

Programming Principles in Python (CSCI 503/490)

Concurrency

Dr. David Koop

unittest

- Subclass from `unittest.TestCase`, write `test_*` functions
- Use `assert*` instance functions
- `import unittest`

```
class TestOperators(unittest.TestCase):
    def test_add(self):
        self.assertEqual(add(3, 4), 7)

    def test_add_op(self):
        self.assertEqual(operator.add(3, 4), 7)
unittest.main(argv=[''], exit=False)
```

Mock Testing

- Sometimes we don't want to actually execute all of the code that may be triggered by a particular test
- Examples: code that posts to Twitter, code that deletes files
- We can mock this behavior by substituting the actual methods with mockers
- Can even simulate side effects like having the function being mocked raise an exception signifying the network is done

Python Modules for Working with the Filesystem

- In general, cross-platform! (Linux, Mac, Windows)
- `os`: translations of operating system commands
- `shutil`: better support for file and directory management
- `fnmatch`, `glob`: match filenames, paths
- `os.path`: path manipulations
- `pathlib`: object-oriented approach to path manipulations, also includes some support for matching paths

Listing Files in a Directory

- Difference between file and directory
- `isfile/is_file` and `isdir/is_dir` methods
 - `os.path.isfile/isdir`
 - `DirEntry.is_file/is_dir`
 - `Path.is_file/is_dir`
- Test while iterating through
 - ```
from pathlib import Path
basepath = Path('my_directory/')
files_in_basepath = basepath.iterdir()
for item in files_in_basepath:
 if item.is_file():
 print(item.name)
```

# File Attributes

---

- Getting information about a file is "stat"-ing it (from the system call name)
- Names are similarly a bit esoteric, use documentation
- `os.stat` or use `.stat` methods on `DirEntry/Path`
- Modification time:
  - ```
from pathlib import Path
current_dir = Path('my_directory')
for path in current_dir.iterdir():
    info = path.stat()
    print(info.st_mtime)
```
- Also can check existence: `path.exists()`

Filename Pattern Matching

- `string.endswith/startswith`: no wildcards
- `fnmatch`: adds `*` and `?` wildcards to use when matching (**not** just like regex!)
- `glob.glob`: treats filenames starting with `.` as special
 - can do recursive matchings (e.g. in subdirectories) using `**`
- `pathlib.Path.glob`: object-oriented version of `glob`
- ```
from pathlib import Path
p = Path('.')
for name in p.glob('*.*'):
 print(name)
```
- Also, can break apart paths:
  - `split/basename/dirname/join ~ parent/name/joinpath`

[V. Ndlovu]



# Moving and Renaming Files/Directories

---

- Moving files or directories:
  - `shutil.move('dir_1/', 'backup/')`
- Renaming files or directories:
  - `os.rename`
  - `pathlib.Path.rename`
  - `data_file = Path('data_01.txt')`  
`data_file.rename('data.txt')`



# Assignment 6

---

- Object-Oriented Programming
- Classes to create an online store
  - Operators
  - Representations
  - Exceptions
- Useful practice for the test

# Test 2

---

- Wednesday, April 2, in class from 12:30-1:45pm
- Similar Format to Test 1
- Emphasizes topics covered since Test 1, but still need to know core concepts from the first third of the course

# Concurrency

# What is concurrency?

Why do we care about concurrency  
(multitasking and multiprocessing)?

