Administration

- Lecturer is `Jonas.Skeppstedt@cs.lth.se` with office E:2190
- Course site is `http://cs.lth.se/edag01`
  but the Discord server and Tresorit directory are more useful (see mail)
- You will get an account on a POWER8 machine (3.5 GHz, 10 cores, 80 hardware threads)
- You can work on other machines if you wish but performance measurements are to be done on this.
- You can access it with **ssh -Y user@power.cs.lth.se**

Contents of the course

Sedgewick and Flajolet in "An Introduction to the Analysis of Algorithms":

The quality of the implementation and properties of compilers, machine architecture, and other major facets of the programming environment have dramatic effects on performance.

EDAG01 Efficient C

You will learn the C language in detail and a methodology to maximize algorithm performance on a modern computer

To write efficient code, you need competence in:

- Mathematics, algorithms and data structures
- The C programming language and UNIX C programming tools
- Pipelined and superscalar processors
- Cache memories
- What optimizing compilers can do for you — and what you need to fix yourself

Contents Lecture 1

- The purpose of learning C
- Some simple C programs

Some views of C

- The *other* language for high-performance, FORTRAN, is mainly focussed on numerical computing and not for writing code eg for embedded systems, operating system kernels, or compilers.
- Very often other languages such as Clojure, Python, Scala, Haskell, Lisp, Prolog, Ada, Java, C++, Mathematica, or Matlab are preferable because they have many convenient features which enable faster program development.
- When performance in terms of memory usage and/or speed is *the* most important aspect, however, the programmer must have complete control over what is happening and then the overhead of many language features can lead to inferior performance.

Your lecturer's relationship with C

- C is great but not ideal for *everything*.
- It is my favorite language since 1988. Just like Lisp and Prolog, it's nice because it's beautiful, powerful, and is simple.
- I have written the second ISO validated C99 compiler, after `edg.com`.
- If I would manage a large software project with several million lines of code, I would use C.
- I will not try to convince you that C "is best" because there is no such thing as a best language.

Principles of the C Programming Language

- Trust the programmer
- Don't prevent the programmer from doing what needs to be done
- Keep the language small and simple
- Provide only one way to do an operation
- Make it fast, even if it is not guaranteed to be portable
- Support international programming

  Update since the C99 version: Don't trust the programmer.

Writing a C program

```
#include <stdio.h>

int main(int argc, char** argv)
{
        printf("hello, world\n");
        return 0;
}
```

- A Java methods is called a function in C.
- A C program must have a **main** function.
- A C function must be declared before it is used.

The C preprocessor

- The command **#include <stdio.h>** reads a file with a declaration of printf.
- Commands in a C file which start with a hash, #, are performed by the C preprocessor before the compiler starts.
- You can run the preprocessor by typing **cpp**.
- The preprocessor can include files and deal with macros, eg **INT_MAX** is the largest number of type **int**.
- Notice that cpp knows nothing about C syntax.

Installing the gcc and clang compilers on Windows 10

- Install Windows subsystem for Linux
- See Tresorit and the file `links.txt` for links to youtube videos (and in the comments part of this video)
- Click on the Ubuntu app and you will get a terminal window.
- Become Ubuntu administrator by typing and press return (or enter)

  ```
  sudo bash
  ```
- Update some files by typing:

  ```
  apt update
  ```
- and then

  ```
  apt upgrade
  ```
- and install

  ```
  apt install gcc clang
  ```
- and to leave administrator mode type

  ```
  exit
  ```

Installing the clang compiler on a Mac

- Search for and open a terminal window on your Mac
- Then type

  ```
  xcode-select --install
  ```
- Other compilers can be installed using the brew system but you don't need to use them

Compiling a C program

- In this course we will use the GNU C compiler, called **gcc**.
- To compile one or more C files to make an executable program type **gcc hello.c**
- The command gcc will first run cpp, then the C compiler, and then two more programs called an assembler and a link-editor.
- Later in the course you will learn about assembler and the operating system course you can learn about link-editors.
- For this course, gcc takes care of the link-editor and tells it to produce an executable file.

Running a C program

- By default the executable file (made by typing gcc hello.c) is called **a.out**.
- To execute it in Linux (or MacOS X, or another UNIX), type ./**a.out**.
- You can tell gcc that you want a certain name: **gcc hello.c -o hello**.
- Now you type ./**hello**.

