

Synchronization problems with monitors

Lecture 6 of TDA383/DIT390 (Concurrent Programming)

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Barriers

Readers-writers

Dining philosophers

Sleeping barber

In today's class, we go through several classical synchronization problems and solve them using threads and monitors.

We will mostly use pseudo-code representing monitor classes with signal and continue discipline, which simplifies the details of Java syntax and libraries but which can be turned into fully functioning code by adding boilerplate. On the course website you can download fully working implementations of some of the problems.

We declare monitor classes by adding the pseudo-code keyword **monitor** to regular Java classes. Note that **monitor** is **not** a valid Java keyword—that is why we highlight it in a different color—but we will use it to simplify the presentation of monitors.

Turning a pseudo-code monitor class into a proper Java class is straightforward:

- mark all attributes as private
- add locking to all public methods

Details on how to implement monitors in Java are presented in the class on monitors.

We also occasionally annotate monitor classes with invariants using the pseudo-code keyword invariant; invariant is not a valid Java keyword—that is why we highlight it in a different color—but we will use it to help make more explicit the behavior of classes.

Resource allocator

An allocator grants users exclusive access to a number of resources:

- users asynchronously request resources and release them back
- the allocator ensures resources are given exclusively to one user at a time, and keeps tracks of how many resources are available

```
interface Allocator<T> {
```

```
// get 'n' resources; block if not available
Set<T> request(int n);
```

```
// release 'resources'
void release(Set<T> resources);
```

}

Resource allocator problem: implement Allocator such that:

- · an arbitrary number of users can access the allocator
- · users are granted exclusive access to resources

Users continuously and asynchronously access the allocator, which must guarantee proper synchronization.

Allocator<Resource> allocator;

```
user<sub>k</sub>
while (true) {
    // how many resources are needed?
  int n = howMany();
    // get resources from allocator
  Set<Resource> res = allocator.request(n);
    // do something with resources
  for (Resource r: res) use(r);
    // release resources
  allocator.release(res); // we assume |res| does not change
}
```

The allocator problem is similar to the producer-consumer: users waiting for resources block, and get unblocked when some other users releases them. The important thing is to only acquire all resources at once when they are all available.

```
monitor class MonitorAllocator<T> implements Allocator<T> {
    int available; // number of available resources
    // new resources have become available
    Condition moreAvailable = new Condition();
    Set<T> storage = new Set<>(); // actual resources
```

```
do not update available until done waiting!
public Set<T> request(int n) {
  while (available < n)
    moreAvailable.wait() #
  // now n resources are available
  available -= n; // update count
  return storage.removeAll(n); // remove and return n resources</pre>
```

When releasing resources, we do not know how many resources each waiting thread is waiting for. Therefore, we have to signal all waiting users; each will have a chance to check whether enough resources are available.

```
monitor class MonitorAllocator<T> implements Allocator<T> {
  int available; // number of available resources
    // new resources have become available
  Condition moreAvailable = new Condition();
  Set<T> storage = new Set<>(); // actual resources
                              must signal all waiting threads
  public void release(Set<T> resources) 
    int n = resources.count(); // how many resources?
    storage.addAll(resources); // add resources to storage
    available += n:
                                // update count
                                // more resources are available
    moreAvailable.signalAll() f
  }
```

MonitorAllocator may be somewhat inefficient: if there are many users and few resources in the system, every time there is a release all threads are unblocked and resumed, but most of them will have to go back waiting. In these conditions, it may be better to use multiple condition variables to signal precisely how many resources have become available.

monitor class TargetedAllocator<T> extends MonitorAllocator<T> {
 Condition[] have = new Condition[N]; // N = total # of resources

```
public Set<T> request(int n) {
    public void release(Set<T> resources) {
        // wait for n resources
        while (available < n)
        have[n - 1].wait();
        available -= n;
        return storage.removeAll(n);
    }
</pre>
```

MonitorAllocator may be somewhat inefficient: if there are many users and few resources in the system, every time there is a release all threads are unblocked and resumed, but most of them will have to go back waiting. In these conditions, it may be better to use multiple condition variables to signal precisely how many resources have become available.

