of processors
- Threads execute with variable speed
  - Programs must be designed to work with any schedule



Programmer vs. Processor View

Programmer's View	Possible Execution #1	Possible Execution #2	Possible Execution #3
.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.
x = x + 1;	x = x + 1;	x = x + 1;	x = x + 1;
y = y + x;	y = y + x;	....	y = y + x;
z = x + 5y;	z = x + 5y;	Thread is suspended.	....
.	.	Other thread(s) run.	Thread is suspended.
.	.	Thread is resumed.	Other thread(s) run.
.	.	....	Thread is resumed.
		y = y + x;	....
		z = x + 5y;	z = x + 5y;

Possible Executions



Thread Operations

- thread_create(thread, func, args)
  - Create a new thread to run func(args)
- thread_yield()
  - Relinquish processor voluntarily
- thread_join(thread)
  - In parent, wait for forked thread to exit, then return
- thread_exit
  - Quit thread and clean up, wake up joiner if any

Example: threadHello

```
#define NTHREADS 10
thread_t threads[NTHREADS];
main() {
   for (i = 0; i < NTHREADS; i++)  thread_create(&threads[i], &go, i);
   for (i = 0; i < NTHREADS; i++) {
      exitValue = thread_join(threads[i]);
      printf("Thread %d returned with %ld\n", i, exitValue);
   }
   printf("Main thread done.\n");
}
void go (int n) {
   printf("Hello from thread %d\n", n);
   thread_exit(100 + n);
   // REACHED?
}
```

threadHello: Example Output

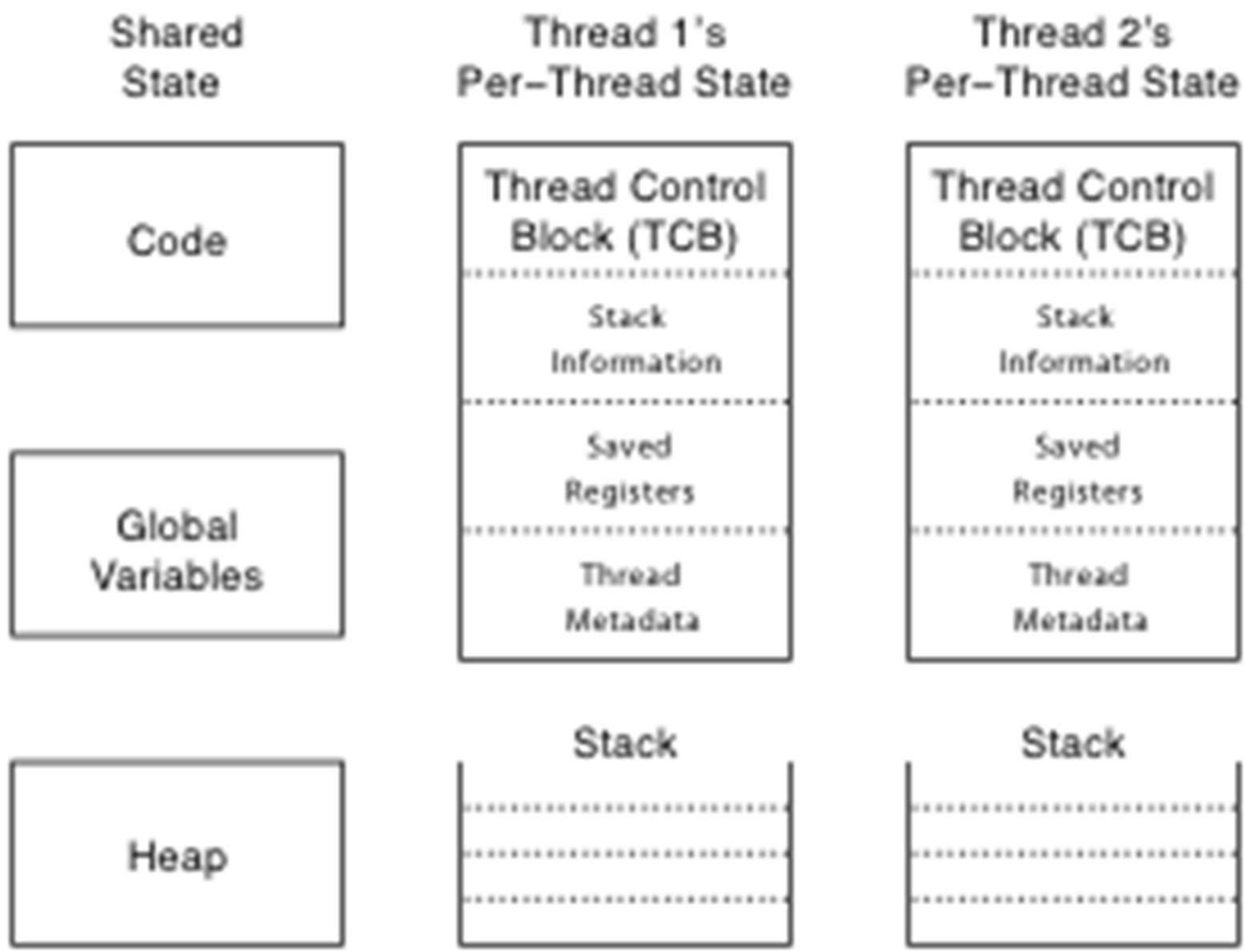
- Why must “thread returned” print in order?
- What is maximum # of threads running when thread 5 prints hello?
- Minimum?

```
bash-3.2$ ./threadHello
Hello from thread 0
Hello from thread 1
Thread 0 returned 100
Hello from thread 3
Hello from thread 4
Thread 1 returned 101
Hello from thread 5
Hello from thread 2
Hello from thread 6
Hello from thread 8
Hello from thread 7
Hello from thread 9
Thread 2 returned 102
Thread 3 returned 103
Thread 4 returned 104
Thread 5 returned 105
Thread 6 returned 106
Thread 7 returned 107
Thread 8 returned 108
Thread 9 returned 109
Main thread done.
```

