

Linux, Pointers and pthreads

Edward Zhang

SOFTENG 370 T1

Hello!

I'm in Part IV, and you probably remember me from SOFTENG 251, SOFTENG 206, and SOFTENG 254

- ▶ Ask questions on Piazza instead of emailing me so your classmates can see the answers (also such that Robert can answer questions that I can't, such as specifics regarding what you can and can't do in the assignment)
- ▶ If you want to meet, email me first at ezha210@aucklanduni.ac.nz
- ▶ These slides will be on Canvas, and any source code demonstrated along with TeX source code for these slides can be found on github.com/encryptededdy

You need a UNIX system

Some ways to get a UNIX system to do this assignment

- ▶ Dual Boot Linux
- ▶ Run Linux in a Virtual Machine
- ▶ Run natively on macOS
 - ▶ Probably won't work for Assignment 2 (no FUSE)
- ▶ Run within Windows Subsystem for Linux (WSL)
 - ▶ Probably won't work for Assignment 2 (no FUSE)
- ▶ Run within Windows Subsystem for Linux 2 (WSL2)
 - ▶ Unreleased, unless you want to run Insider Fast Ring (not recommended)

On Virtual Machines

You can use any distro you want, but you'll probably be able to get more help when googling if you use one of the more popular desktop ones.

- ▶ Ubuntu (probably 18.04 LTS)
- ▶ Fedora Workstation (my personal preference)
- ▶ Debian
- ▶ Arch (great wiki, and u use arch btw), Manjaro if you actually want an installer

Hypervisors

Oracle's VirtualBox is the usual free go-to. I personally prefer VMWare Player, feel free to give it a try. Parallels is a good option on macOS, but it's \$\$\$.

Also try Hyper-V on Windows if you have Pro and already have it enabled, as it lets you keep other Windows features on (like Windows Sandbox or Core Isolation). It also supports one-click install of Ubuntu.

Note on Dual Booting

Beware you may be unable to dual-boot on some hardware, such as Surface Devices (drivers are a bit of a pain, especially on the book; check r/surfacelinux for more resources), or the 2019 MacBook Pro (can't even install, T2 chip NVMe storage support broken).

VSCode Remote

You can develop in a Linux environment with a Linux toolchain, while running VSCode from within Windows. This supports WSL. See: <https://code.visualstudio.com/docs/remote/wsl>

Software to use

- ▶ Install gcc (if not part of your distro) using apt/dnf/pacman
- ▶ Visual Studio Code is a fine text editor with IntelliSense
- ▶ You could also use CLion (JetBrains) if you prefer IntelliJ-like shortcuts and autocomplete, however you will need to create your own CMake file for building. There's no free version, but you can sign up for a JetBrains educational account

Using man to find documentation

Man is a built in documentation tool. In this case, we can check the documentation for `pthread_create` using...

```
$ man pthread_create
```

```
edward@EddylyzerPC /mnt/c/WINDOWS/System32 *
pthread_create(3)                                Linux Programmer's Manual                                PTHREAD_CREATE(3)

NAME
pthread_create - create a new thread

SYNOPSIS
#include <pthread.h>

int pthread_create(pthread_t *thread, const pthread_attr_t *attr,
void *(*start_routine)(void *), void *arg);

Compile and link with -pthread.

DESCRIPTION
The pthread_create() function starts a new thread in the calling process. The new thread starts execution by
invoking start_routine(); arg is passed as the sole argument of start_routine().

The new thread terminates in one of the following ways:

* It calls pthread_exit(), specifying an exit status value that is available to another thread in the same
process that calls pthread_join().

* It returns from start_routine(). This is equivalent to calling pthread_exit() with the value supplied in the
return statement.

* It is canceled (see pthread_cancel()).

* Any of the threads in the process calls exit(), or the main thread performs a return from main(). This
causes the termination of all threads in the process.

The attr argument points to a pthread_attr_t structure whose contents are used at thread creation time to
determine attributes for the new thread; this structure is initialized using pthread_attr_init() and related
functions. If attr is NULL, then the thread is created with default attributes.

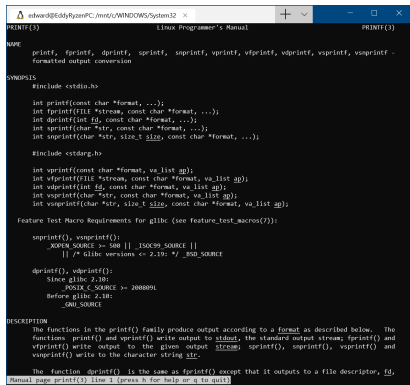
Manual page pthread_create(3) line 1 (press h for help or q to quit)
```

Finding the correct manpage

What if there are multiple versions of a given function?

