Lecture 6: Assembly Programs

- Today's topics:
  - Large constants
  - The compilation process
  - A full example
  - Intro to the MARS simulator

Saving Conventions

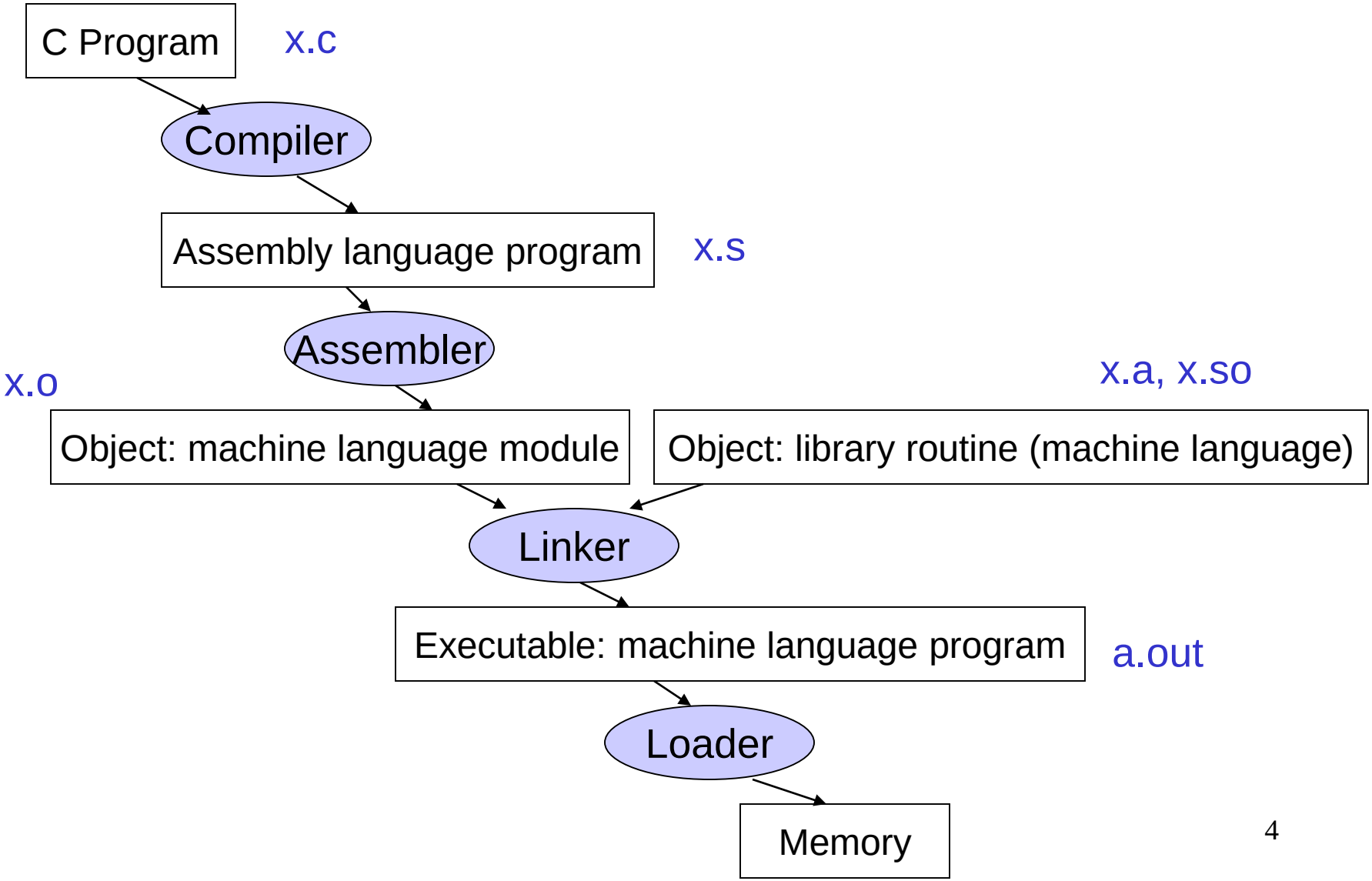
- Caller saved: Temp registers $t0-$t9 (the callee won't bother saving these, so save them if you care), $ra (it's about to get over-written), $a0-$a3 (so you can put in new arguments)

- Callee saved: $s0-$s7 (these typically contain "valuable" data)

Large Constants

- Immediate instructions can only specify 16-bit constants
- The lui instruction is used to store a 16-bit constant into the upper 16 bits of a register… combine this with an OR instruction to specify a 32-bit constant
- The destination PC-address in a conditional branch is specified as a 16-bit constant, relative to the current PC
- A jump (j) instruction can specify a 26-bit constant; if more bits are required, the jump-register (jr) instruction is used

Starting a Program



Role of Assembler

- Convert pseudo-instructions into actual hardware instructions – pseudo-instrs make it easier to program in assembly – examples: “move”, “blt”, 32-bit immediate operands, etc.

