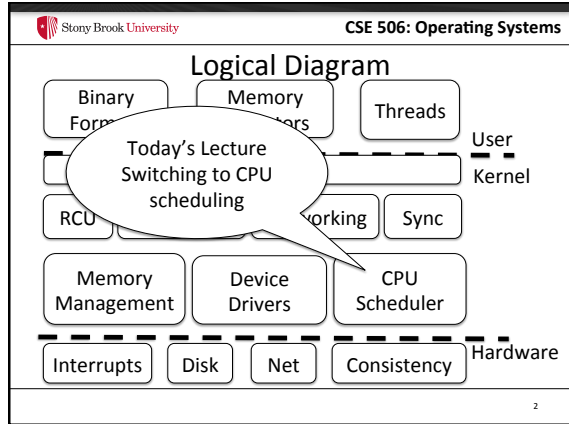


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Scheduling

Don Porter

1



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Lecture goals

- Understand low-level building blocks of a scheduler
- Understand competing policy goals
- Understand the $O(1)$ scheduler
 - CFS next lecture
- Familiarity with standard Unix scheduling APIs

3

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Undergrad review

- What is cooperative multitasking?
 - Processes voluntarily yield CPU when they are done
- What is preemptive multitasking?
 - OS only lets tasks run for a limited time, then forcibly context switches the CPU
- Pros/cons?
 - Cooperative gives more control; so much that one task can hog the CPU forever
 - Preemptive gives OS more control, more overheads/complexity

4

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Where can we preempt a process?

- In other words, what are the logical points at which the OS can regain control of the CPU?
- System calls
 - Before
 - During (more next time on this)
 - After
- Interrupts
 - Timer interrupt – ensures maximum time slice

5

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(Linux) Terminology

- `mm_struct` – represents an address space in kernel
- `task` – represents a thread in the kernel
 - A task points to 0 or 1 `mm_struct`s
 - Kernel threads just “borrow” previous task’s `mm`, as they only execute in kernel address space
 - Many tasks can point to the same `mm_struct`
 - Multi-threading
- Quantum – CPU timeslice

6

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Outline

- Policy goals
- Low-level mechanisms
- O(1) Scheduler
- CPU topologies
- Scheduling interfaces

7

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Policy goals

- Fairness – everything gets a fair share of the CPU
- Real-time deadlines
 - CPU time before a deadline more valuable than time after
- Latency vs. Throughput: Timeslice length matters!
 - GUI programs should feel responsive
 - CPU-bound jobs want long timeslices, better throughput
- User priorities
 - Virus scanning is nice, but I don't want it slowing things down

8

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No perfect solution

- Optimizing multiple variables
- Like memory allocation, this is best-effort
 - Some workloads prefer some scheduling strategies
- Nonetheless, some solutions are generally better than others

9

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Context switching

- What is it?
 - Swap out the address space and running thread
- Address space:
 - Need to change page tables
 - Update cr3 register on x86
 - Simplified by convention that kernel is at same address range in all processes
 - What would be hard about mapping kernel in different places?

10

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Other context switching tasks

- Swap out other register state
 - Segments, debugging registers, MMX, etc.
- If descheduling a process for the last time, reclaim its memory
- Switch thread stacks

11

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Switching threads

- Programming abstraction:


```
/* Do some work */
schedule(); /* Something else runs */
/* Do more work */
```

12

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How to switch stacks?

- Store register state on the stack in a well-defined format
- Carefully update stack registers to new stack
 - Tricky: can't use stack-based storage for this step!

13

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Example

```

/* eax is next->thread_info.esp */
/* push general-purpose regs */
push ebp
mov esp, eax
pop ebp
/* pop other regs */

```

14

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Weird code to write

- Inside schedule(), you end up with code like:


```
switch_to(me, next, &last);
/* possibly clean up last */
```
- Where does last come from?
 - Output of switch_to
 - Written on my stack by previous thread (not me)!

15

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How to code this?

