# MEMORY SYNCHRONIZATION

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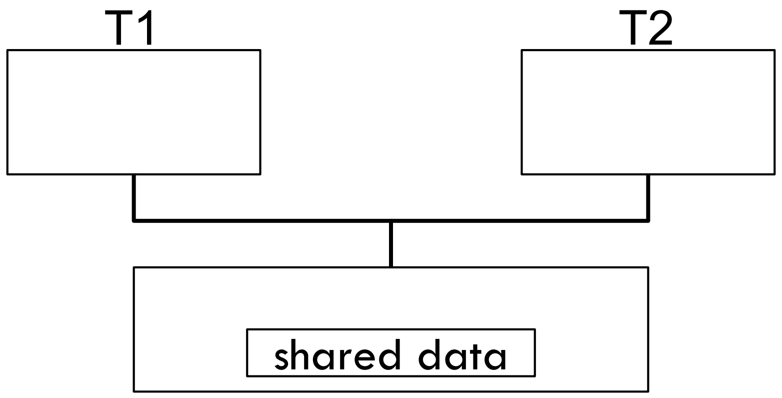
CS/ECE 7810: Advanced Computer Architecture

## Overview

- Upcoming deadline
  - Feb. 8th: project proposal
    - Apply my suggestions to your pre-proposal and resubmit
  - 5 pre-proposal received; one group is missing
- This lecture
  - What cache coherence is unable to do
    - Shared memory synchronizations
    - Locks
    - Barriers
    - Transactional memory

# Recall: Cache Coherence

- Coherency protocols (must) guarantee
  - write propagation
  - write serialization
- Coherency protocols do not guarantee
  - only one thread accesses shared data
  - threads start executing a section of code together