- Convert assembly instrs into machine instrs – a separate object file (x.o) is created for each C file (x.c) – compute the actual values for instruction labels – maintain info on external references and debugging information

Role of Linker

- Stitches different object files into a single executable
  - patch internal and external references
  - determine addresses of data and instruction labels
  - organize code and data modules in memory
- Some libraries (DLLs) are dynamically linked – the executable points to dummy routines – these dummy routines call the dynamic linker-loader so they can update the executable to jump to the correct routine

Full Example – Sort in C (pg. 133)

```
void sort (int v[], int n)
{
    int i, j;
    for (i=0; i<n; i+=1) {
        for (j=i-1; j>=0 && v[j] > v[j+1]; j-=1) {
            swap (v,j);
        }
    }
}
```

```
void swap (int v[], int k)
{
    int temp;
    temp = v[k];
    v[k] = v[k+1];
    v[k+1] = temp;
}
```

- Allocate registers to program variables
- Produce code for the program body
- Preserve registers across procedure invocations

The swap Procedure

- Register allocation: $a0 and $a1 for the two arguments, $t0 for the temp variable – no need for saves and restores as we're not using $s0-$s7 and this is a leaf procedure (won't need to re-use $a0 and $a1)

```
swap:   sll   $t1, $a1, 2
        add   $t1, $a0, $t1
        lw    $t0, 0($t1)
        lw    $t2, 4($t1)
        sw    $t2, 0($t1)
        sw    $t0, 4($t1)
        jr    $ra
```

```
void swap (int v[], int k)
{
    int temp;
    temp = v[k];
    v[k] = v[k+1];
    v[k+1] = temp;
}
```

The sort Procedure

- Register allocation: arguments v and n use $a0 and $a1, i and j use $s0 and $s1; must save $a0 and $a1 before calling the leaf procedure

- The outer for loop looks like this: (note the use of pseudo-instrs)

```
                move   $s0, $zero          # initialize the loop
loopbody1: bge     $s0, $a1, exit1     # will eventually use slt and beq
                … body of inner loop …
                addi    $s0, $s0, 1
                j          loopbody1
exit1:
```

```
for (i=0; i<n; i+=1) {
   for (j=i-1; j>=0 && v[j] > v[j+1]; j-=1) {
         swap (v,j);
   }
}
```

The sort Procedure

- The inner for loop looks like this:

```
                addi    $s1, $s0, -1          # initialize the loop
loopbody2:      blt     $s1, $zero, exit2     # will eventually use slt and beq
                sll     $t1,  $s1, 2
                add     $t2, $a0, $t1
                lw      $t3, 0($t2)
                lw      $t4, 4($t2)
                bgt     $t3, $t4, exit2
                … body of inner loop …
                addi    $s1, $s1, -1
                j        loopbody2
exit2:
```

```
for (i=0; i<n; i+=1) {
   for (j=i-1; j>=0 && v[j] > v[j+1]; j-=1) {
         swap (v,j);
   }
}
```

Saves and Restores

- Since we repeatedly call “swap” with $a0 and $a1, we begin “sort” by copying its arguments into $s2 and $s3 – must update the rest of the code in “sort” to use $s2 and $s3 instead of $a0 and $a1
- Must save $ra at the start of “sort” because it will get over-written when we call “swap”
- Must also save $s0-$s3 so we don’t overwrite something that belongs to the procedure that called “sort”

Saves and Restores

```
sort:   addi    $sp, $sp, -20
        sw      $ra, 16($sp)
        sw      $s3, 12($sp)
        sw      $s2, 8($sp)
        sw      $s1, 4($sp)
        sw      $s0, 0($sp)
        move    $s2, $a0
        move    $s3, $a1
          …
        move    $a0, $s2        # the inner loop body starts here
        move    $a1, $s1
        jal     swap
          …
exit1:  lw      $s0, 0($sp)
          …
        addi    $sp, $sp, 20
        jr      $ra
```

9 lines of C code → 35 lines of assembly

IA-32 Instruction Set

- Intel's IA-32 instruction set has evolved over 20 years – old features are preserved for software compatibility
- Numerous complex instructions – complicates hardware design (Complex Instruction Set Computer – CISC)
- Instructions have different sizes, operands can be in registers or memory, only 8 general-purpose registers, one of the operands is over-written
- RISC instructions are more amenable to high performance (clock speed and parallelism) – modern Intel processors convert IA-32 instructions into simpler micro-operations

Endian-ness

Two major formats for transferring values between registers and memory

Memory: low address 45 7b 87 7f high address

Little-endian register: the first byte read goes in the low end of the register

Register: 7f 87 7b 45

Most-significant bit ↗ ↖ Least-significant bit (x86)

Big-endian register: the first byte read goes in the big end of the register

Register: 45 7b 87 7f

Most-significant bit ↗ ↖ Least-significant bit (MIPS, IBM)

MARS

- MARS is a simulator that reads in an assembly program and models its behavior on a MIPS processor
- Note that a “MIPS add instruction” will eventually be converted to an add instruction for the host computer’s architecture – this translation happens under the hood
- To simplify the programmer’s task, it accepts pseudo-instructions, large constants, constants in decimal/hex formats, labels, etc.
- The simulator allows us to inspect register/memory values to confirm that our program is behaving correctly

Example

```
main:
    addi   $t0, $zero, 5
    addi   $t1, $zero, 7
    add    $t2, $t0, $t1
```

If we inspect the contents of $t2, we'll find the number 12

Title

- Bullet