



Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

## Computer Architecture and Assembly Language Lab

Spring 2016

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### Lab 2

#### **Control Flow (including loops and branches), Inputs & Outputs, Making decisions**

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#### **Goal**

In this Laboratory, you will learn how to use flow control, inputs and outputs and how to make decisions in the assembly language. It will include branch and loops. Before, you have learned in lab 1 how to read the input variables and print them as an output. After this lab you will have the knowledge for using loop and branch instructions with MIPS processors.

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#### **Preparation**

Please carefully read the second chapter of the textbook (Patterson and Hennessy 5<sup>th</sup> edition) and also the SPIM instructions in Appendix A.10 in the textbook before attending the lab.

You should also look at the tutorial under “resources” on Sakai. Any additional material will be uploaded on the Sakai “resources”. The *QtSpim* program needed to do the lab exercises has been installed on the ECE 103 computers. To acquire this software for your personal computer, you can download it from <http://sourceforge.net/projects/spimsimulator/files> .

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## Introduction [1, 2]

As you have seen in the first Lab, *Qtspim* is a simulator that runs MIPS 32 programs. By clicking on the icon Qtspim.exe on the screen, two windows will appear, the first one is *Qtspim* window that you can run your program on it and the other one is a console window that displays the result to you (Figure 1).

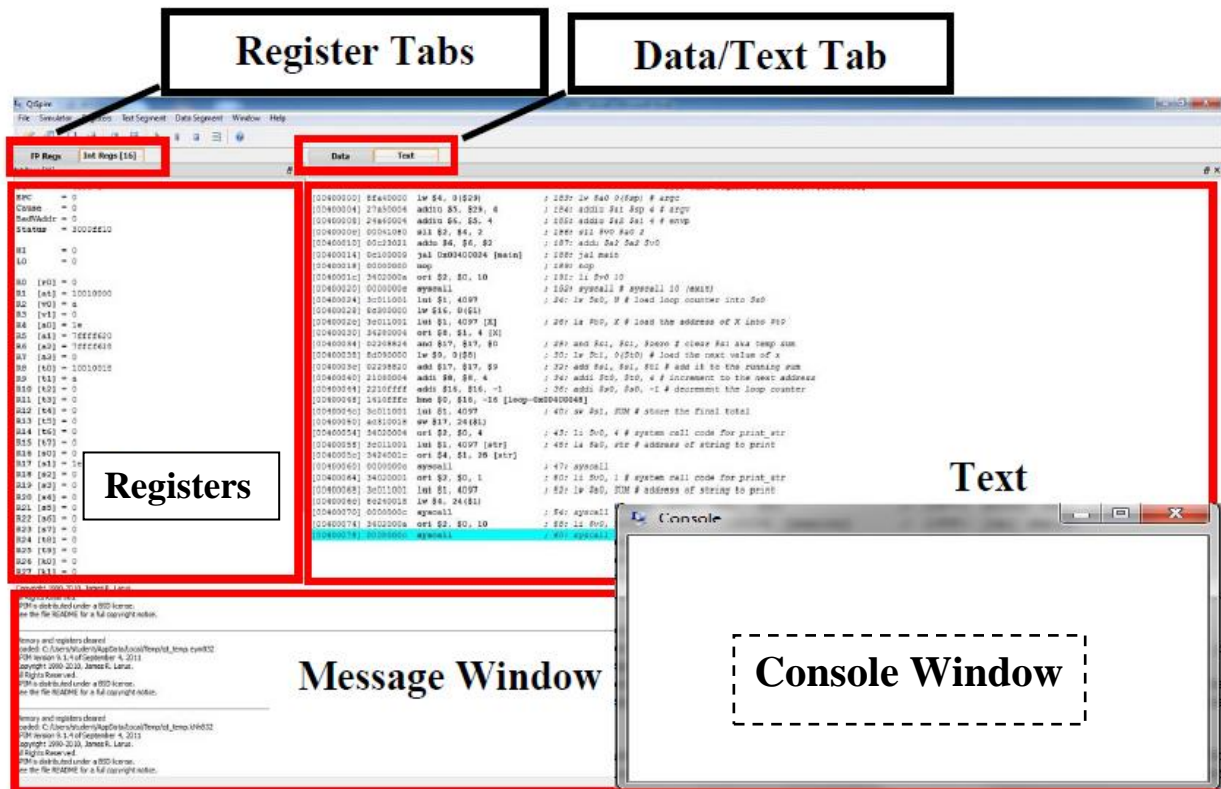


Figure 1: The *Qtspim*'s windows

For running your program, you have to do the following:

1. Create a new text file, write your codes and save it as **x.asm** or **x.s**.
2. Click on the **File** button and choose **Reinitialize and Load File** and load your program (Figure 2)
3. You can run your program at once using the **Run** icon from **Simulator** on the menu bar or using the function key **F5**. For running your program line by line, you can use the F10 function key.
4. You can follow the results by looking at the registers in the left window.(Figure 3)



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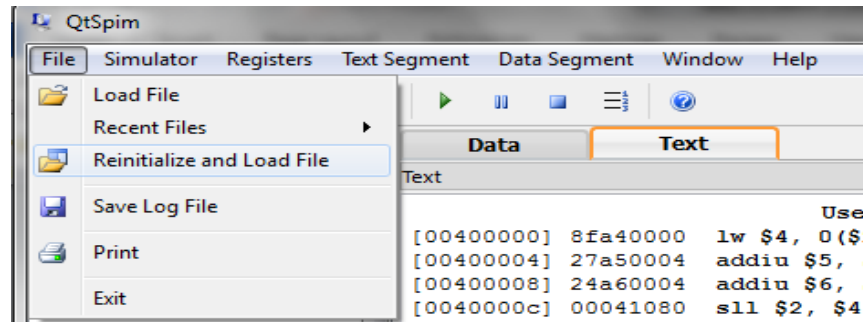


