

Concurrent Programming (Part 1)

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Objectives

- We will cover:
 - What a **process** is
 - How to **fork** and **wait** for processes
 - What a **thread** is
 - How to **spawn** and **join** threads

Agenda

- **Concurrency**
- Process-level concurrency
- Thread-level concurrency

Concurrency

- To implement concurrency...
- **Option 1: Process-level concurrency**
 - Multiple processes run concurrently
- **Option 2: Thread-level concurrency**
 - Multiple threads run concurrently within the same process

Concurrency

- **COS 217**
 - (Sometimes) covers **process**-level concurrency
 - As implemented in **C** via `fork()` and `wait()`
 - Does not cover **thread**-level concurrency
- **COS 333**
 - Covers **processes**-level concurrency
 - As implemented in **Python**
 - Covers **thread**-level concurrency
 - As implemented in **Python**

Agenda

- Concurrency
- **Process-level concurrency**
- Thread-level concurrency

Process Concurrency

- *Program*
 - Executable code
- *Process*
 - An instance of a program in execution
 - Each process has its own distinct **context**

Process Concurrency

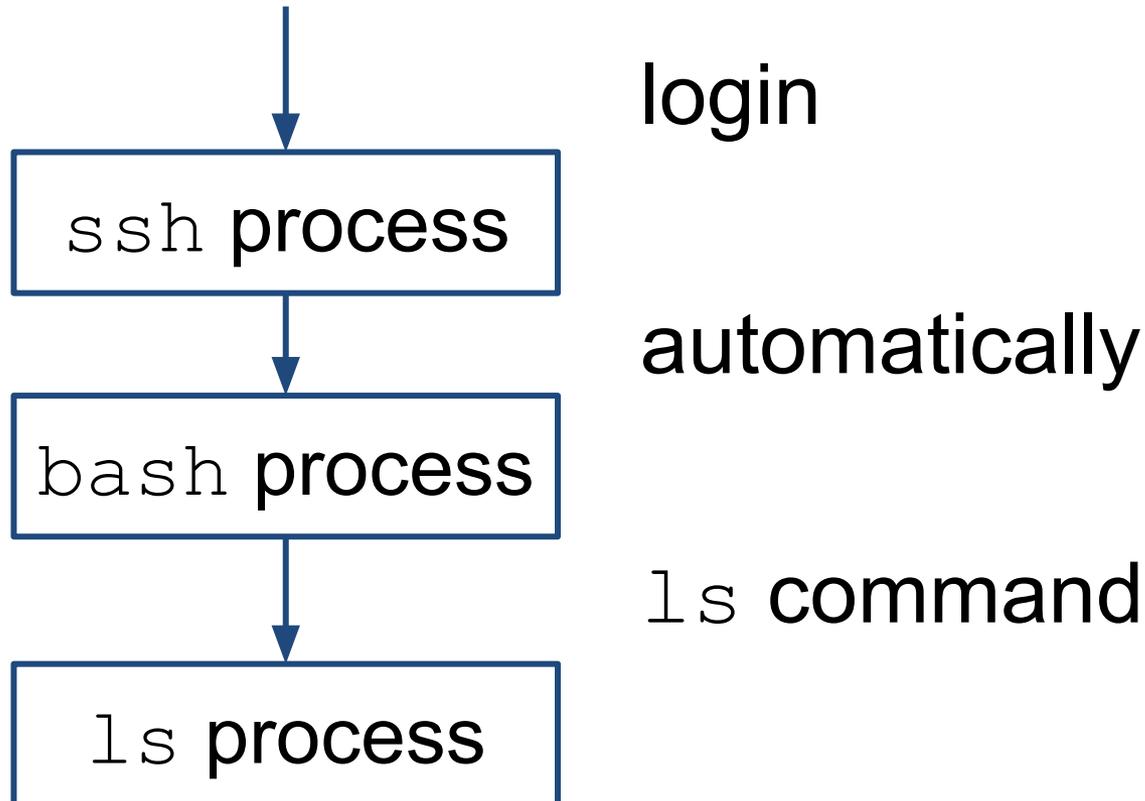
- **Context** consists of:
 - Process id
 - Address space: TEXT, RODATA, DATA, BSS, HEAP, STACK
 - Processor state: general purpose registers, flags register, instruction pointer register, etc.

Process Concurrency

- Process-level concurrency
 - Process P1 *forks* child process P2
 - P1 and P2 run *concurrently*
 - >1 processor available on computer => P1 and P2 run in *parallel*
 - 1 processor available on computer => OS *context switches* between P1 and P2
 - OS “gives the processor” to P1
 - OS “gives the processor” to P2
 - ...