monitor class TargetedAllocator<T> extends MonitorAllocator<T> {
 Condition[] have = new Condition[N]; // N = total # of resources

```
public Set<T> request(int n) { public void release(Set<T> resources) {
    // wait for n resources
    while (available < n)
        have[n - 1].wait();
    available -= n;
    return storage.removeAll(n);
    arrays indexed from 0 ______}
    signal threads waiting for 1 ≤ k ≤ available resources
    But n = resources.count();
    available += n;
    available += n;
    for (int k = available; 0 < k; k--)
    have[k __1].signal();
    But n = resources
    But n = resources
    But n = resources.count();
    available -= n;
    for (int k = available; 0 < k; k--)
    have[k __1].signal();
    But n = resources
    Automatic network network
```

Neither TargetedAllocator nor MonitorAllocator satisfy starvation freedom: two users b_1 and b_2 can alternate getting the resources and starve another user s.

For simplicity, suppose there is a single resource in the system.



who has the resource: allocator

Neither TargetedAllocator nor MonitorAllocator satisfy starvation freedom: two users b_1 and b_2 can alternate getting the resources and starve another user *s*.

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who has the resource: b_1

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who has the resource: b_2

Neither TargetedAllocator nor MonitorAllocator satisfy starvation freedom: two users b_1 and b_2 can alternate getting the resources and starve another user *s*.

For simplicity, suppose there is a single resource in the system.



who has the resource: b_2

Neither TargetedAllocator nor MonitorAllocator satisfy starvation freedom: two users b_1 and b_2 can alternate getting the resources and starve another user *s*.

For simplicity, suppose there is a single resource in the system.



who has the resource: allocator

Neither TargetedAllocator nor MonitorAllocator satisfy starvation freedom: two users b_1 and b_2 can alternate getting the resources and starve another user *s*.

For simplicity, suppose there is a single resource in the system.



who has the resource: allocator

This is the same as the initial state, so this scenario can repeat indefinitely.

Fair allocator

}

Starvation occurs because new calls to request take over waiting
calls. To avoid starvation, we let new requests yield to waiting ones:
public Set<T> request(int n) {
 // wait until n resources are available
 // and there are no waiting users
 while (available < n ||] k: !have[k].isEmpty())</pre>

By waiting until all previous waiting requests have been served, we have a first-come-first-served policy for assigning resources.

Fair allocator

Starvation occurs because new calls to request take over waiting
calls. To avoid starvation, we let new requests yield to waiting ones:
public Set<T> request(int n) {

```
// wait until n resources are available
```

// and there are no waiting users

```
while (available < n || ∃ k: !have[k].isEmpty())</pre>
```

```
have[n - 1].wait(); 
available -= n; 0 \le k < N
```

```
return storage.removeAll(n);
```

}

By waiting until all previous waiting requests have been served, we have a first-come-first-served policy for assigning resources.

This is not directly implementable in Java because Condition does not offer isEmpty, but one can emulate it by explicitly keeping track of waiting processes. We will follow a similar approach for fairness in the readers-writers problem with monitors.

Barriers

```
interface Barrier {
```

```
// block until expect() threads have reached barrier
void wait();
```

```
// number of threads expected at the barrier
int expect();
```

Reusable barrier: implement Barrier such that:

- · a thread blocks on wait until all threads have reached the barrier
- after expect() threads have executed wait, the barrier is closed again

Threads continuously approach the barrier, which must guarantee that they synchronize each access.

Barrier barrier = new Barrier(n); // barrier for n threads

thread_k

```
while (true) {
    // code before barrier
    barrier.wait(); // synchronize at barrier
    // code after barrier
}
```

Barriers: first attempt

}

As a first attempt, we use a condition variable allone to signal when the last thread has arrived at the barrier.

```
public void wait()
{ nDone += 1;
    if (nDone == n) allDone.signalAll(); // if last, signal all
    else while (nDone < n) allDone.wait(); // else wait for allDone
    nDone -= 1; }</pre>
```

As a first attempt, we use a condition variable allone to signal when the last thread has arrived at the barrier.

```
public void wait()
{ nDone += 1;
    if (nDone == n) allDone.signalAll(); // if last, signal all
    else while (nDone < n) allDone.wait(); // else wait for allDone
    nDone -= 1; }</pre>
```

}

- The while loop around allDone.wait() is needed because of the signal and continue discipline (and possible spurious wakeups)
- Unfortunately, it also keeps on blocking all threads but the last one, since they all read nDone == n - 1 < n when unblocked

As a second attempt, we remove the decrement to nDone, so that all waiting threads can continue.

```
public void wait()
{ nDone += 1;
    if (nDone == n) allDone.signalAll(); // if last, signal all
    else while (nDone < n) allDone.wait(); }// else wait for allDone
}</pre>
```

This works in the first iteration, but it is not reusable: after the last thread signals allone, the barrier remains open indefinitely.