Figure 2: Run the program

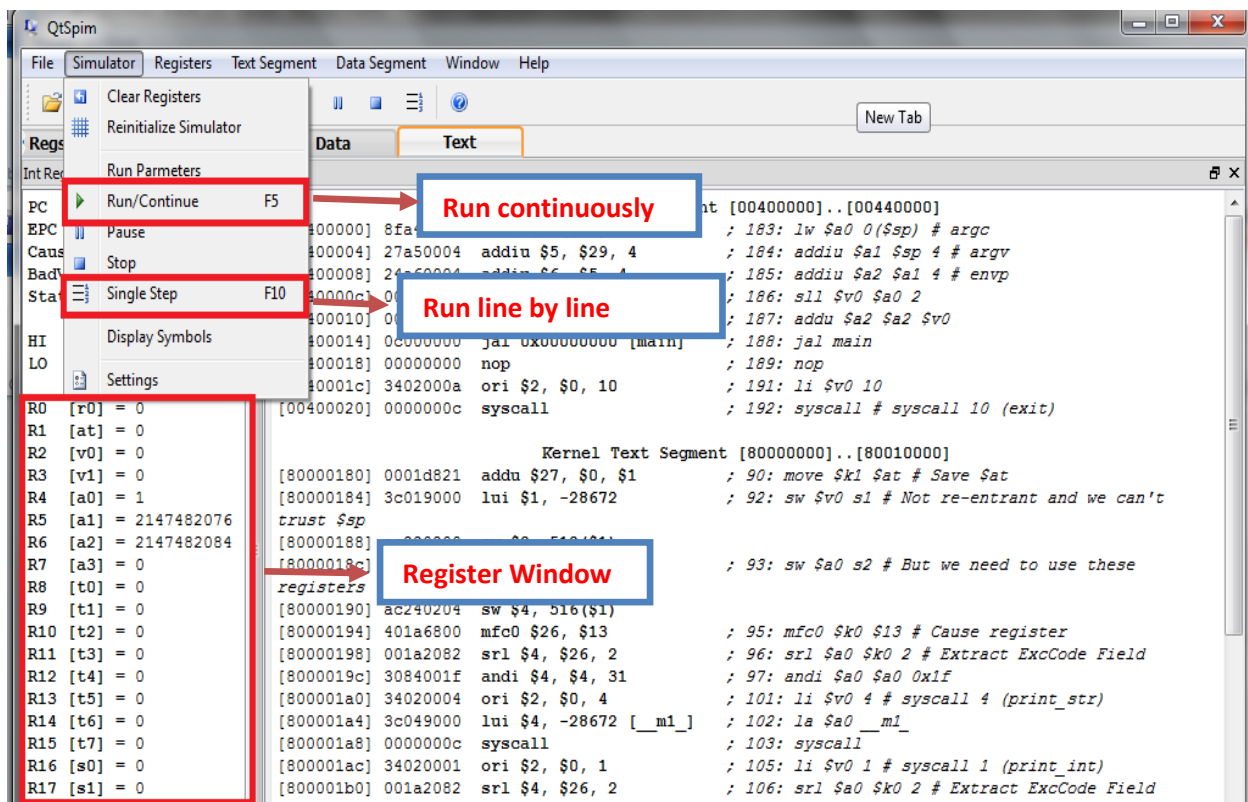


Figure 3: Run the program

Before doing Laboratory 2 you must be familiar with the process of reading and printing the integer in SPIM. In SPIM, execution of a program starts from the very top instruction, which we always labeled it as **main** for convenience. A label is a symbolic name for an address in



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memory. In MIPS assembly, a label is a symbol name, followed by a colon. Labels must be the first item on the line. Below, you can see the way we are using labels to show the beginning of the program. It is a simple program that computes the sum of 1 and 2. Copy the below codes to a text file name as **Ex1** and **reinitialize** it and run.

```
# add.asm-- A program that computes the sum of 1 and 2,  
# leaving the result in register $t0.  
# Registers used:  
# t0 - used to hold the result.  
# t1 - used to hold the constant 1.  
  
main:  
li    $t1, 1                # load 1 into $t1.  
addi  $t0, $t1, 2           # $t0 = $t1 + 2.  
  
# end of add.asm
```

The end of a program is defined in a very different way. Similar to C, where the exit function can be called in order to halt the execution of a program, one way to halt a MIPS program is with something analogous to calling **exit** in C. Unlike C, however, if you forget to "call exit" your program will not gracefully exit when it reaches the end of the main function. The way to tell SPIM that it should stop executing your program, and also to do a number of other useful things, is with a special instruction called a **syscall**. The **syscall** instruction suspends the execution of your program and transfers control to the operating system. Copy the below code into the text file **Ex2** and run to see how you can exit from the program.



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```
# add.asm-- A program that computes the sum of 1 and 2,  
# leaving the result in register $t0.  
# Registers used:  
# t0 - used to hold the result.  
# t1 - used to hold the constant 1.  
# v0 - syscall parameter.  
  
main:                # SPIM starts execution at main.  
li    $t1, 1         # load 1 into $t1.  
addi  $t0, $t1, 2     # compute the sum of $t1 and 2, and put it into  
$t0.  
  
li    $v0, 10         # syscall code 10 is for exit.  
syscall              # make the syscall.  
  
# end of add.asm
```

We see that the exit process is done by placing a 10 (the number for the exit **syscall**) into register **\$v0** before executing the **syscall** instruction.

## Input and Output

Now we will see how we can do reading and printing integers in MIPS. Both of these operations can be done using **syscall** instructions with the proper instruction code (see Appendix at the end of this manual). Use the below codes as Ex3 and run the program. This program shows you how to read two integer numbers and print the difference of the two numbers in the console window.



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```
# sub2.asm-- A program that computes and prints the difference
# of two numbers specified at runtime by the user.
# Registers used:
# $t0 - used to hold the first number.
# $t1 - used to hold the second number.
# $t2 - used to hold the difference of the $t1 and $t2.
# $v0 - syscall parameter and return value.
# $a0 - syscall parameter.

main:

## Get first number from user, put into $t0.
li $v0, 4          # load syscall print string
la $a0, str1       # load address of str1 to register a0
syscall            # make the syscall.

li $v0, 5          # load syscall read_int into $v0.
syscall            # make the syscall.
move $t0, $v0      # move the number read into $t0.

## Get second number from user, put into $t1.
li $v0, 4          # load syscall print string
```



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```
la $a0, str2      # load address of str2 to register a0
syscall          # make the syscall.

li $v0, 5         # load syscall read_int into $v0.
syscall          # make the syscall.
move $t1, $v0     # move the number read into $t1.
sub $t2, $t0, $t1 # compute the difference.