Process Concurrency

Example: On a Linux system:



Process Concurrency

- See [forking.py](#)

```
$ python forking.py
```

```
parent process terminated
```

```
blue
```

```
blue process terminated
```

```
red
```

```
red process terminated
```

```
$
```

```
$ python forking.py
```

```
parent process terminated
```

```
red
```

```
red process terminated
```

```
blue
```

```
blue process terminated
```

```
$
```

```
$ python forking.py
```

```
blue
```

```
parent process terminated
```

```
blue
```

```
blue
```

```
blue
```

```
blue
```

```
blue process terminated
```

```
red
```

```
red process terminated
```

```
$
```

Process Concurrency

- See [waiting.py](#)

```
$ python waiting.py
blue
blue
blue
blue
blue
blue process terminated
red
red
red
red
red
red process terminated
parent process terminated
$
```

```
$ python waiting.py
red
red
red
red
red
red process terminated
blue
blue
blue
blue
blue
blue process terminated
parent process terminated
$
```

Aside: Zombies

- **Definition:**
 - A ***zombie process*** is a process that has exited but has not been **waited for (reaped)** by its parent process
- Zombie processes needlessly clutter the operating system's data structures
- A parent process should wait for (reap) its child processes

Agenda

- Concurrency
- Process-level concurrency
- **Thread-level concurrency**

Thread Concurrency

- *Thread*
 - A flow of control within a process
 - A process contains one or more threads
 - Within a process, all threads execute **concurrently**

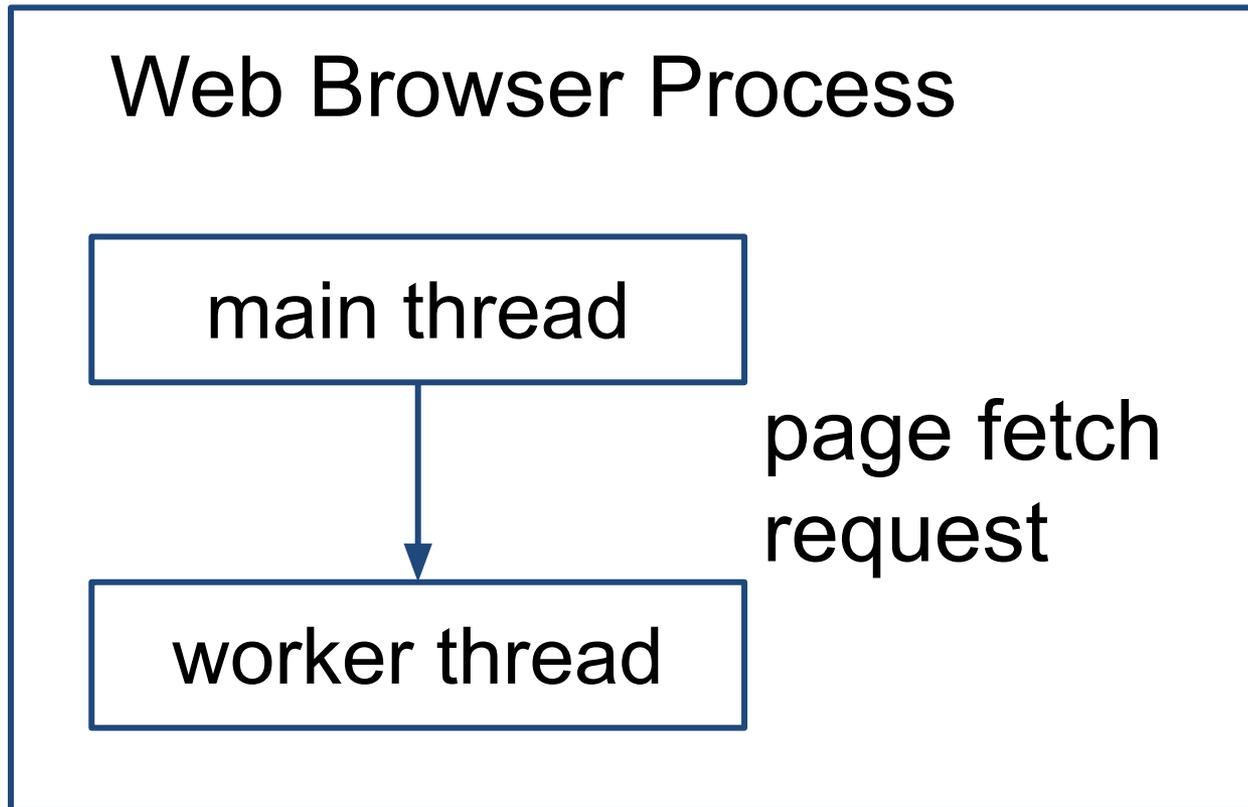
Thread Concurrency

- **Thread-level** concurrency
 - Within P1, thread T1 *spawns* child thread T2
 - T1 and T2 run *concurrently*
 - >1 processors available on computer => T1 and T2 run in *parallel* *
 - 1 processor available on computer => OS *context switches* between T1 and T2
 - OS “gives the processor” to T1
 - OS “gives the processor” to T2
 - ...