Fork/Join Concurrency

- Threads can create children, and wait for their completion
- Data only shared before fork/after join
- Examples:
  - Web server: fork a new thread for every new connection
    - As long as the threads are completely independent
  - Merge sort
  - Parallel memory copy

Thread Data Structures

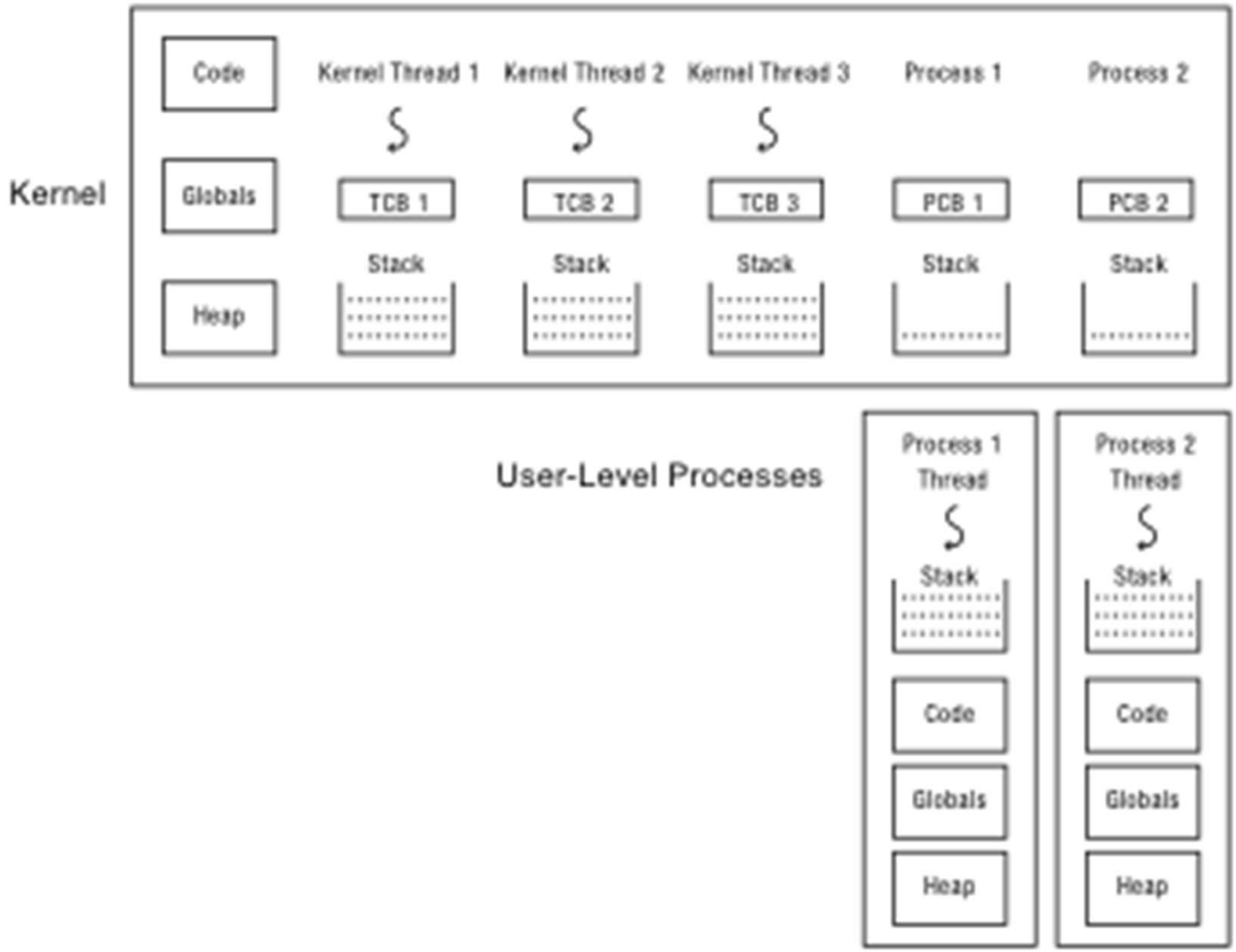


Thread Lifecycle

Implementing Threads: Roadmap

- Kernel threads
  - Thread abstraction only available to kernel
  - To the kernel, a kernel thread and a single threaded user process look quite similar
- Multithreaded processes using kernel threads (Linux, MacOS)
  - Kernel thread operations available via syscall
- User-level threads
  - Thread operations without system calls

Multithreaded OS Kernel



Implementing threads

- Thread_fork(func, args)
  - Allocate thread control block
  - Allocate stack
  - Build stack frame for base of stack (stub)
  - Put func, args on stack
  - Put thread on ready list
  - Will run sometime later (maybe right away!)
- stub(func, args): OS/161 mips_threadstart
  - Call (*func)(args)
  - If return, call thread_exit()

Thread Stack

- What if a thread puts too many procedures on its stack?
  - What happens in Java?
  - What happens in the Linux kernel?
  - What happens in OS/161?