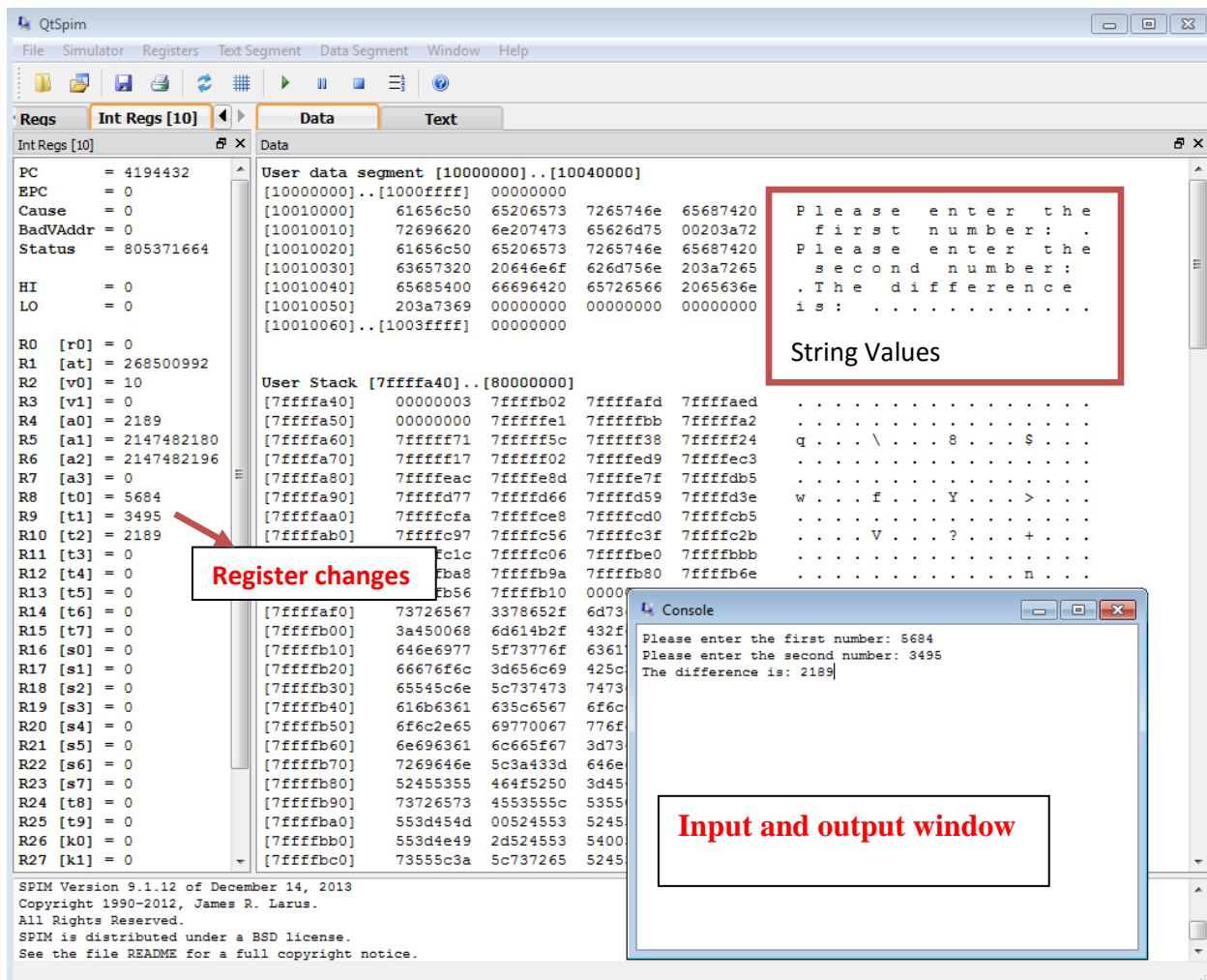
## Print out $t2.
li $v0, 4         # load syscall print string
la $a0, str3      # load address of str3 to register a0
syscall          #make the call
move $a0, $t2     # move the number to print into $a0.
li $v0, 1         # load syscall print_int into $v0.
syscall          # make the syscall.
li $v0, 10        # syscall code 10 is for exit.
syscall          # make the syscall.