}

A correct solution uses another variable round to keep track of how many times the barrier has been used. The last thread in each round resets nDone and increments round for the next iteration; other threads only block as long as the current turn is not complete.

```
monitor class TurnBarrier implements Barrier {
```

```
int round = 0; /* other variables as in previous attempts */
public void wait()
```

```
{ nDone += 1;
int myRound = round; // what round am I in?
if (nDone == n) { // if last at barrier:
   allDone.signalAll(); // signal all
   nDone = 0; // reset counter
   round += 1; // increase round
} else while (nDone < n // else wait for allDone
   && myRound == round) // while the turn
   allDone.wait(); } // has not changed
```

A correct solution uses another variable round to keep track of how many times the barrier has been used. The last thread in each round resets nDone and increments round for the next iteration; other threads only block as long as the current turn is not complete.

```
monitor class TurnBarrier implements Barrier {
```

```
int round = 0; /* other variables as in previous attempts */
public void wait()
{ nDone += 1; to avoid overflows, count modulo 2: round = (round+1)%2
                                      // what round am I in?
  int myRound = round;
  if (nDone == n) {
                                     // if last at barrier:
    allDone.signalAll(
                                     // signal all
    nDone = 0:
                                     // reset counter
    round += 4
                                     // increase round
  } else while (nDone < n</pre>
                                    // else wait for allDone
                && myRound == round) // while the turn
           allDone.wait(); } // has not changed
```

Readers-writers

interface AccessBoard {

}

```
void beginRead(); // get read access to board
void endRead(); // release read access
void beginWrite(); // get write access to board
void endWrite(); // release write access
```

Readers-writers problem: implement AccessBoard such that:

- · multiple reader can operate concurrently
- · each writer has exclusive access

Invariant: #WRITERS = 0 \lor (#WRITERS = 1 \land #READERS = 0)

Other properties that a good solution should have:

- · support an arbitrary number of readers and writers
- no starvation of readers or writers

Readers and writers continuously and asynchronously try to access the board, which must guarantee proper synchronization.

writer _m
ile (true) {
<pre>board.beginWrite();</pre>
// write messages
<pre>board.endWrite();</pre>

AccessBoard board;

In the semaphore version of the readers-writers problem, we had single methods read and write that guaranteed synchronization and performed the actual reading and writing.

In contrast, the monitor version that we are describing now has methods to synchronize the begin and end of reading and writing, but the actual reading and writing is left implicit:

- the actual writing could be performed in a monitor method, since it operates in mutual exclusion w.r.t. both readers and writers
- however, the actual reading should <u>not</u> be performed in a monitor method, since it would prevent multiple readers from actually operating concurrently

In the semaphore version of the readers-writers problem, we had single methods read and write that guaranteed synchronization and performed the actual reading and writing.

In a <u>concrete implementation</u>, the <u>actual reading and writing</u> could operate on a different (non-synchronized) shared object:

- readers and writers must follow the protocol of calling beginRead/beginWrite before reading/writing the other shared object, and calling endRead/endWrite when they are done reading/writing it
- this way, synchronization is guaranteed for any shared object that can be read and written, and the only actual concurrency is the one permitted by the problem (multiple readers, and no writers)

Since we want to allow multiple readers on the board at the same time, we cannot simply give the lock on the whole monitor to a single thread. Instead, we use condition variables to notify threads when it is OK to read or to write.

monitor class MonitorBoard implements ActiveBoard {

int nReaders = 0; // # readers active on the board int nWriters = 0; // # writers active on the board

Condition readOK = new Condition(); // readers can access board Condition writeOK = new Condition(); // a writer can access board

invariant { nWriters == 0 || (nWriters == 1 & & nReaders == 0) }

Entry methods beginRead and beginWrite:

- wait until it is OK to read/write
- increment the number of readers/writers

Exit methods endRead and endWrite:

- decrement the number of readers/writers
- signal waiting readers/writers

The tricky part is when to signal and when to wait: different choices lead to different priorities of readers vs. writers.