  - What *should* happen?

Thread Context Switch

- Voluntary
  - Thread_yield
  - Thread_join (if child is not done yet)
- Involuntary
  - Interrupt or exception
  - Some other thread is higher priority

Voluntary thread context switch

- Save registers on old stack
- Switch to new stack, new thread
- Restore registers from new stack
- Return
- Exactly the same with kernel threads or user threads

OS/161 switchframe_switch

```
/* a0: old thread stack pointer
 * a1: new thread stack pointer */

/* Allocate stack space for 10 registers. */
  addi sp, sp, -40

  /* Save the registers */
  sw   ra, 36(sp)
  sw   gp, 32(sp)
  sw   s8, 28(sp)
  sw   s6, 24(sp)
  sw   s5, 20(sp)
  sw   s4, 16(sp)
  sw   s3, 12(sp)
  sw   s2, 8(sp)
  sw   s1, 4(sp)
  sw   s0, 0(sp)

  /* Store old stack pointer in old thread */
  sw   sp, 0(a0)
```

```
 /* Get new stack pointer from new thread */
  lw   sp, 0(a1)
  nop        /* delay slot for load */

/* Now, restore the registers */
  lw   s0, 0(sp)
  lw   s1, 4(sp)
  lw   s2, 8(sp)
  lw   s3, 12(sp)
  lw   s4, 16(sp)
  lw   s5, 20(sp)
  lw   s6, 24(sp)
  lw   s8, 28(sp)
  lw   gp, 32(sp)
  lw   ra, 36(sp)
  nop              /* delay slot for load */

  /* and return. */
  j ra
  addi sp, sp, 40     /* in delay slot */
```