.data
str1: .asciiz "Please enter the first number: "
str2: .asciiz "Please enter the second number: "
str3: .asciiz "The difference is equal to: "
# end of sub2.asm.
```



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As the example above indicates, for reading the integers you must use **syscall** instruction in combination with the **\$v0** register containing a value of 5. When it's done, the OS waits for keyboard input until user presses **Enter**. Afterwards, the input value will be stored in the **\$v0** register. The story is the same for printing an integer to the output. In this case we use **syscall** and loads 1 into the **\$v0** register, which says to the OS that we want to print out an integer. Also, for printing an integer, its value must be first loaded in the argument register **\$a0** before calling the **syscall** instruction. Also, for printing a string, its address needs to be put into register **\$a0** and the constant 4 into **\$v0** before using **syscall**. As an example see the three strings in sub2.asm above. You can also see the contents in the Data tab of the simulator.



**Figure 4:** Program for subtracting two numbers and print the result with the proper messages.





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## Loops and Branches

If you need to write a program that does some repetitive jobs, you may need to use loops and branches in your code. You can use branch instruction to jump from one part of the code to another. The basic concept of a loop hides in using branch instructions, carefully. For example, you can use the label **Loop** and after that some instructions. When you want another iteration to be executed you must use **b** command by doing **b Loop**. Also, there must be a condition for breaking from the loop. For example you can use **beqz \$t0, endloop** and it means that if register **t0** is equal to zero then go to **endloop** label. To show how loops and branches work in assembly see the following example. This example is a simple one only for introducing loop and branches and does not do anything important.

```
1 # branch.asm- Loop and Branches program.
2 # Registers used:
3 # $t0 - used to hold the number of iteration
4 # $t1 - used to hold the counter value in each iteration
5 # $v0 - syscall parameter and return value.
6 # $a0 - syscall parameter-- the string to print.

7 .text
8 main:
9  li    $t0, 5           # init the number of loop.
10 li    $t1, 0           # init the counter of the loop

11 loop:
12  beq $t0, $t1, endloop # if $t0==$t1 then go to endloop
13  addi $t1, $t1, 1      # increment the counter, i.e. $t1++
```



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```
14 b loop                # branch to loop label

15 endloop:

16 li    $v0, 10          # 10 is the exit syscall.
17 syscall                # do the syscall.
```

As you can see in this example, a part of the code is labeled as **loop**. The **b** instruction in this code does a branch to where the **loop** label is placed. But every loop needs a condition to stop. By using the branch if equal (**beq**) instruction the program is checking if the condition \$t1 is equal to \$t0 is satisfied or not. If the condition is satisfied it branches to the label specified in this instruction (here is the **endloop** label), otherwise another iteration of the loop is executed.

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## Assignments

The *QtSpim* program needed to do these exercises has been installed on the ECE 103 computers.

### Assignment 1

Try to interpret the above code for yourself and guess how many iterations it will do. If we replace the line 12 with **blt \$t0, \$t1, endloop** or **bge \$t0, \$t1, endloop** or **bnez \$t1, endloop**, how does it affect the number of iterations? Explain the reasons.

### Assignment 2

Write a program in MIPS to print out the largest prime number which is smaller than 300. (Please make sure to write your pseudo-code first and include it in the report.)



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### Assignment 3

Write a program in MIPS to ask user to input two integers between 10 to 500. If the input number is out of the boundary or one input number is divisible by the other, an error message should be printed. Otherwise, calculate the sum of all even numbers between the two input numbers (excluding the two). (Please make sure to write your pseudo-code first and include it in the report.)

### Assignment 4

Write a program to print out a diamond of letters '\*' as the following example. The number of lines **n** are inputted from user. (Please make sure to write your pseudo-code first and include it in the report.)

Example:

The number of lines? **5**

```
*  
***  
*****  
***  
*
```

### Assignment 5

Write a MIPS program that asks users to setup a password (with length between 6 and 10; both upper and lower case letters should be included). First let the user enter a string and check if it meets all the requirements. If not, print out an error message and ask the user to enter another string. In the case the user does not enter a proper string again, the program terminates with an appropriate message. Otherwise, after storing the password, again ask the user to re-enter the password. If it is correct, print an appropriate message. Otherwise, give 2 more chances to the



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user to enter the password. If the user cannot reenter the same password, display an appropriate message on the screen.

Example program output on console:

```
Set a password: Lab

Failed. Please enter a password with the size of 6 to 10!

Set a password: Lablab

Re-enter the password: Lab

Incorrect, you have 2 more chance! Please re-enter the password:
Lablab

Password is setup.
```

### Assignment 6

Write a MIPS program that converts a hex string into its binary representation. The hex string should only consist of digit characters '0', '1', ..., '9' and characters 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E', 'F'. Your program should output an error if the input hex string is invalid.

