Computer Architecture
Lecture 2c: Course Logistics

Prof. Onur Mutlu
ETH Zürich
Fall 2020
18 September 2020
Recap: Some Goals of This Course

- Teach/enable/empower you to:
  - Understand how a computing platform works
  - Understand how decisions made in hardware affect the software/programmer as well as the hardware designer
  - Think critically (in solving problems)
  - Think broadly across the levels of transformation
  - Understand how to analyze and make tradeoffs in design
  - Apply the above in several lab projects and HWs
Onur Mutlu

- Full Professor @ ETH Zurich ITET (INFK), since September 2015
- Strecker Professor @ Carnegie Mellon University ECE/CS, 2009-2016, 2016-...
- PhD from UT-Austin, worked at Google, VMware, Microsoft Research, Intel, AMD
- [https://people.inf.ethz.ch/omutlu/](https://people.inf.ethz.ch/omutlu/)
- omutlu@gmail.com (Best way to reach me)
- [https://people.inf.ethz.ch/omutlu/projects.htm](https://people.inf.ethz.ch/omutlu/projects.htm)

Research and Teaching in:

- Computer architecture, computer systems, hardware security, bioinformatics
- Memory and storage systems
- Hardware security, safety, predictability
- Fault tolerance
- Hardware/software cooperation
- Architectures for bioinformatics, health, medicine
- ...
Course Info: The Teaching Team

- Teaching Assistants
  - Dr. Mohammed Alser
  - João Dinis Ferreira
  - Rahul Bera
  - Geraldo F. de Oliveira Jr.
  - Can Firtina
  - **Dr. Juan Gomez Luna**
  - Dr. Jawad Haj-Yahya
  - Hasan Hassan
  - Konstantinos Kanellopoulos
  - Jeremie Kim
  - Nika Mansouri Ghiasi
  - Dr. Haiyu Mao
  - Dr. Lois Orosa
  - Dr. Jisung Park
  - Minesh Patel
  - Gagandeep Singh
  - Kosta Stojiljkovic
  - Giray Yaglikci

- Get to know them and their research
Review: Major High-Level Goals of This Course

- Understand the principles
- Understand the precedents

Based on such understanding:
- Enable you to evaluate tradeoffs of different designs and ideas
- Enable you to develop principled designs
- Enable you to develop novel, out-of-the-box designs

The focus is on:
- Principles, precedents, and how to use them for new designs

In Computer Architecture
A Note on Hardware vs. Software

- This course might seem like it is only “Computer Hardware”

- However, you will be much more capable if you master both hardware and software (and the interface between them)
  - Can develop better software if you understand the hardware
  - Can design better hardware if you understand the software
  - Can design a better computing system if you understand both
The Transformation Hierarchy

Computer Architecture (expanded view)

- Problem
- Algorithm
- Program/Language
- System Software
- SW/HW Interface
- Micro-architecture
- Logic
- Devices
- Electrons
What Do I Expect From You?

- **Required background**: Digital circuits course, programming, an open mind willing to take in many exciting concepts.

- Learn the material thoroughly
  - attend lectures, do the readings, do the exercises, do the labs
- **Work hard**: this will be a hard, but fun & informative course
- Ask questions, take notes, participate
- Perform the assigned readings
- **Participate online (lecture, Piazza)**
- Start early
- If you want feedback, come to office hours

- Remember “*Chance favors the prepared mind.*” (Pasteur)
What Do I Expect From You?

- How you prepare and manage your time is very important.

- There will be many lab and homework assignments.
  - They will take time.
  - Start early, work hard.

- This will be a heavy course.
  - However, you will learn a lot of fascinating topics and understand how a computing platform works.
  - And, it will hopefully change how you look at and think about designs around you.
How Will You Be Evaluated?

- Project assignments: 50%
- Final exam (180 minutes): 35%
- Homeworks: 15%

- More on this later
Course Goals

- **Goal 1:** To familiarize those interested in computer system design with both fundamental operation principles and design tradeoffs of processor, memory, and platform architectures in today’s systems.
  - Strong emphasis on fundamentals, design tradeoffs, key current/future issues
  - Strong emphasis on looking backward, forward, up and down

- **Goal 2:** To provide the necessary background and experience to design, implement, and evaluate a modern processor by performing hands-on simulator implementation.
  - Strong emphasis on functionality, hands-on design & implementation, and efficiency.
  - Strong emphasis on making things work, realizing ideas
Course Website

- [https://safari.ethz.ch/architecture/fall2020/doku.php](https://safari.ethz.ch/architecture/fall2020/doku.php)

- All slides, lecture videos, readings, assignments to be posted
- Plus other useful information for the course
- Check frequently for announcements and due dates
Homework 0

- Due Sep 24

- Information about yourself

- All future grading is predicated on homework 0
Heads Up

- We will have a few required review assignments
  - Due likely end of next week

- HW1 will be out early next week
  - Due in ~2 weeks

- Lab 1 will be out today
  - Due in ~2 weeks

- Check the website. Will also be announced in lecture
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