x86 switch_threads

```
# Save caller's register state
#  NOTE: %eax, etc. are ephemeral
pushl %ebx
pushl %ebp
pushl %esi
pushl %edi

# Get offsetof (struct thread, stack)
mov thread_stack_ofs, %edx
# Save current stack pointer to old
    thread's stack, if any.
movl SWITCH_CUR(%esp), %eax
movl %esp, (%eax,%edx,1)

# Change stack pointer to new
    thread's stack
# this also changes currentThread
movl SWITCH_NEXT(%esp), %ecx
movl (%ecx,%edx,1), %esp

# Restore caller's register state.
popl %edi
popl %esi
popl %ebp
popl %ebx
ret
```

A Subtlety

- Thread_create puts new thread on ready list
- When it first runs, some thread calls switchframe
  - Saves old thread state to stack
  - Restores new thread state from stack
- Set up new thread's stack as if it had saved its state in switchframe
  - "returns" to stub at base of stack to run func

Two Threads Call Yield

Thread 1's instructions	Thread 2's instructions	Processor's instructions
"return" from thread_switch into stub		"return" from thread_switch into stub
call go		call go
call thread_yield		call thread_yield
choose another thread		choose another thread
call thread_switch		call thread_switch
save thread 1 state to TCB		save thread 1 state to TCB
load thread 2 state		load thread 2 state
	"return" from thread_switch into stub	"return" from thread_switch into stub
	call go	call go
	call thread_yield	call thread_yield
	choose another thread	choose another thread
	call thread_switch	call thread_switch
	save thread 2 state to TCB	save thread 2 state to TCB
	load thread 1 state	load thread 1 state
return from thread_switch		return from thread_switch
return from thread_yield		return from thread_yield
call thread_yield		call thread_yield
choose another thread		choose another thread
call thread_switch		call thread_switch

Involuntary Thread/Process Switch

- Timer or I/O interrupt
  - Tells OS some other thread should run
- Simple version (OS/161)
  - End of interrupt handler calls switch()
  - When resumed, return from handler resumes kernel thread or user process
  - Thus, processor context is saved/restored twice (once by interrupt handler, once by thread switch)