# Why concurrency?

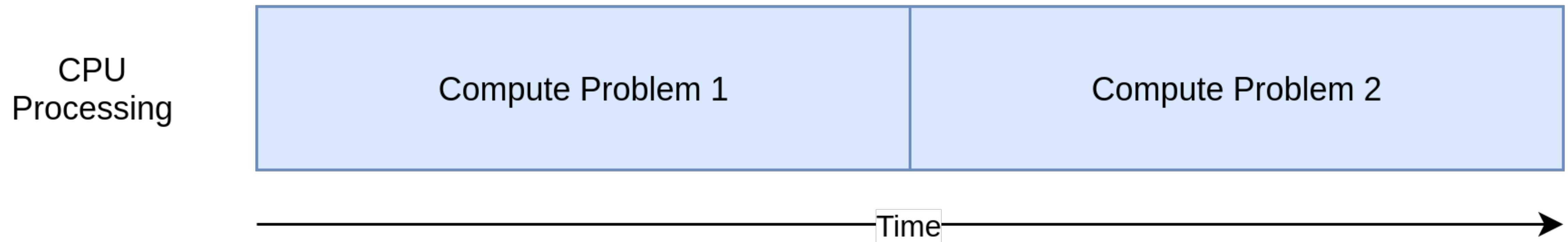
---

- Speed:
  - Moore's Law and multiple cores
  - CPU-bound programs can use more cores
- Input/Output
  - Programs often sit waiting for data to load from disk/network

# CPU-Bound

---

- Have to run each problem in sequence
- Wait for Problem 1 to finish before Problem 2 can start
- ...even if they are totally separate problems!
- What if we could use another core for Problem 2?

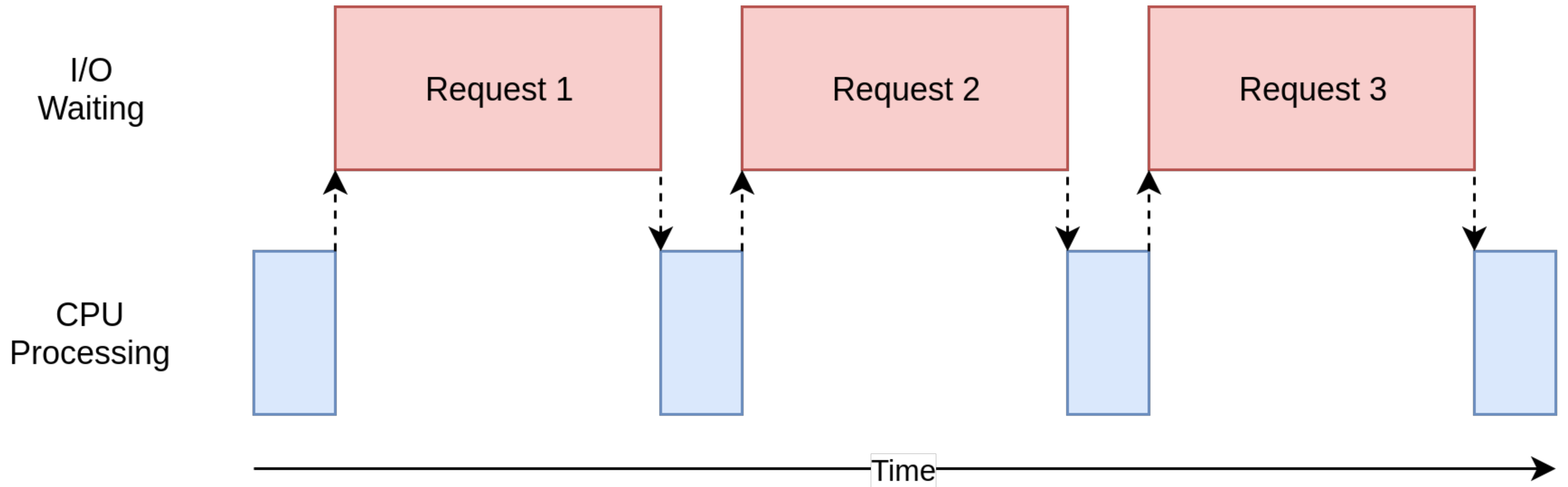


[J. Anderson]