In the first version, the waiting conditions follow directly from the class invariant: readers wait until there are no writers, and writers wait until there are neither readers nor writers.

```
public void beginRead() {
    // wait until:
    // no active writers
    while (nWriters > 0)
        readOK.wait();
    nReaders += 1:
```

```
// more readers welcome
readOK.signalAll();
```

}

In the first version, the waiting conditions follow directly from the class invariant: readers wait until there are no writers, and writers wait until there are neither readers nor writers.

```
public void beginRead() {
```

```
// wait until:
// no active writers
while (nWriters > 0)
  readOK.wait();
nReaders += 1;
// more readers welcome
readOK.signalAll();
```

}

The readOK.signalAll() at the end of beginRead is not needed: a reader only waits when nWriters > 0, so as long as endWrite unblocks all readers there will not be waiting readers there.

```
public void endRead() {
```

}

```
nReaders -= 1;
// if last reader: resume
// one waiting writer
if (nReaders == 0)
writeOK.signal();
// more readers welcome
readOK.signalAll();
```

public void endWrite() {
 nWriters -= 1; // nWriters == 0
 // resume one waiting writer
 // and all waiting readers
 readOK.signalAll();
 writeOK.signal();
}

```
public void endRead() {
    nReaders -= 1;
    // if last reader: resume
    // one waiting writer
    if (nReaders == 0)
      writeOK.signal();
    // more readers welcome
    readOK.signalAll();
}
```

```
public void endWrite() {
    nWriters -= 1; // nWriters == 0
    // resume one waiting writer
    // and all waiting readers
    readOK.signalAll();
    writeOK.signal();
}
```

Similarly as in beginRead, the readOK.signalAll() at the end of endRead is not needed: a reader only waits when nWriters > 0, so as long as endWrite unblocks all readers there will not be waiting readers there.

The first version ensures mutual exclusion but gives priority to readers over writers.



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The first version ensures mutual exclusion but gives priority to readers over writers.

active thread: writeOK.blocked: r_2 executing nReaders: 1 beginRead() { $\lambda * \dots */$ } endRead() { /* ... */} beginWrite() { /* ... */} endWrite() { /* ... */}

The first version ensures mutual exclusion but gives priority to readers over writers.



The first version ensures mutual exclusion but gives priority to readers over writers.



entry queue:

Déjà vu!

The first version is correct in that it ensures mutual exclusion according to the readers-writers invariant.

However, it gives priority to readers over writers:

- new readers can enter the monitor without waiting as long as a reader is active
- waiting writers have to wait until the last reader calls endRead and signals writeOK
- as long as readers keep arriving and queuing for entering the monitor, the waiting writers will never execute

Conversely, waiting readers are unblocked as soon as the current writer finishes — independent of whether there are other writers waiting.

We show a fair solution, which gives <u>equal priority</u> to readers and writers, using the signal and wait signaling discipline:

- readers give priority to waiting writers, so that a reader will be able to begin reading as soon as the writers that have been waiting longer finish
- writers give priority to waiting readers, so that a writer will be able to begin writing as soon as the readers that have been waiting longer finish

Implementing the same behavior under the <u>signal and continue</u> discipline would require more explicit bookkeeping—a less elegant solution, which we do not discuss explicitly.

This example shows how the semantics of <u>signal and wait</u> is <u>easier to</u> <u>understand</u> and use in programs; unfortunately, it is not the semantics available in most programming languages.