- Pick a register (say ebx); before context switch, this is a pointer to last's location on the stack
- Pick a second register (say eax) to stores the pointer to the currently running task (me)
- Make sure to push ebx after eax
- After switching stacks:
 - pop ebx /* eax still points to old task */
 - mov (ebx), eax /* store eax at the location ebx points to */
 - pop eax /* Update eax to new task */

16

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17

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Strawman scheduler

- Organize all processes as a simple list
- In schedule():
 - Pick first one on list to run next
 - Put suspended task at the end of the list
- Problem?
 - Only allows round-robin scheduling
 - Can't prioritize tasks

18

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Even straw-ier man

- Naïve approach to priorities:
 - Scan the entire list on each run
 - Or periodically reshuffle the list
- Problems:
 - Forking – where does child go?
 - What about if you only use part of your quantum?
 - E.g., blocking I/O

19

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O(1) scheduler

- Goal: decide who to run next, independent of number of processes in system
 - Still maintain ability to prioritize tasks, handle partially unused quanta, etc

20

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O(1) Bookkeeping

- runqueue: a list of runnable processes
 - Blocked processes are not on any runqueue
 - A runqueue belongs to a specific CPU
 - Each task is on exactly one runqueue
 - Task only scheduled on runqueue's CPU unless migrated
- 2 * 40 * #CPUs runqueues
 - 40 dynamic priority levels (more later)
 - 2 sets of runqueues – one active and one expired

21

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O(1) Data Structures

22

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O(1) Intuition

- Take the first task off the lowest-numbered runqueue on active set
 - Confusingly: a lower priority value means higher priority
- When done, put it on appropriate runqueue on expired set
- Once active is completely empty, swap which set of runqueues is active and expired
- Constant time, since fixed number of queues to check; only take first item from non-empty queue

23

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O(1) Example

24

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What now?

Active

- 139
- 138
- 137
-
-
-
- 101
- 100

Expired

- 139
- 138
- 137
-
-
-
- 101
- 100

25

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Blocked Tasks

- What if a program blocks on I/O, say for the disk?
 - It still has part of its quantum left
 - Not runnable, so don't waste time putting it on the active or expired runqueues
- We need a "wait queue" associated with each blockable event
 - Disk, lock, pipe, network socket, etc.

26

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Blocking Example

Active

- 139
- 138
- 137
-
-
-
- 101
- 100

Expired

- 139
- 138
- 137
-
-
-
- 101
- 100

27

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Blocked Tasks, cont.

- A blocked task is moved to a wait queue until the expected event happens
 - **No longer on any active or expired queue!**
- Disk example:
 - After I/O completes, interrupt handler moves task back to active runqueue

28

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Time slice tracking

- If a process blocks and then becomes runnable, how do we know how much time it had left?
- Each task tracks ticks left in 'time_slice' field
 - On each clock tick: `current->time_slice--`
 - If time slice goes to zero, move to expired queue
 - Refill time slice
 - Schedule someone else
 - An unblocked task can use balance of time slice
 - Forking halves time slice with child

29

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More on priorities

- 100 = highest priority
- 139 = lowest priority
- 120 = base priority
 - "nice" value: user-specified adjustment to base priority
 - Selfish (not nice) = -20 (I want to go first)
 - Really nice = +19 (I will go last)

30

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Base time slice

$$time = \begin{cases} (140 - prio) * 20ms & prio < 120 \\ (140 - prio) * 5ms & prio \geq 120 \end{cases}$$

- “Higher” priority tasks get longer time slices
 - And run first

31

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Goal: Responsive UIs

- Most GUI programs are I/O bound on the user
 - Unlikely to use entire time slice
- Users get annoyed when they type a key and it takes a long time to appear
- Idea: give UI programs a priority boost
 - Go to front of line, run briefly, block on I/O again
- Which ones are the UI programs?

32

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Idea: Infer from sleep time

- By definition, I/O bound applications spend most of their time waiting on I/O
- We can monitor I/O wait time and infer which programs are GUI (and disk intensive)
- Give these applications a priority boost
- Note that this behavior can be dynamic
 - Ex: GUI configures DVD ripping, then it is CPU-bound
 - Scheduling should match program phases

33

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Dynamic priority

$$dynamic\ priority = \max (100, \min (static\ priority - bonus + 5, 139))$$

- Bonus is calculated based on sleep time
- Dynamic priority determines a tasks' runqueue
- This is a heuristic to balance competing goals of CPU throughput and latency in dealing with infrequent I/O
 - May not be optimal

34

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Dynamic Priority in O(1) Scheduler

- Important: The runqueue a process goes in is determined by the **dynamic** priority, not the static priority
 - Dynamic priority is mostly determined by time spent waiting, to boost UI responsiveness
- Nice values influence **static** priority (directly)
 - Static priority is a starting point for dynamic priority
 - No matter how “nice” you are (or aren't), you can't boost your “bonus” without blocking on a wait queue!