# I/O-Bound

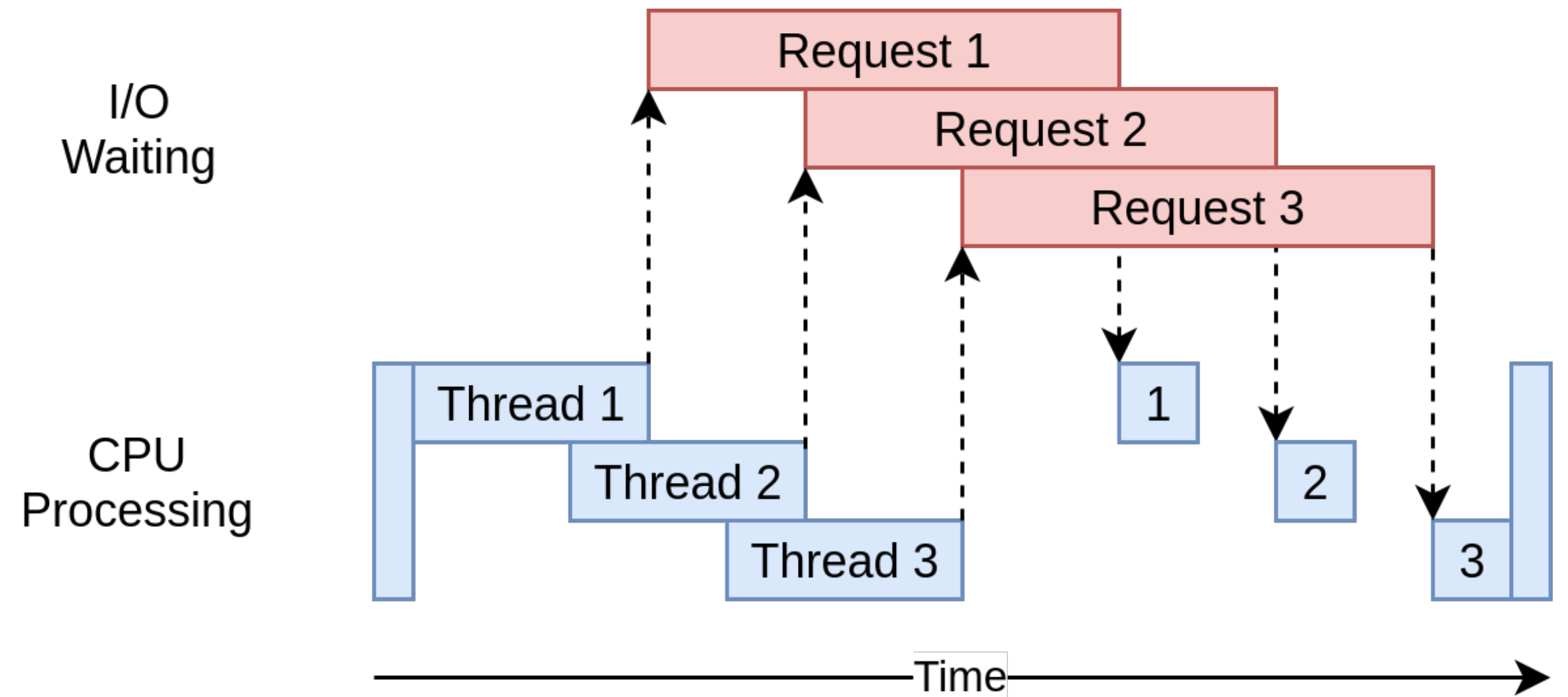
- Waiting for the file system or network to get data
- Nothing else happens while we wait for I/O to finish
- What if we could do something else while waiting for I/O?



[J. Anderson]

# Threading

- Threading address the I/O waits by letting separate pieces of a program run at the same time
- Threads run in the same process
- Threads share the same memory (and global variables)
- Operating system schedules threads; it can manage when each thread runs, e.g. round-robin scheduling
- When blocking for I/O, other threads can run



[J. Anderson]

# Threading Problem: Race Conditions

---

- Two threads, T1 and T2 that increment a variable  $a = 42$
- We don't know when these threads will be **interrupted** by the OS
- T1 reads the value of  $a$  (42)  
T1 adds one and writes  $a$  (43) # T1 finished  
T2 reads the value of  $a$  (43)  
T2 adds one and writes  $a$  (44) # T2 finished
- T1 reads the value of  $a$  (42) # T1 INTERRUPT  
T2 reads the value of  $a$  (42) # T2 INTERRUPT  
T1 adds one and writes  $a$  (43) # T1 finished  
T2 adds one and writes  $a$  (43) # T2 finished
- Two different answers!

