**Project 4: Multicore Cache Coherence (10%)**

**ENEE 646: Digital Computer Design, Fall 2020**

Assigned: Tuesday, Dec 1; Due: Saturday, Dec 19

### Purpose

This project is intended to help you understand the issues of writing software for multicore systems. You will find that having multiple cores (and therefore multiple program counters) is only half the problem; the real issue is the cache system. Your job is to get a multicore cache system up and running (the cache, the cache controller, the bus interface unit, and the memory controller have all been developed for you; you need only integrate them into your P2/P3 pipeline), and then add a cache-coherence engine of your choosing, so that the example multithreaded software given to you will run correctly.

### Project Overview

The figure below indicates what you will be working with in this project. On the project website is code that will give your pipelined processors a split L1 Instruction/Data Cache (only one port to the Data Cache, as before, with the limitation that memory ops must be in the right-hand atom of an instruction), a separate Bus Interface Unit to the main memory, and a memory controller. This is similar to what you were given in Project 3, except that the internals of the Bus Interface Unit should be much easier to understand this time around. Each BIU is connected to the memory controller through two sets of wires: first, there is a shared *address bus* and *data bus*, and the shared nature of the busses is important because it means that any core can see what every other core is requesting of main memory. Secondly, each core has a separate *req/grant* interface, so that when a core wants access to main memory, it sets its *req* bus to a valid signal, and at some point, the memory controller will *grant* that core permission to use the shared address & data busses.

For Project 4, your job is to build a cache-coherence engine for this system, which amounts to a modification of the BIU to implement some form of cache coherence. You can choose whatever type of coherence you want (e.g., SI, MSI, MESI, MOESI, etc.). You have been given two test harnesses to

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**Multicore Cache & Memory System**

![Multicore Cache & Memory System Diagram](image)
experiment with. The first, test1.v, instantiates one RiSC32 core and connects it to the main-memory system; the second, test3.v, instantiates three RiSC32 core and connects all of them to the main-memory system. The test3.v test harness also sets the CPU-ID for each core in the system to a different value, so each core has a unique ID [1..3].

**Project Details**

The following assembly code reverses an array in-place:

```assembly
# reverse-1.s - array reverse for a single thread
# reverses a 2N-entry array in place
#
# register usage:
#  r1  - loop index
#  r2  - address of first item in array (base address)
#  r3  - address of last item in array
#  r4, r5 - temps for LW/SW (exchange)
#  r11 - address of i entry
#  r12 - address of n-i entry
#  r3  - N-1
#  r4  - N
#
movi r14, 6
movi r2, array
addi r13, r14, -1  | addi r3, r2, r14
add r1, r0, r13    | add r3, r3, r13
loop:     add r11, r2, r1  | sub r12, r3, r1
        nop              | lw r4, r11, 0
        lw r5, r12, 0  | sw r4, r12, 0
        addi r1, r1, -1 | sw r5, r11, 0
        nop              | blz r1, next
        bne r0, r14, loop

# at this point the array should be backwards in the cache
# now load a bunch of garbage into the cache to force writebacks
next:    movi r2, pad
        movi r3, 32
        movi r5, 8
        add r1, r0, r0
flush:   add r4, r2, r1
        add r1, r1, r5  | lw r0, r4, 0
        bne r1, r3, flush | lw r0, r4, 4
        halt
        nop
        nop
        nop
array:   .mfill 12, 1, 1
pad:     .mfill 32, 0xabcd
```  

The first loop (in the middle of the code) does the work of reversing the array, and then the loop at the bottom forces writebacks of all the data produced by the first loop, by loading a bunch of data that conflicts in the data cache. You can run this program on any of your processor designs, and it should work. Moreover, you should be able to see in the main-memory output that it works. The code starts in the middle of the array. On each iteration, the loop loads the two values to be swapped, stores them back in opposite places, and then decrements the loop index by one and repeats.

Here is the problem. The following is a multi-threaded version of the exact same code, but it fails to work correctly, and it is not the fault of the software. Try running it on your P1 or P2 solutions (which do not have caches).
The main difference is that the array is divided into thirds, and each CPU uses its CPU-ID to determine which third of the array it gets. The array values are interleaved such that a particular thread on a CPU swaps two values and then decrements by three places instead of one, as in the previous code. When this runs, the main memory values get all messed up because there is false sharing going on; by design, none of the threads will overwrite each other’s data, but because the data is closely packed, two different threads will write to different addresses that happen to lie in the same cache block, and this is what causes main memory to get out of sync.

Yes, the simplest solution is not to write code this way. However, this code presents a very simple, if contrived, multicore/multi-threaded example that fits on a single page and is thus easily analyzed, and that can be solved with a cache-coherence engine.

**Cache Implementation & Limitations**

The cache that has been provided to you is extremely simple. It has 8 blocks and a single port. Each block is the size of one 128-bit (4-word) vectors. It is write-back and allocate-on-write-miss.

The Bus Interface Unit (cache_and_BIU) instantiates both an Instruction Cache and a Data Cache, so it can satisfy two simultaneous requests from the pipeline: one from instruction fetch, and one from a data operation in the execute stage.
Additional limitation:

1. The Cache cannot handle two data requests at the same time, thus instructions of the form
are not allowed, unless you modify your system to handle it. Additionally, the memory operations must be on the right-hand side, e.g. like this:

\[ \text{nop} \quad | \quad \text{lw r5, r6, 7} \]

You should check out the example code above.

The cache & BIU do handle store operations. The Caches were integrated into the BIU to facilitate the implementation of your cache-coherence engine: it will make it much easier for your BIU to make updates to the cache contents based on events observed on the common address/data bus to main memory.

**Cache-Miss Operations & Timing**

The protocol between our cache and main memory is shown in the following timing diagrams. There are four different scenarios:

1. Clean Read-Miss
2. Dirty Read-Miss
3. Clean Write-Miss
4. Dirty Write-Miss

There are two main possibilities: reads (LW operations) and writes (SW operations), and for each of these operations, the desired clock in the cache can either be present (a hit, in which case the request is handled immediately and main-memory is not involved), or not (a miss).
In the miss case, we will always fetch from main memory; this is because the cache implements an allocate-on-write-miss policy as mentioned above.

The main issue that comes up is whether the block that is being displaced to make room for the incoming block has been previously written: i.e., whether the block is dirty or not. If dirty, i.e., if it has been modified since fetching the data from main memory, then the block must be first written back to main memory before any new data can be fetched and brought into the cache. Thus, the protocols for the “dirty” scenarios are much longer and much more complex.

You will see that the protocols are relatively straightforward but take a bit longer than the timing in Project 3, and this was done intentionally to make it much simpler to extend and modify.

**Project Submission & Grading**

Your job is the develop a system that runs the reverse-3.s code correctly. You can choose whatever type of coherence engine you want (e.g., SI, MSI, MESI, MOESI, etc.). You do not have to implement a memory-consistency scheme—i.e., do not worry about sequential consistency, processor consistency, total store order, etc.

You have two deliverables for this project:

1. Submit your working project as a tarball of all your files.
2. Include a README file in PDF that includes diagrams of what you have done. Your documentation need not be elaborate, but it must cover everything you did.

Use the on-line submit facility and number this as assignment #4.