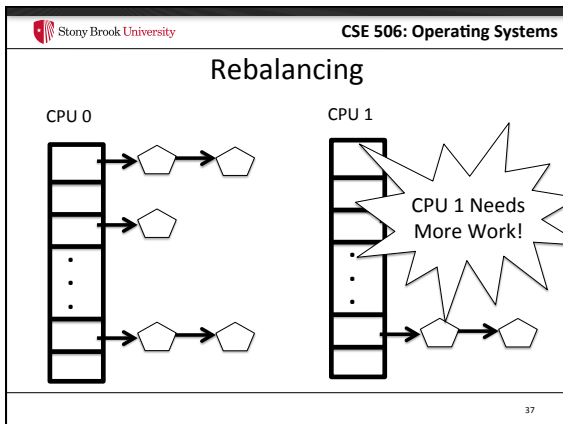
35

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Rebalancing tasks

- As described, once a task ends up in one CPU's runqueue, it stays on that CPU forever

36



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Rebalancing tasks

- As described, once a task ends up in one CPU's runqueue, it stays on that CPU forever
- What if all the processes on CPU 0 exit, and all of the processes on CPU 1 fork more children?
- We need to periodically rebalance
- Balance overheads against benefits
 - Figuring out where to move tasks isn't free

38

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Idea: Idle CPUs rebalance

- If a CPU is out of runnable tasks, it should take load from busy CPUs
 - Busy CPUs shouldn't lose time finding idle CPUs to take their work if possible
- There may not be any idle CPUs
 - Overhead to figure out whether other idle CPUs exist
 - Just have busy CPUs rebalance much less frequently

39

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Average load

- How do we measure how busy a CPU is?
- Average number of runnable tasks over time
- Available in `/proc/loadavg`

40

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Rebalancing strategy

- Read the `loadavg` of each CPU
- Find the one with the highest `loadavg`
- (Hand waving) Figure out how many tasks we could take
 - If worth it, lock the CPU's runqueues and take them
 - If not, try again later

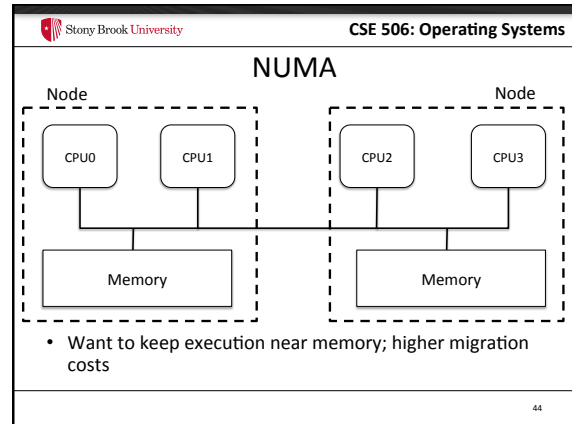
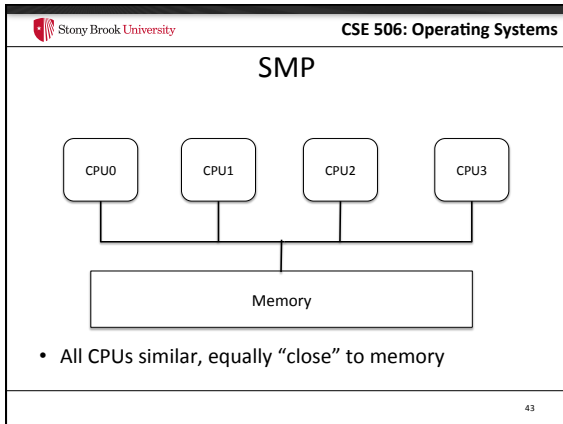
41

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Why not rebalance?