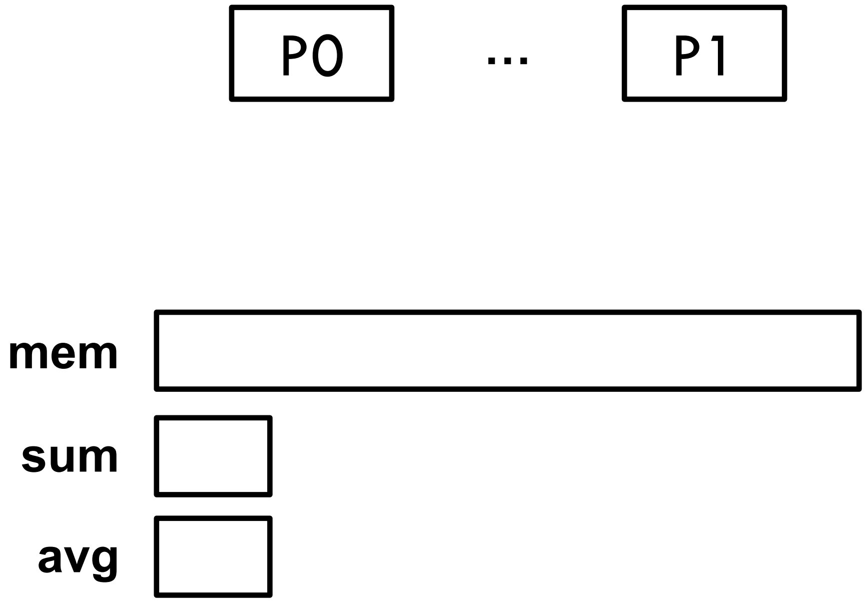


**How to synchronize threads?**

# Shared Memory Synchronization

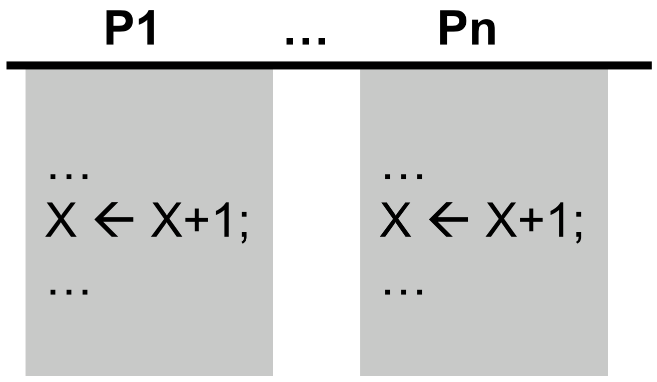
- Example

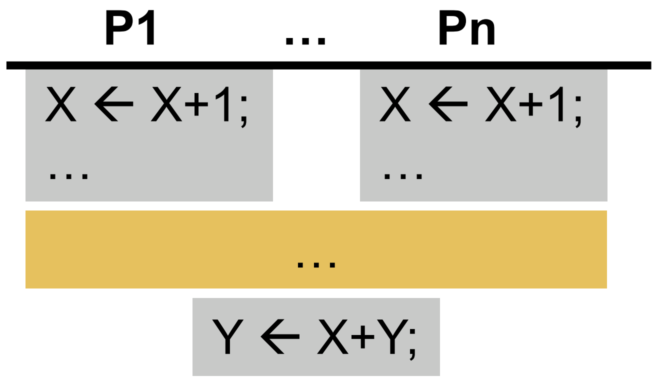
```
int mem[]; // large array
…
main() {
    …
    for(i=0; i<N; ++i) {
        sum += mem[i];
    }
    avg = sum / N;
    …
}
```



# Shared Memory Synchronization

- Critical section problem
  - How to order thread access to shared data?
- Memory barriers
  - Force threads to start executing a section together





## Synchronization Components

- Acquire method
  - obtain the lock or proceed past the barrier
- Waiting algorithm
  - spin (busy wait)
    - Repeatedly test a condition; additional traffic
  - block (suspend)
    - Let OS suspend the process; large resume overheads
- Release method
  - allow other processes to proceed

## Critical Section Problem

- Definition
  - N threads compete to use some shared data
  - Each process has a code segment, called critical section, in which the shared data is accessed
- Need to provide
  - Mutual exclusion: no two threads are allowed in the critical section
  - Forward progress: no one outside the critical section may block other processes
  - Fairness: bounded waiting times for entering the critical section

# Basic Hardware for Synchronization

- Test-and-set – atomic exchange
- Fetch-and-op (e.g., increment)
  - returns value and atomically performs op (e.g., increments it)
- Compare-and-swap
  - compares the contents of two locations and swaps if identical
- Load-linked/store conditional
  - pair of instructions – deduce atomicity if second instruction returns correct value

## Lock Example

- Test-and-set spin lock (TSL)

```
entry_section:
        TSL R1, LOCK                  | copy lock to R1 and set lock to 1
        CMP R1, #0                    | was lock zero?
        JNE entry_section             | if it wasn't zero, lock was set, so loop
        RET                           | return; critical section entered

exit_section:
        MOV LOCK, #0                  | store 0 into lock
        RET                           | return; out of critical section
```

Problem: many memory reads and writes due to busy waiting

Question: what if a process is switched out of CPU during CS?

## Lock Example

- Test-and-Test-and-set spin lock (TTSL)
  - Spinning on read only data (local copy)

```
entry_section:
    MOV R1, LOCK            | copy lock to R1
    CMP R1, #0              | if it was zero
    JNE entry_section       | if it wasn't zero, loop
    TSL R1, LOCK            I copy lock to R1 and set lock to 1
    CMP R1, #0              I was lock zero?
    JNE entry_section       | if it wasn't zero, lock was set, so loop
    RET                     I return; critical section entered
```

- Excessive memory traffic due to multiple cores spinning on a lock
- TTSL is unfair

## Lock Example

- Ticket lock using fetch-and-op (increment)

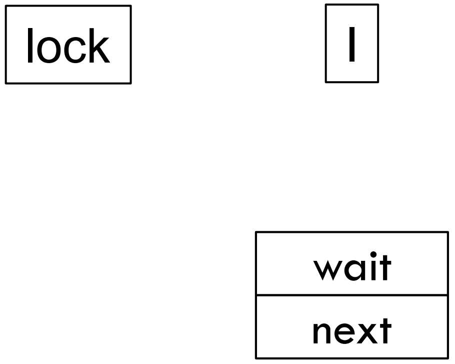
```
lock:
myticket = fetch & increment (&(L->next_ticket));
while(myticket!=L->now_serving) {
   delay(time * (myticket-L->now_serving));
}
unlock:
L->now_serving = L->now_serving+1;
```

- Advantage : Fair (FIFO)
- Disadvantage : Contention (Memory/Network)