Separate compilation

- If you have many big source code files, it is a waste of time to recompile all files every time.
- You can tell gcc to compile a file and produce a so called object file (has nothing to do with object-oriented programming).
- **gcc -c hello.c**
- **gcc hello.o**
- The above two lines are identical to **gcc hello.c** but useful if you have many files. The second line should then contain all .o files.

Example of I/O: scanf and printf

```
#include <stdio.h>
int main(int argc, char** argv)
{
        int     a;
        float   b;
        double  c;

        scanf("%d %f %lf\n", &a, &b, &c);
        printf("%lf\n", a + b + c);
}
```

- %d for int, %f for float, and %lf for double.
- The program will read three numbers from input and print the sum.

More about the previous example

- In the call to the function **scanf**, we need & to tell the compiler that the variables should be modified by the called function.
- This does not exist in Java. You cannot ask another method to modify a number passed as a parameter to the method.
- Other useful format-specifiers include:
  - %x for a hexnumber (base 16),
  - %s for a string,
  - %c for a char,

Writing to files in C

```
#include <stdio.h>
int main(int argc, char** argv)
{
        int     a = 1;
        float   b = 2;
        double  c = 3;
        FILE*   fp;

        fp = fopen("data.txt", "w"); // open the file for writing.
        fprintf(fp, "%d %f %lf\n", a, b, c);
        fclose(fp);
}
```

- This will create a new file on your hard disk.

Reading from files in C

```
#include <stdio.h>
int main(int argc, char** argv)
{
        int     a;
        float   b;
        double  c;
        FILE*   fp;

        fp = fopen("data.txt", "r"); // open the file for reading.
        fscanf(fp, "%d %f %lf\n", &a, &b, &c);
        fclose(fp);
}
```

- Note again the & since fscanf will modify the variables.

Three ways to make arrays in C

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>

int size = 10;

int main(int argc, char** argv)
{
        int     a[10], n, i;
        int*    b;
        int     c[size];             // called a variable length array.

        sscanf(argv[1], "%d", &n);   // assumes program is run eg as $ ./a.out 10

        b = calloc(n, sizeof(int));  // like Java's b = new int[n];

        for (i = 0; i < n; i += 1)
                b[i] = i; // use b as if it was an array

        free(b);
}
```

Explanation of the previous slide

- The **a** and **c** arrays are allocated with other local variables.
- Note that **a** and **c** are ”real” arrays.
- On the other hand, b is like an array in Java for which you must allocate memory yourself. Use **new** in Java and eg **calloc** in C.
- Java automatically takes care of deallocating the memory of objects.
- In C you must do it yourself using **free**.
- The variable **b** is not an array — it is a pointer.

Variable length array in C99 and C11

```
int fun(int m, int n)
{
        int     a[n];
        int     b[m][n];
}
```

- Before C99 the above was illegal due to m and n are not constants.
- In C99 it is OK to write like that but only for local variables.
- Most C compilers still only support C89 and thus it may be wise to stick to that at least sometimes.
- Variable lengths arrays are only optional in C11.

Class in Java vs Struct in C 1(4)

- C has no classes.
- C has structs which are Java classes with everything public and no methods.

```
struct s {  // this s is a tag.
        int     a;
        int     b;
} s;            // this s is a variable identifier.
```

- Struct names have a so called **tag** which is a different namespace than variables and functions: so the above declares a **struct s** which is a type and a variable **s**.
- If we write **Link p** in Java we declare **p** to be a reference but not the object itself whereas **s** above is the *real* object, or data.

Class in Java vs Struct in C 2(4)

- In Java we can declare a List class something like this:

```
class List {
        List     next;   // Next is a reference to another object.
        int      a;
        int      b;
}
```

- **next** above only holds the address of another object but **next** *is not a List object itself*. The list does not contain a list.
- Java let's you use pointers conveniently without giving you too much head ache.
- C does not.

Class in Java vs Struct in C 3(4)

- We cannot write the following in C:

```
struct list_t {
        struct list_t     next;   // Compilation error!!
        int               a;
        int               b;
};
```

- It is impossible to allocate a list within the list!
- We really want to declare **next** to simply hold the address of a list object.
- In C this is done as: **struct list_t* next;** which makes **next** a pointer.

- The following is correct in C:

```
struct list_t {
        struct list_t*    next;
        int               a;
        int               b;
};
```

- After going into pointers in more detail we will see how to avoid typing **struct list_t** more than twice using **typedef**.

Memory

- As you all know, your computer has something called **memory**.
- It is sufficient to view it as a huge array: **char memory[4294967296];**
- It is preferable in the beginning to view it as: **int memory[1073741824];**
- Forget about strings for the moment. Now our world consists only of ints.
- As you know, a compiler translates a computer program into some kind of language which can be understood by a machine.
- That has happened for the software in everybody's mobile phone.

Instructions

- You will see more details about it later, but the C program which controls your phone is translated to commands which are numbers and can be represented as ints.
- These ints are also put in the memory.
- We can for instance put the instructions at the beginning of the array.
- The instructions will occupy a large number of array elements.
- No problem — our array is huge.

Global variables in memory

```
int x = 12;

int main()
{
        return x * 2;
}
```

- We also put the variable **x** in the memory.
- This program will have a few instructions for reading **x** from memory, multiplying with two, and returning the result.
- It is a good idea to put **x** after the instructions: next page

Memory layout

0	READ from 3 into R	read the data in **x** from memory at address 3
1	MUL 2	R = R * 2
2	RETURN	return R
3	12	**x** lives here

- The array element where we have put a variable is called its **address**
- The instructions above are not written as integers but rather as commands to make them more readable.
- An instruction is represented in memory as a number however.
- It would be too complicated to demand that the hardware should read text such as **MUL** — it is easier is to build hardware if there simply is a number which means multiplication.

Function calls and local variables

- When you call a function or method, all the local variables must be stored somewhere.
- It is a convention to put them at the end of the memory array.
- The local variables of the main function are put at the very end of the array.
- When main calls a function, its local variables are put just before main's.
- In general, when a new function starts running, it puts its local variables at the last (highest index) unused memory array elements.
- This works like a stack of plates: main is at the bottom and you put newly called functions on the plate at the top.

The Stack

```
int main()              int f(int a)            int g(int a)
{                       {                       {
        int x = 12;             int b = a+1;            return a + 3;
        return f(x);            return g(b+2);  }
}                       }
```

1073741817	15	a in g lives here.
1073741818		return address from g is here.
1073741819	13	b in f lives here.
1073741820	12	a in f lives here.
1073741821		return address from f is here.
1073741822	12	x in main lives here.
1073741823		return address from main is here.

- When a function returns, it deallocates its memory space.
- This is managed by the compiler which uses a register for holding the current free memory index, called the **stack pointer**.

Pointers

```
int x = 12;
int *p;
int main()
{
        p = &x;
        *p = 13;
        return x * 2;
}
```

- A pointer is just a variable and it can hold the address of another variable.
- When **p** points to **x**, writing ***p** accesses **x**.

Memory layout

	instruction/data	**Java**	**comment**
0	STORE 6 at 7	MEMORY[7] = 6	&x is put in element 7, ie p
1	READ from 7 into R	R = MEMORY[7]	read data in p: R=6
2	STORE 13 at R	MEMORY[R] = 13	*p = 13
3	READ 6 into R	R = MEMORY[6]	fetch the value of x
4	MUL 2	R = R * 2	multiply **x** and R
5	RETURN	return R	
6	12		**x** lives here
7	0		**p** lives here

More about pointers

- In Java, you have used pointers all the time, but they are called object references.
- Suppose you have **Link p**, then **p** is a pointer.
- In Java, pointers can only point at objects.
- The address of some object is, as you might know, the location in memory where that object lives, ie just an integer number.
- In Java, **new** returns the address of a newly created object.
- In C, **new** does not exist and instead a normal function is used (malloc or calloc).

More about pointers

- In C, but not in Java, the programmer can ask for the address of almost anything and thus get a pointer to that object (or function).
- To change the value of a variable in a function, you need to pass the address of the variable as a parameter to the function:

```
void f(int* a)
{
        *a = 12;
}
```

```
void g()
{
        int     b;

        f(&b);
}
```

More about pointers

- If the type of the variable is a pointer, then you will need two stars:

```
void f(int** a)
{
        *a = NULL;
}
```

```
void g()
{
        int*     b;

         f(&b);
}
```

More about pointers

- To return multiple values in Java, you create and return an extra object.
- Option 1 in C: use a plain struct which is allocated on the stack.
- Option 2 in C: Pass additional arguments as pointers (preferable).