\$ man 3 printf

Use 3 to access section 3, which contains the C function version of printf. Without 3 you get the linux command.



```
edward@EddyPzyanPC: /mnt/c/Windows/System32 X
Linux Programmer's Manual
PRINTF(3)

NAME
printf, fprintf, dprintf, sprintf, snprintf, vprintf, vfprintf, vdprintf, vsprintf, vsnprintf -
formatted output conversion

SYNOPSIS
#include <stdio.h>

int printf(const char *format, ...);
int fprintf(FILE *stream, const char *format, ...);
int dprintf(int fd, const char *format, ...);
int sprintf(char *str, const char *format, ...);
int snprintf(char *str, size_t size, const char *format, ...);

#include <stdarg.h>

int vprintf(const char *format, va_list ap);
int vfprintf(FILE *stream, const char *format, va_list ap);
int vdprintf(int fd, const char *format, va_list ap);
int vsprintf(char *str, const char *format, va_list ap);
int vsnprintf(char *str, size_t size, const char *format, va_list ap);

Feature Test Macro Requirements for glibc (see feature_test_macros(7)):

sprintf(), vprintf():
_XOPEN_SOURCE >= 500 || _ISOC99_SOURCE ||
|| /* glibc versions < 2.19: *_BSD_SOURCE

dprintf(), vdprintf():
Since glibc 2.10:
_POSIX_C_SOURCE >= 200809L
Before glibc 2.10:
_GNU_SOURCE

DESCRIPTION
The functions in the printf() family produce output according to a format as described below. The
functions printf() and vprintf() write output to stdout, the standard output stream; fprintf() and
vfprintf() write output to the given output stream; sprintf(), vsprintf(), vsnprintf() and
vsnprintf() write to the character string str.

The function dprintf() is the same as fprintf() except that it outputs to a file descriptor, fd.

Manual page printf(3) line 1 (press h for help or q to quit)
```

Defining Pointers

Consider a variable `foo`. Say we define it as `int foo;`

- ▶ `&foo` gives us the address of `foo`.
- ▶ `int *fooPointer` stores a pointer to something of type `int`.
Thus, we could do something like `int *fooPointer = &foo;`

Assignment / Dereferencing

Ok, now we have a pointer to `foo` that we defined with `int *fooPointer = &foo;`. How can we write to what it's pointing too (`foo`)?

- ▶ You cannot just go `fooPointer = 12`
- ▶ We can instead dereference using an asterisk and perform a store, such as `*fooPointer = 12`
- ▶ We can load the value such as `int bar = *fooPointer;`
- ▶ Note that once we load it into `bar`, updating `bar` won't change `foo`.

Example

```
#include <stdio.h>

int main( int argc, const char* argv[] )
{
    int foo;
    int *fooPointer = &foo;
    *fooPointer = 420;

    printf("%d\n", fooPointer); // Compiler warning
    printf("%d\n", *fooPointer);
    printf("%d\n", foo);

    int bar = *fooPointer;
    bar = 840;

    printf("%d\n", bar);
    printf("%d\n", foo);
}
```

Indirection

You can do this by the way..

```
int    a = 100;
int    *b = &a;
int    **c = &b;
int    ***d = &c;
```

And to dereference these, use the appropriate number of asterisks

```
***d == **c == *b == a == 100;
```

Note that `**d` would return a type `int *` (b), and `*d` would return a type `int **` (c).

Function Pointers

There are cases where we have to pass around functions, and for that we can use function pointers! Consider this function...

```
void meme(int a) {  
    printf("Nobody: 0, C: %d", a);  
}
```

To define a variable that stores a function that returns void and takes an int, then assign it with the meme function, we can do this...

```
void (*funcPtr)(int);  
funcPtr = &meme;
```

In order to call funcPtr, we simply dereference it and give it the input we want.

```
(*funcPtr)(370); // prints Nobody: 0, C: 370
```

Function Pointers cont.

This is useful if we want a function that takes a function as a parameter...

```
void caller(void (*func)(int))  
{  
    func(100);  
}
```

...perhaps by a library that helps you run your function on a separate thread :thinking:

What's this?

Consider this section of code from the assignment. What's happening here?

```
struct block right_block;  
struct block left_block;  
left_block.size = my_data->size / 2;  
left_block.first = my_data->first;  
right_block.size = left_block.size + (my_data->size % 2);  
right_block.first = my_data->first + left_block.size;  
merge_sort(&left_block);  
merge_sort(&right_block);  
merge(&left_block, &right_block);
```

Recall that the block struct has size as an int, and first as an *int

Pointer Addition

If the first element is at memory location 0, then the second is at 4, then 8 and so on. (ints are usually 4 bytes).

```
right_block.first = my_data->first + left_block.size;
```

When we add `size` to `first`, we essentially shift the pointer forward by `size` elements (therefore selecting the second half). Note that we aren't adding `size` bytes. Since `first` is an int pointer, (`size of int × size`) bytes are added.

Structure Basics

We can define a struct that holds multiple variables like this...

```
struct Stuff
{
    int a;
    int b;
}
```

Structure Basics

We can define a struct that holds multiple variables like this...

```
struct Stuff
{
    int a;
    int b;
}
```

And declare and assign to it...

```
struct Stuff foo;
foo.a = 0;
foo.b = 1;
// or
struct Stuff foo = {0, 1};
```

Pointing to structs

```
struct Stuff foo = {0, 1};  
struct Stuff *fooPtr = &foo;
```

Now we have a pointer to a struct. But how do we access a and b inside it using the pointer?

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Now we have a pointer to a struct. But how do we access a and b inside it using the pointer?

Well, we could dereference it...

```
(*fooPtr).a  
(*fooPtr).b
```

But that's ugly. So instead we can use an arrow ("pointer to member")...

```
fooPtr->a  
fooPtr->b
```

Lifetime of a stack variable

If we just initialize a variable like we do with “local” below, it is simply allocated on the stack. Recall that the stack is freed once a function returns.

```
int* func(int a)
{
    int local = 7;
    return &local;
}
```

What's wrong with this code?

Lifetime of a stack variable

If we just initialize a variable like we do with “local” below, it is simply allocated on the stack. Recall that the stack is freed once a function returns.

```
int* func(int a)
{
    int local = 7;
    return &local;
}
```

What's wrong with this code?

A: After we return this function, local will be removed from the stack. Therefore, when whatever calls func tries to dereference the pointer that was returned, it may not point to what we want it to.