# Threading Solution: Locking

---

- Ensure no two threads can access the same variable at the same time
- T1 acquires a lock on a
  - T1 reads the value of a (42) # T1 INTERRUPT
  - T2 waits for a lock on a # T2 BLOCKED, sleeps
  - T1 adds one and writes a (43)
  - T1 releases lock on a # T1 finished
  - T2 acquires a lock on a
  - T2 reads the value of a (43)
  - T2 adds one and writes a (44)
  - T2 releases lock on a # T2 finished

# Python and Threading

---

- ```
import threading
def printer(num):
    print(num)
for i in range(5):
    t = threading.Thread(target=printer, args=(i,))
    t.start()
```
- Try this: you will likely see out-of-order outputs or weird formatting
- Why?

Python Locks

- ```
my_lock = threading.Lock()

def printer(num):
 with my_lock:
 print(num)

for i in range(5):
 t = threading.Thread(target=printer, args=(i,))
 t.start()
```
- With statement provides context manager to acquire and release the lock

# ThreadPoolExecutor

---

- Can be difficult to keep track of all threads
- Want to reuse threads instead of creating a new one each time
- Wait until all threads are done executing before next tasks
- `ThreadPoolExecutor` simplifies this
- ```
from concurrent.futures import ThreadPoolExecutor  
with ThreadPoolExecutor(max_workers=5) as executor:  
    executor.map(printer, range(10))
```
- `max_workers` specifies the number of threads (can compute multiple times on one thread)
- `map` figures out how to assign the inputs to the threads

Python Threading Speed

- If I/O bound, threads work great because time spent waiting can now be used by other threads
- Threads **do not** run simultaneously in standard Python, i.e. they cannot take advantage of multiple cores
- Use threads when code is **I/O bound**, otherwise no real speed-up plus some overhead for using threads

Using multiple cores at once

- Python is linear/serial; only one thread executes at a time
- Python has **garbage collection**, releasing memory when not used
 - Requires keeping track of all objects by **reference counting**
 - `a = { 'IL', 'IN', 'OH' }`
`b = { 'states': a }`
 - `{ 'IL', 'IN', 'OH' }` has a reference count of 2 (a and b both reference it)
- Problem: keeping track of references across different threads/processes

Python and the GIL

- Remember Python integrates other libraries, including those written in C
- Python was designed to have a thread-safe interface for C libraries (which were not necessarily themselves thread-safe)
- Could add locking to every value/data structure, but with multiple locks comes possible **deadlock**
- Python instead has a Global Interpreter Lock (GIL) that must be acquired to execute any Python code
- This effectively makes Python single-threaded (faster execution)
- Python requires threads to give up GIL after certain amount of time
- Python 3 improved allocation of GIL to threads by not allowing a single CPU-bound thread to hog it

--disable-gil (No GIL Python)