```
struct s f()
{
        struct s a;
        a.x = ...;
        a.y = ...;
        a.u = ...;
        return a;
}
```

```
void g(int* x, int* y, int* u)
{

        *x = ...;
        *y = ...;
        *u = ...;
}
```

Arrays vs Pointers

- Arrays and pointers are not equivalent!
- An array declares storage for a number of elements, except when it is a function parameter:

```
int fun(int a[], int b[12], int c[3][4]);
int fun(int *a,  int *b,    int (*c)[4]);
int main()
{
        int     x, y[12], z[4];
        fun(&x, y, &z); // valid.
}
```

- The compiler changes the first [ ] to * for array parameters.
- Array parameters are not arrays. They are pointers.
- Doing so avoids copying large arrays in function calls.

C has row-major matrix memory layout

```
int c[3][4] = { { 1, 2, 3, 4}, { 5, 6 }, { 7 } };
int i, j;
for (i = 0; i < 3; i++)
        for (j = 0; j < 4; j++)
                x += c[i][j];
```

- In a two-dimensional array, one row is layed out in memory at a time, ie row-major.
- Could also be called "rightmost index varies fastest".

Arrays as parameters

```
int fun(int c[3][4])
{
        printf("%zu %zu\n", sizeof c, sizeof c[0]);
}
```

- If the output is ”8 16”, what conclusions can we draw about the size of a pointer and the size of an int?
- Answer: an pointer is eight bytes and an int is four bytes.
- The variable **c** in the function is simply a pointer: **int (*c)[4]**.

Representation of array references

- a[i] is represtented as ***(a+i)** internally in the compiler.

```
int main()
{
        int     a[10], *p, i = 3;

        /* the following are equivalent: */

        i[a];
        a[i];
        p = a; p[i]; i[p];
        p = a+i; 0[p]; p[0]; *p;
}
```

Memory allocation in C

1. Variables with static storage duration (globals, static).
2. Stack variables.
3. `alloca(size_t size)` takes memory from the stack.
4. `malloc/calloc/realloc` take memory from the heap.

Use tools to find memory errors

- Memory errors:
  - Use pointer which does not point to anything
  - Index out of bounds
  - Forget to free — called a memory leak
  - Free twice
- Two tools you will use in Lab 3
  - Valgrind
  - Google Sanitizer

Global variables and functions

- Visible from others source files.
- Automatically set to zero unless there is an initializer:

```
int x;
int y = 1;
int f() { return x * y; }
```

- Often it is best to avoid global variables due to:
  - Compilers are not good at using them efficiently
  - They sometimes make it more difficult to understand the program

Static variables and functions

- Similar to global variables and functions

```
static int x;
static int y = 1;
static int f() { return x * y;}
```

- Only visible in the scope it is defined
- Functions can only be defined at file scope — no nested functions!
- Always use static instead of global unless the symbol is "exported" to other files
- There is no syntax in C to export symbols — use a header file with declarations

Stack variables

- Easy for compilers to use efficiently
- Don't use huge arrays since the stack may be too small
- You can use a struct as a parameter and return value — but not array
- As we saw arrays are converted to pointers in the declaration
- There is no syntax to return an array — only a pointer:

```
int a[10];
int* f()
{
    return a; // ok
}
```

```
int* g()
{
    int a[10];
    return a;      // bad idea
}
```

- The pointer returned from g becomes invalid immediately

Stack variable

- No automatic initial value — just garbage
- We can initialize a struct or array:

```
int main()
{
    int     a[10] = { 1, 2, 3 };

}
```

- Zero is used for the "missing" expressions

`alloca`

- Takes memory from the stack
- Automatically deallocated at function return
- Problem 1: **alloca** is not standard.
- Problem 2: if no memory is available, **NULL** is not returned (as for malloc/calloc).
- Somewhat bad reputation, but nevertheless used.
- Much more efficient than **malloc/calloc**.

Heap memory

- `void* malloc(size_t s);`
- `void* calloc(size_t n, size_t s);`
- `void* realloc(void* p, size_t s);`
- `void free(void* p);`

Free-list

- Using Java new or malloc/free takes time
- Sometimes a free-list is useful
- Instead of calling free, put it aside for future use
- Instead of calling malloc, check if there already is something put aside
- With "put aside" is meant putting it in a list — but don't allocate memory for the list!
- Use the object type itself somehow

sizeof

- Use the **sizeof** operator when requesting memory.
- The **sizeof** operator either takes a type or an expression as operand:

```
int* p; /* lots of code... */ p = calloc(n, sizeof(int));
int* q; /* lots of code... */ q = calloc(n, sizeof *q);
```

- The latter is safer: what happens if somebody changes from `int` to `long` and forgets the sizeof-operand?