* In principle, but not in Python

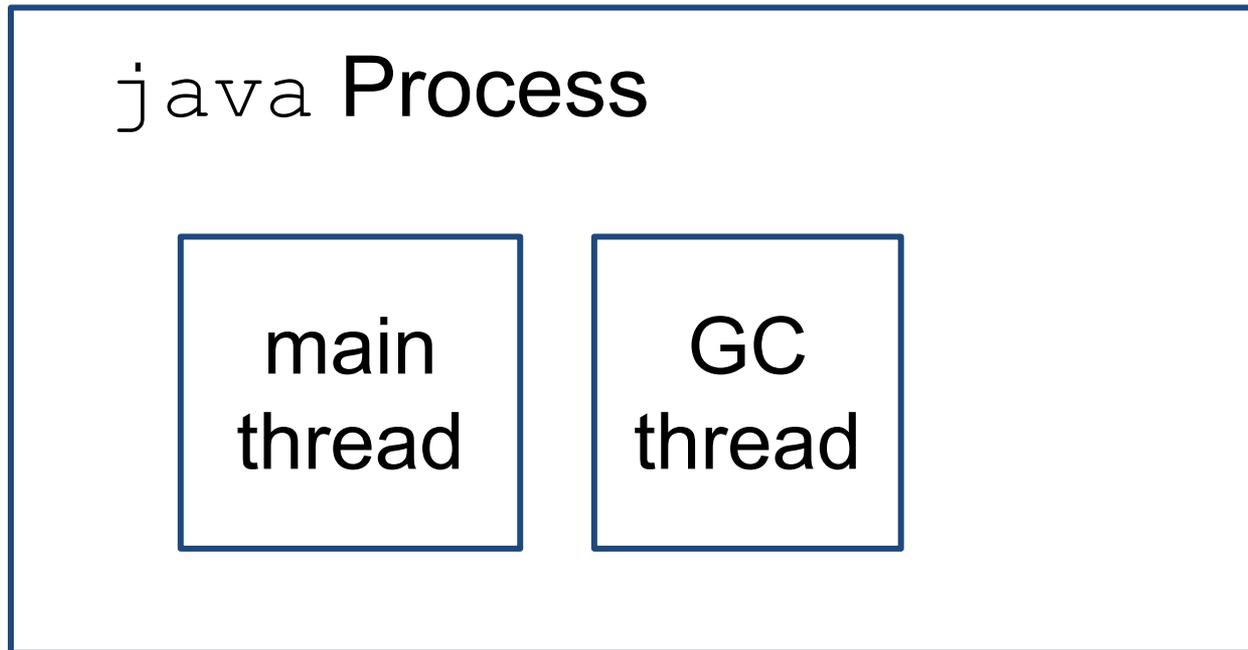
Thread Concurrency

Example: In a web browser:



Thread Concurrency

Example: In a java process:



Thread Concurrency

- Generalizing...
- The “main” thread runs at process startup
 - Other threads may run at process startup too
- The main thread can spawn other threads
- Note terminology:
 - One process **forks** another
 - One thread **spawns** another

Thread Concurrency

- See [spawning.py](#)

```
$ python spawning.py
main thread terminated
blue
blue
blue
blue
blue
blue
blue thread terminated
red
red
red
red
red
red
red thread terminated
$
```

```
$ python spawning.py
blue
blue
blue
blue
blue
blue thread terminated
red
red
red
red
red
red thread terminated
main thread terminated
$
```

```
$ python spawning.py
blue
blue
blue
blue
red
red
red
red
red thread terminated
blue
main thread terminated
blue thread terminated
$
```

Thread Concurrency

- In Python...
- To compose a thread:
 - Define a subclass of `threading.Thread`
 - Override `run()` method
 - Instantiate an object of that class
- To spawn a thread:
 - Call object's `start()` method
 - `start()` does setup, calls `run()`
 - **Don't call `run()` directly!!!**

Thread Concurrency

- See [joining.py](#)

```
$ python joining.py
blue
blue
blue
blue
blue
blue thread terminated
red
red
red
red
red
red thread terminated
main thread terminated
$
```

```
$ python joining.py
blue
blue
blue
red
red
red
red
red thread terminated
blue
blue
blue thread terminated
main thread terminated
$
```

Summary

	Terminology in Theory	Terminology in Python
Concurrent processes	fork + wait	fork + join
Concurrent threads	spawn + join	spawn + join

Aside: Zombies

- A parent **process** should wait for (reap) its child processes
- A parent **thread** need not join its child threads

Lecture Summary

- In this lecture we covered:
 - What a **process** is
 - How to **fork** and **wait** for processes
 - What a **thread** is
 - How to **spawn** and **join** threads