Programming Assignment:
Dining Java Philosophers

CS 377: Parallel Programming
Fall 2006
November 9, 2006

1 Administrative Details

Due: Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2006

To be handed in: Your printed lab report, and printed source code for both versions.

Comments: Be sure to update the comments to indicate your name and the location of your
source file, as well as which version is implemented.

Report: Your lab report will discuss your overall experience solving problems, any problems en-
countered, how solved, lessons learned, etc.

Starting Code: The starting code is the same code we worked with during the live demo in class
on Nov. 7. Copy this starting code from my java-phils directory on spaceserver. There are
three Java classes to copy:
mlsmith/java-phils/Main.java
mlsmith/java-phils/Philosopher.java
mlsmith/java-phils/TableMon.java

2 Description

One of the difficult and frustrating things about solving this problem with UPC is that the language
provides low level locks and barriers as synchronization primitives. When we attempted to solve the
dining philosophers problem using a waiter that seats at most four philosophers at a time, things
got a little messy. It would have been nice to have monitors available, which would have simplified
things considerably.

Java provides a limited monitor synchronization mechanism. All Java objects have a hidden
lock, and the synchronized keyword permits us to implement critical sections, as well as a queue
to wait on synchronization conditions (i.e., one implicit condition variable). The starting code gives
one example of using synchronized, along with the wait() and notifyAll() primitives.

In this assignment, you will gain experience using the two forms of Java synchronization sup-
ported by the synchronized keyword: synchronized methods and synchronized code blocks. Examples
of synchronized methods abound in TableMon.java. As a reminder, the form of a synchronized
code block is as follows:
synchronized (obj) {
    // A thread executing in this block holds the hidden lock
    // of object obj. This is a critical section!
    // Thus, two or more objects can synchronize with one
    // another by sharing a common object, and using
    // synchronized code blocks.
}

3 Assignment

Your mission is to implement two additional versions of the dining philosophers in Java. One
version will be monitor-like, using synchronized methods; the other version will use synchronized
code block and shared objects among the dining philosophers.

synchronized code blocks. In this version, you will use synchronized code blocks and syn-
chronizing objects to represent the chopsticks. You will implement a Chopsticks class that contains
an array of Chopstick objects to represent the chopsticks. You may make Chopstick an inner class
of Chopsticks if you wish. In addition to the array of Chopstick objects, provide two methods
in class Chopsticks: getLeft(int id) and getRight(int id). Note: these methods need not be
synchronized, as they merely return the reference to the appropriate chopstick for the given philos-
opher id. These methods will be used in the Philosopher class in the lifecycle of the philosopher to
create synchronized code blocks. The basic idea is this:

synchronized (chopsticks.getLeft(id)) {
    // philosopher has left chopstick!
    synchronized (chopsticks.getRight(id)) {
        // philosopher has right chopstick!
        // don’t just hold them---eat!
    }
}

Using these synchronized code blocks, implement a deadlock free solution to the dining philoso-
phers (i.e. pick up chopsticks safely!). The three (or four) main Java classes for this solution are:
Main, Philosopher, and Chopsticks (which should include the inner class Chopstick).

synchronized methods. In this version, you will implement the waiter solution to the dining
philosophers. This time, you have monitor capability! Add a WaiterMon class to the starter code,
and modify your Philosopher objects to include a reference to a waiter monitor, in addition to the
table monitor. The WaiterMon object should have a single instance variable to keep track of the
number of philosophers currently seated. Provide two synchronized methods: sitDown(int id)
and standUp(int id). These methods should increment and decrement the count, as appropriate.
If there is no room at the table, sitDown(int id) should wait. Similarly, standUp(int id) should
notify any waiting philosophers that there’s room at the table.