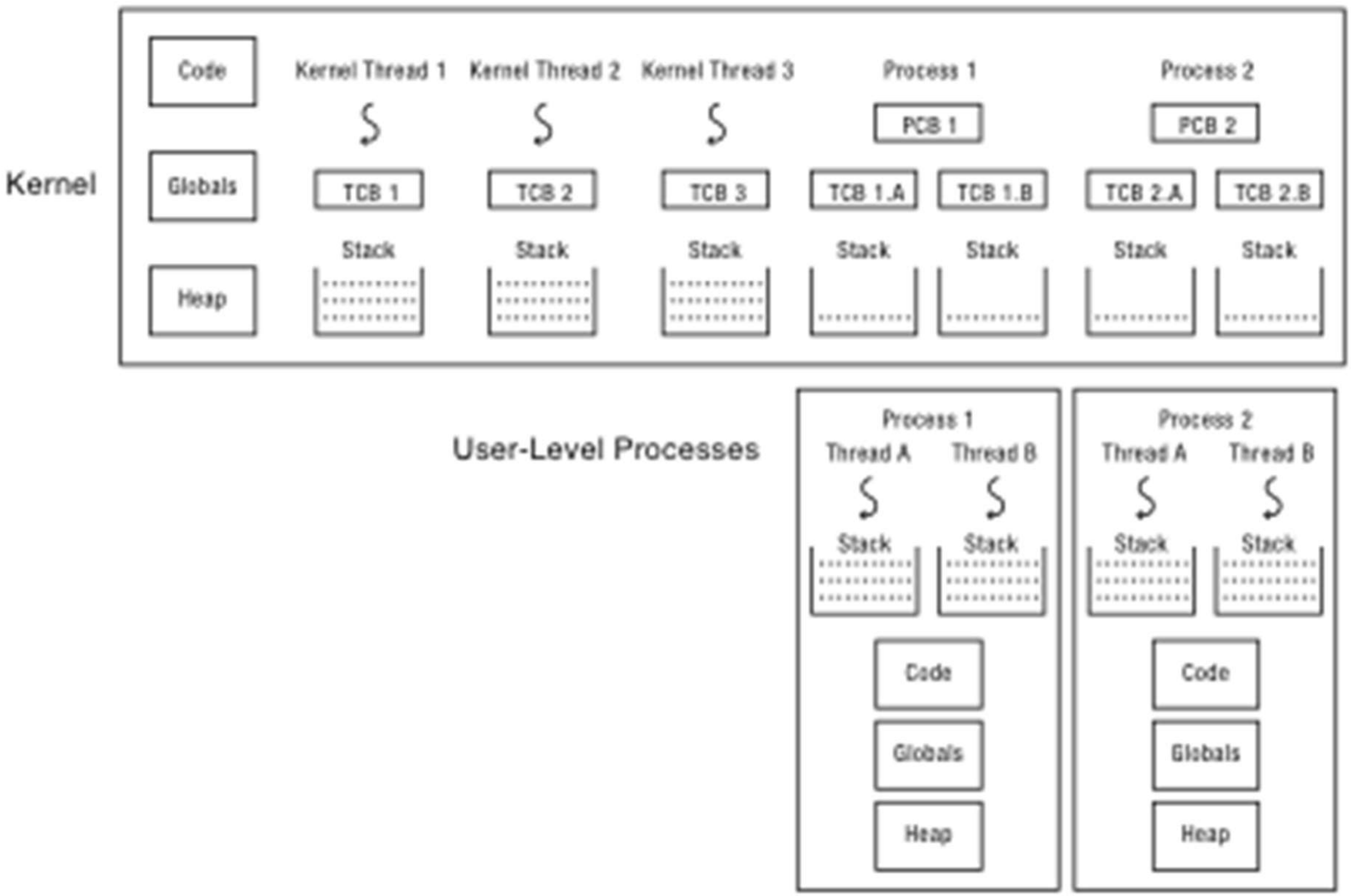
Faster Thread/Process Switch

- What happens on a timer (or other) interrupt?
  - Interrupt handler saves state of interrupted thread
  - Decides to run a new thread
  - Throw away current state of interrupt handler!
  - Instead, set saved stack pointer to trapframe
  - Restore state of new thread
  - On resume, pops trapframe to restore interrupted thread

Multithreaded User Processes (Take 1)

- User thread = kernel thread (Linux, MacOS)
  - System calls for thread fork, join, exit (and lock, unlock,…)
  - Kernel does context switch
  - Simple, but a lot of transitions between user and kernel mode

Multithreaded User Processes (Take 1)



Multithreaded User Processes (Take 2)

- Green threads (early Java)
  - User-level library, within a single-threaded process
  - Library does thread context switch
  - Preemption via upcall/UNIX signal on timer interrupt
  - Use multiple processes for parallelism
    - Shared memory region mapped into each process

Multithreaded User Processes (Take 3)

- Scheduler activations (Windows 8)
  - Kernel allocates processors to user-level library
  - Thread library implements context switch
  - Thread library decides what thread to run next
- Upcall whenever kernel needs a user-level scheduling decision
  - Process assigned a new processor
  - Processor removed from process
  - System call blocks in kernel

Question

- Compare event-driven programming with multithreaded concurrency. Which is better in which circumstances, and why?