Entry methods beginRead and beginWrite:

- · wait until it is OK to read/write
- · increment the number of readers/writers

```
public void beginRead() {
                                     public void beginWrite() {
 // wait until:
                                       // wait until:
 // no active writers and
                                       // no active writers and
  // no blocked writers
                                       // no active readers
  if (nWriters > 0
                                       if (nWriters > 0
         || !writeOK.isEmpty()
                                              || nReaders > 0)
    readOK.wait():
                                         writeOK.wait():
                                       nWriters += 1;
  nReaders += 1:
 // more readers welcome
  readOK.signal();
                              give priority to waiting writers over readers
}
```

Entry methods beginRead and beginWrite:

- · wait until it is OK to read/write
- · increment the number of readers/writers

```
public void beginRead() {
                                     public void beginWrite() {
  // wait until:
                                       // wait until:
  // no active writers and
                                       // no active writers and
  // no blocked writers
                                       // no active readers
  if (nWriters > 0
                                       if (nWriters > 0
           !writeOK.isEmpty()
                                               || nReaders > 0)
    readOK.wait();
                                         writeOK.wait();
  nReaders += 1:
                                       nWriters += 1;
  // more readers welcome
  readOK.signal();
                              give priority to waiting writers over readers
}
     no waiting loop under signal and wait (a loop would lose signals)
```

Exit methods endRead and endWrite:

- decrement the number of readers/writers
- signal waiting readers/writers

```
public void endRead() {
                                      public void endWrite() {
   nReaders -= 1;
                                        nWriters -= 1;
  // if last reader: one
                                        // if no waiting readers: one
   // waiting writer can resume
                                        // waiting writer can resume
   if (nReaders == 0)
                                        if (readOK.isEmpty())
                                          writeOK.signal();
     writeOK.signal();
 }
                                        else
                                          // otherwise: one waiting
                                          // reader can resume
give priority to waiting readers over writers
                                          readOK.signal();
                                      }
           beginRead signals readOK.signal() to other waiting readers
```

Signaling readers prioritize writers, and signaling writers prioritize readers. This provides a starvation free solution: writers and readers take turn as they try to access the board.

It is not difficult to adapt MonitorBoard's implementation to implement different priorities (readers over writers, or writers over readers).

Dining philosophers

Dining philosophers: the problem — recap

interface Table {

}

// philosopher k picks up forks
void getForks(int k);
// philosopher k releases forks
void putForks(int k);



Dining philosophers problem: implement Table such that:

- · forks are held exclusively by one philosopher at a time
- · each philosopher only accesses adjacent forks

Our solution now uses again the signal and continue discipline.

}

We model the forks' state with an array forks: fork[k] == -1 if fork k is on the table; otherwise fork[k] is the number of the philosopher holding fork k. Similarly, condition variable available[k] is used to signal that fork k has become available.

```
monitor class MonitorTable implements Table {
    int[] forks = new int[N] { -1 }; // initialized to all -1
    Condition[] available = new Condition[N];
```

```
invariant { \forall k: -1 \leq \text{fork}[k] < N }
```

```
void putForks(int k) {
  forks[left(k)] = -1; // put down left fork
```

available[left(k)].signal(); // notify waiting thread forks[right(k)] = -1; // put down right fork available[right(k)].signal(); // notify waiting thread We rely on the monitor's implicit locks to acquire both forks atomically.

```
void getForks(int k) {
  while (forks[left(k)] >=0)
    available[left(k)].wait(); // wait for left fork
  forks[left(k)] = k; // pick up left fork
  while (forks[right(k)] >= 0)
    available[right(k)].wait(); // wait for right fork
  forks[right(k)] = k; // pick up right fork
}
```

If philosopher k blocks waiting for the <u>right</u> fork, it will release the lock on the monitor, but k's left neighbor will still find the philosopher k's <u>left</u> fork <u>unavailable</u>. Can this determine a deadlock? If P_k blocks waiting for the <u>right</u> fork, it will release the lock on the monitor, but P_k 's left neighbor P_{k-1} will still find the philosopher P_k 's <u>left</u> fork <u>unavailable</u>. Can this determine a deadlock?

Suppose P_k is waiting for the right fork while holding the left fork.

- Since monitor methods are executed atomically, when P_k started executing getForks, P_{k+1} was already holding P_k 's right fork, and thus P_{k+1} started executing getForks before P_k did.
- Let *e_k* be the time when *P_k* starts executing getForks.
- A deadlock occurs only if there is circular waiting, which is possible only if every P_j is waiting for the right fork from P_j 's neighbor P_{j+1} .
- The condition for deadlock is thus *e_k* > *e_{k+1}* > ··· > *e_{k-1}* > *e_k*, which is contradictory: a deadlock is <u>impossible</u>.