## Lock Example

- MCS linked-list based queue locks
  - Processors waiting on the lock are stored in a linked list
  - Every processor using the lock allocates a queue node (I) with two fields
    - must_wait (bool) and next_node (pointer)
- Lock variable is a pointer to the tail of the queue

```
acquire(lock):
  I->next = null;
  predecessor = Swap(lock, I)
  if predecessor != NULL
    I->must_wait = true
    predecessor->next = I
    repeat while I->must_wait
```



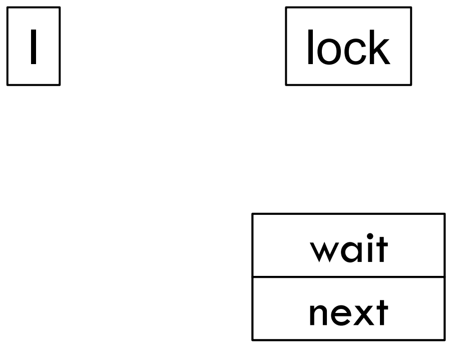
**How to release MCS lock?**

# Lock Example

- Release MCS lock

```
release(lock):
  if (I->next == null)
    if CAS(lock, I, null)
      return

  I->next->must_wait = false
```



# Centralized Barrier

- A globally-shared piece of state keeps track of thread arrivals
  - e.g., a counter
- Each of the threads
  - updates shared state to indicate its arrival
  - polls that state and waits until all threads have arrived
- Then, it can leave the barrier
- Since barrier has to be used repeatedly:
  - state must end as it started

## Sense-Reversing Barrier

- Key idea: decouple spinning from the counter

```
// global variables
int count = P;
bool sene = true;

// local variable
bool local_sense = true;

// barrier
local_sense = ! local_sense;
if(fetch_and_dec(&count) == 1) {
    count = P;
    sense = local_sense;
}
else {
    while(sense != local_sense);
}
```

**Keeps track of arrivals using `count`**

**Controls spinning using `sense`**

## Lock Freedom

- Priority inversion: a low-priority process is preempted while holding a lock needed by a high-priority process
- Convoying: a process holding a lock is de-scheduled (e.g. page fault, no more quantum), no forward progress for other processes capable of running
- Deadlock (or Livelock): processes attempt to lock the same set of objects in different orders (could be bugs by programmers)
- Error-prone

## Transactions

- A sequence of instructions that is guaranteed to execute and complete only as an atomic unit

```
Begin Transaction
        Inst #1
        Inst #2
        Inst #3
        …
End Transaction
```

- Satisfy the following properties
  - Serializability: Transactions appear to execute serially.
  - Atomicity (or Failure-Atomicity): A transaction either
    - commits changes when complete, visible to all; or
    - aborts, discarding changes (will retry again)