- Intuition: If things run slower on another CPU
- Why might this happen?
 - NUMA (Non-Uniform Memory Access)
 - Hyper-threading
 - Multi-core cache behavior
- Vs: Symmetric Multi-Processor (SMP) – performance on all CPUs is basically the same

42

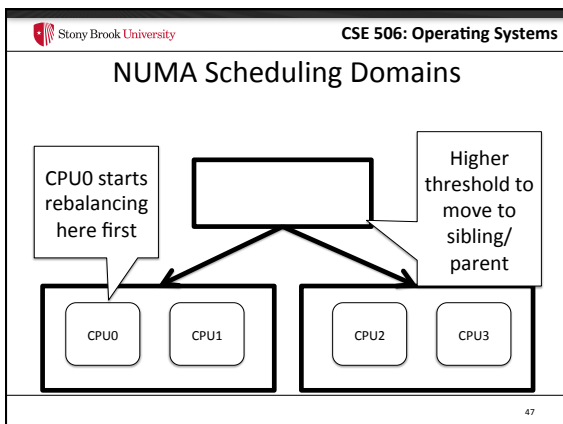
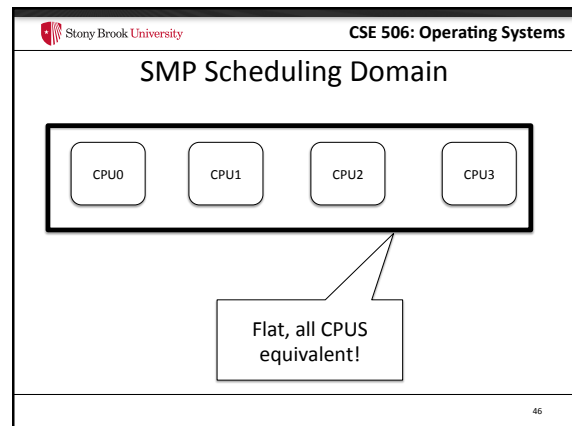


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Scheduling Domains

- General abstraction for CPU topology
- “Tree” of CPUs
 - Each leaf node contains a group of “close” CPUs
- When an idle CPU rebalances, it starts at leaf node and works up to the root
 - Most rebalancing within the leaf
 - Higher threshold to rebalance across a parent

45



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Hyper-threading

- Precursor to multi-core
 - A few more transistors than Intel knew what to do with, but not enough to build a second core on a chip yet
- Duplicate architectural state (registers, etc), but not execution resources (ALU, floating point, etc)
- OS view: 2 logical CPUs
- CPU: pipeline bubble in one “CPU” can be filled with operations from another; yielding higher utilization

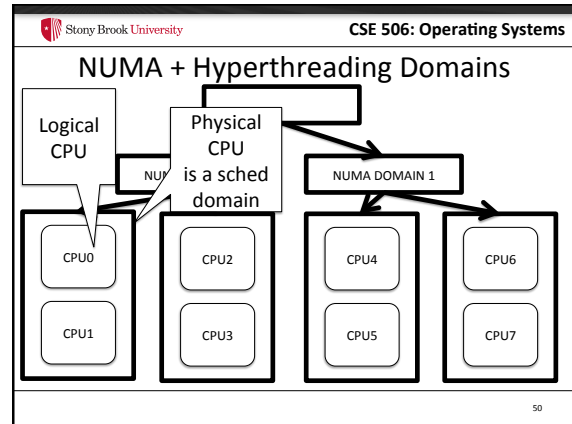
48

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Hyper-threaded scheduling

- Imagine 2 hyper-threaded CPUs
 - 4 Logical CPUs
 - But only 2 CPUs-worth of power
- Suppose I have 2 tasks
 - They will do much better on 2 different physical CPUs than sharing one physical CPU
- They will also contend for space in the cache
 - Less of a problem for threads in same program. Why?

49



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Multi-core

- More levels of caches
- Migration among CPUs sharing a cache preferable
 - Why?
 - More likely to keep data in cache
- Scheduling domains based on shared caches
 - E.g., cores on same chip are in one domain

51

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Outline

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52

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Setting priorities

- setpriority(which, who, niceval) and getpriority()
 - Which: process, process group, or user id
 - PID, PGID, or UID
 - Niceval: -20 to +19 (recall earlier)
- nice(niceval)
 - Historical interface (backwards compatible)
 - Equivalent to:
 - setpriority(PRIO_PROCESS, getpid(), niceval)

53

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Scheduler Affinity

- sched_setaffinity and sched_getaffinity
- Can specify a bitmap of CPUs on which this can be scheduled
 - Better not be 0!
- Useful for benchmarking: ensure each thread on a dedicated CPU

54

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yield

- Moves a runnable task to the expired runqueue
 - Unless real-time (more later), then just move to the end of the active runqueue
- Several other real-time related APIs

55

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Summary

- Understand competing scheduling goals
- Understand how context switching implemented
- Understand O(1) scheduler + rebalancing
- Understand various CPU topologies and scheduling domains
- Scheduling system calls

56