Example program output on console:

```
Hex string: 1A
Its binary value: 00011010
```

```
Hex string: 3R
Invalid hex string
```

### Assignment 7

Write a program that takes an array (input from user and can be arbitrary size). It returns the sorted array using bubble sort, and print out the median, the number of positive integers, negative integers, and zeros in an array of integers. The last element of the array should have the value 0xF, which is not used for the calculations and not counted for the size. Display those numbers with appropriate message on the console output. For example, assume an array as follows:

```
(Array1: .word 12, 2, -4, 16, 5, -20, 0, 10, 0xF)
```



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Sorted Array: -20 -4 0 2 5 10 12 16

The median is: 3

The number of positives is: 5

The number of negatives is: 2

The number of zeroes is: 1

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## Lab report

Write a proper report including your codes, results (snapshot of output) and the conclusion of assignments and convert it to **pdf** format. Please also attach the **code** files (\*.s,\*.asm) to **Sakai** together with the report. Each lab report is **due** before the start of the next lab. Please include your name and Student ID in both report and the code.

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## References

1. Patterson and Hennessy, "Computer Organization and Design: The Hardware / Software interface", 5<sup>h</sup> Edition, 2014.
  2. Daniel J. Ellard, "MIPS Assembly Language Programming: CS50 Discussion and Project Book", September 1994.
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## Appendix

You can see here some useful MIPS assembly language instructions and their descriptions.

**Table 1:** Basic MIPS Instructions

Instruction	Operand	Description
li	des, const	Load the constant const into des.
lw	des, addr	Load the word at addr into des.
add	des, src1, src2	des gets src1 + src2.
sub	des, src1, src2	des gets src1 - src2.
move	des, src1	Copy the contents of src1 to des.



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div	src1, reg2	Divide src1 by reg2, leaving the quotient in register lo and the remainder in register hi.
div	des, src1, src2	des gets src1 / src2.
mfhi	des	Copy the contents of the hi register to des.
mflo	des	Copy the contents of the lo register to des.
mthi	src1	Copy the contents of the src1 to hi.
mtlo	src1	Copy the contents of the src1 to lo.
mul	des, src1, src2	des gets src1 * src2
mult	src1, reg2	Multiply src1 and reg2, leaving the low-order word in register lo and the high-order word in register hi.
rem	des, src1, src2	des gets the remainder of dividing src1 by src2.
<b>syscall</b>		Makes a system call (refer to table 2 for more information)

**Table 2: SPIM syscall**

Service	Code	Arguments
print int	1	\$a0
print float	2	\$f12
print double	3	\$f12
print string	4	\$a0
read int	5	none
read float	6	none
read double	7	none
read string	8	\$a0 (address), \$a1 (length)
sbrk	9	\$a0 (length)
exit	10	none

**Table 3: Branch Instructions**

Instruction	Operand	Description
b	lab	Unconditional branch to lab.
beq	src1, src2, lab	Branch to lab if src1 = src2.
bne	src1, src2, lab	Branch to lab if src1 $\neq$ src2.
bge	src1, src2, lab	Branch to lab if src1 $\geq$ src2.
bgt	src1, src2, lab	Branch to lab if src1 > src2.
ble	src1, src2, lab	Branch to lab if src1 $\leq$ src2.
blt	src1, src2, lab	Branch to lab if src1 < src2.
beqz	src1, lab	Branch to lab if src1 = 0.



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bnez	src1, lab	Branch to lab if src1 $\neq$ 0.
bgez	src1, lab	Branch to lab if src1 $\geq$ 0.
bgtz	src1, lab	Branch to lab if src1 $>$ 0.
blez	src1, lab	Branch to lab if src1 $\leq$ 0.
bltz	src1, lab	Branch to lab if src1 $<$ 0.
bgezal	src1, lab	If src1 $\geq$ 0, then put the address of the next instruction into \$ra and branch to lab.
bgtzal	src1, lab	If src1 $>$ 0, then put the address of the next instruction into \$ra and branch to lab.
bltzal	src1, lab	If src1 $<$ 0, then put the address of the next instruction into \$ra and branch to lab.