## Basic Transactional Mechanisms

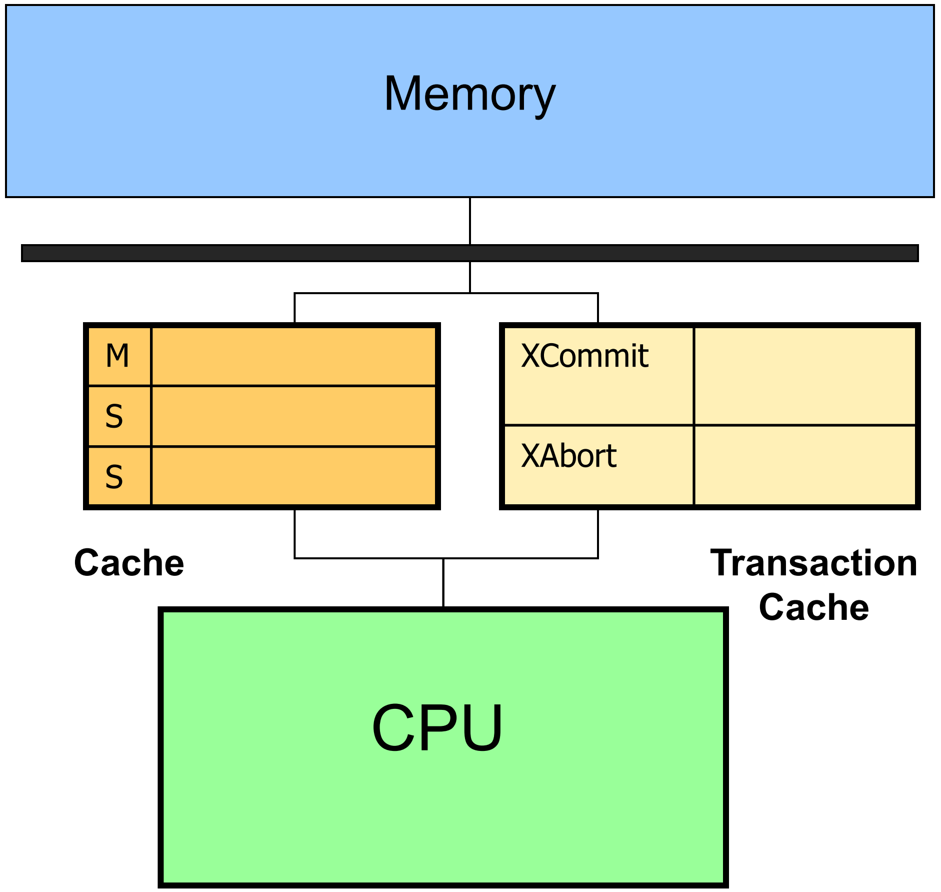
- Isolation
  - Detect when transactions conflict
  - Track read and write sets
- Version management
  - Record new and old values
- Atomicity
  - Commit new values
  - Abort back to old values

# Transactional Memory

- Intended to replace short critical sections
  - Motivated by lock-free data structures
- Transactions
  - Read and write multiple locations
  - Commit in arbitrary order
  - Implicit begin, explicit commit operations
  - Abort affects memory, not registers
    - Software manages restarting execution
    - Validate instruction detects pending abort

[Herlihy'93]

## Transactional Memory Architecture



[Herlihy'93]

# Hardware vs. Software TM

## Hardware Approach

- Low overhead
  - Buffers transactional state in Cache
- More concurrency
  - Cache-line granularity
- Bounded resource

Useful BUT Limited

## Software Approach

- High overhead
  - Uses Object copying to keep transactional state
- Less Concurrency
  - Object granularity
- No resource limits

Useful BUT Limited

## HTM Example

| Tag | data | Trans? | State | Tag | data | Trans? | state |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

Bus Messages:

```
atomic {
  read A
  write B =1
}
```

```
atomic {
  read B



  Write A = 2
}
```

## HTM Example

| Tag | data | Trans? | State | Tag | data | Trans? | state |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | B | 0 | Y | S |
| | | | | | | | |

Bus Messages: **2** read B

```
atomic {
  read A
  write B =1
}
```

```
atomic {
  read B



  Write A = 2
}
```

# HTM Example

| Tag | data | Trans? | State | Tag | data | Trans? | state |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 0 | Y | S | | | | |
| | | | | B | 0 | Y | S |
| | | | | | | | |

Bus Messages: **1** read A

```
atomic {
  read A
  write B =1
}
```

```
atomic {
  read B



  Write A = 2
}
```

# HTM Example

| Tag | data | Trans? | State | Tag | data | Trans? | state |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 0 | Y | S | | | | |
| B | 1 | Y | M | B | 0 | Y | S |
| | | | | | | | |

Bus Messages: NONE

```
atomic {
  read A
  write B =1
}
```

```
atomic {
  read B


  Write A = 2
}
```

# Conflict, visibility on commit

| Tag | data | Trans? | State | Tag | data | Trans? | state |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 0 | N | S | | | | |
| B | 1 | N | M | B | 0 | Y | S |
| | | | | | | | |

Bus Messages: **1** B modified

```
atomic {
  read A
  write B =1
}
```

```
atomic {
  read B


ABORT



  Write A = 2
}
```

# Conflict, notify on write

| Tag | data | Trans? | State | Tag | data | Trans? | state |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 0 | Y | S | | | | |
| B | 1 | Y | M | B | 0 | Y | S |
| | | | | | | | |

Bus Messages: **1** speculative write to B

**2:** 1 conflicts with me

```
atomic {
  read A
  write B =1
ABORT?
}
```

```
atomic {
  read B

ABORT?

  Write A = 2
}
```