Can a philosopher starve by never getting access to both forks?

Suppose P_k is waiting for the right fork while holding the left fork:

- As soon as P_k's right neighbor P_{k+1} is done eating, P_k will be moved to the entry queue of the monitor.
- P_{k+1} is the only philosopher who can take the fork again, but in order to do so P_{k+1} has to re-enter the monitor by queuing at the entry <u>after</u> P_k .
- Therefore P_k will get to have both forks, and will be able to eat.

Suppose P_k is waiting for the left fork:

- As soon as *P_k*'s left neighbor *P_{k-1}* is done eating, *P_k* will be moved to the entry queue of the monitor.
- P_{k-1} is the only philosopher who can take the fork again, but in order to do so P_{k-1} has to re-enter the monitor by queuing at the entry <u>after</u> P_k .
- Therefore P_k will get the left fork at the next attempt.
- As explained above, P_k will be able to eat from this configuration. 33/38

Sleeping barber

The sleeping barber

A barbershop has a barber chair and some chairs for waiting customers.

- If there are no waiting customer, the barber takes a nap
- If there are customers waiting in the chairs, the barber calls one up for a haircut
- If a customer enters the barbershop and finds the barber sleeping, the customer wakes up the barber and gets a haircut immediately
- If a customer arrives when the barber is working, the customer sits in one of the available chairs
- If a customer arrives and finds no empty chairs, the customer leaves right away



Our solution now uses again the signal and continue discipline.

The sleeping barber is a synchronization problem between two asymmetric parties — a customer and the barber.

- They are asymmetric because barber and customers have different obligations and behavior
- They abstract a client/server relationship between threads
- In a way, the problem is an asymmetric variant of <u>barrier</u> synchronization

interface Barbershop {

}

```
// try to get a haircut
// block if waiting slots are available
void enter();
```

```
// serve next customer
// block if no customers
void serve();
```

Sleeping barber problem: implement Barbershop such that:

- · barber and customers behave as explained above
- it supports an <u>arbitrary number</u> of customers (possibly changing over time)
- · it ensures starvation freedom

The customers continuously and asynchronously arrive at the barbershop; the barber continuously try to serve customers.

Barbershop shop;	
customer _k	barber
<pre>while (true) { shop.enter(); // go on with your life }</pre>	<pre>while (true) { shop.serve(); }</pre>

monitor class MonitorBarbershop implements Barbershop {

```
int freeChairs = n;
                                      // n waiting chairs
Condition barber = new Condition(); // signals barber available
Condition customer = new Condition(); // signals customer available
```

```
public void enter() {
 // if waiting chairs available // wait for customers
 if (freeChairs > 0) {
   // sit down
   freeChairs -= 1;
   // wake up barber
   customer.signal();
   // wait turn
   barber.wait():
  }
}
```

```
public void serve() {
  while (freeChairs == n)
    customer.wait():
 // call waiting customer
  barber.signal();
 // customer moves to
  // barber chair
  freeChairs += 1:
  // do haircut
}
```

monitor class MonitorBarbershop implements Barbershop {

```
public void enter() {
         // if waiting chairs available
no effect
         if (freeChairs > 0) {
if barber
           // sit down
already freeChairs -= 1;
is working
           // wake up barber
           customer.signal();
           // wait turn
           barber.wait():
             should this be in a loop?
```

```
public void serve() {
 // wait for customers
  while (freeChairs == n)
    customer.wait():
 // call waiting customer
  barber.signal();
  // customer moves to
  // barber chair
  freeChairs += 1 at least one
 // do haircut customer waiting
}
```

monitor class MonitorBarbershop implements Barbershop {

```
public void enter() {
         // if waiting chairs available
no effect
         if (freeChairs > 0) {
if barber
           // sit down
already freeChairs -= 1;
is working
           // wake up barber
            customer.signal();
           // wait turn
            barber.wait():
            should this be in a loop?
        }
            only for spurious wakeups
```

```
public void serve() {
 // wait for customers
  while (freeChairs == n)
    customer.wait():
 // call waiting customer
  barber.signal();
  // customer moves to
  // barber chair
  freeChairs += 1; least one
 // do haircut customer waiting
}
```