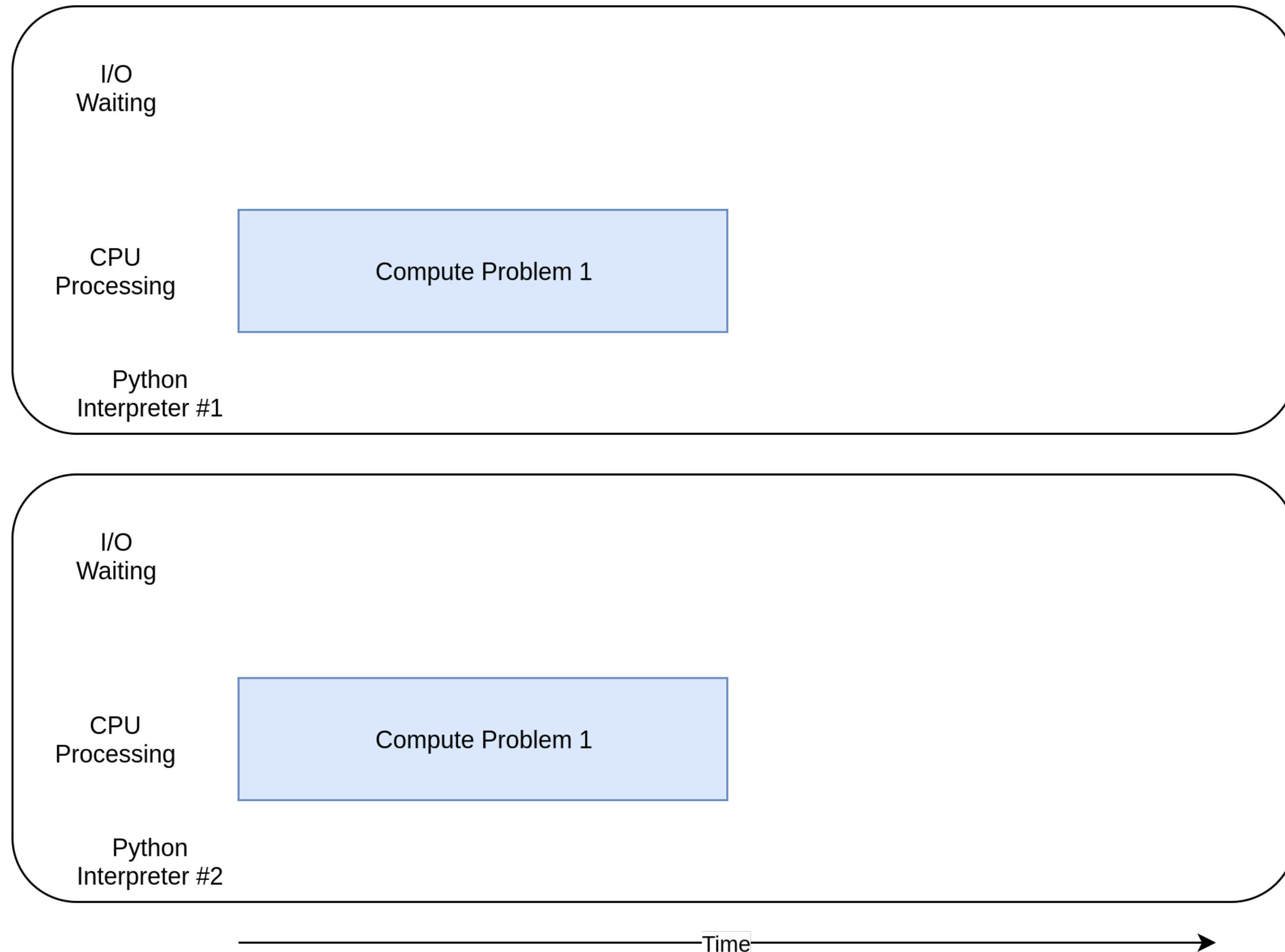
- GIL Problems:
 - Difficult to use multi-core CPUs effectively for scientific applications
 - GPU-Heavy workloads (AI) require effective multi-core CPU execution
 - Workarounds are complex, make libraries more difficult to use and maintain
- PEP 703: Making the Global Interpreter Lock Optional in Python
 - Use biased reference counting (most objects used by a single thread)
 - Change memory allocator to one that is thread-safe (pymalloc relies on GIL)
 - Use per-object locking for container thread safety
 - Updates to the garbage collector (non-generational) that also allow "stop-the-world" on threads

[PEP 703]

Multiprocessing

- Multiple processes do not need to share the same memory, interact less
- Python makes the difference between processes and threads minimal in most cases
- Big win: can take advantage of multiple cores!
- ```
import multiprocessing
with multiprocessing.Pool() as pool:
 pool.map(printer, range(5))
```
- **Warning:** known issues with running this in the notebook, use in scripts or look for alternate possibilities/library
- Set `__spec__ = None` to use the `%run` command in the notebook with a multiprocessing script

# Multiprocessing address CPU-bound processes



[J. Anderson]



# Multiprocessing using concurrent.futures

---

- ```
import concurrent.futures
import multiprocessing as mp
import time

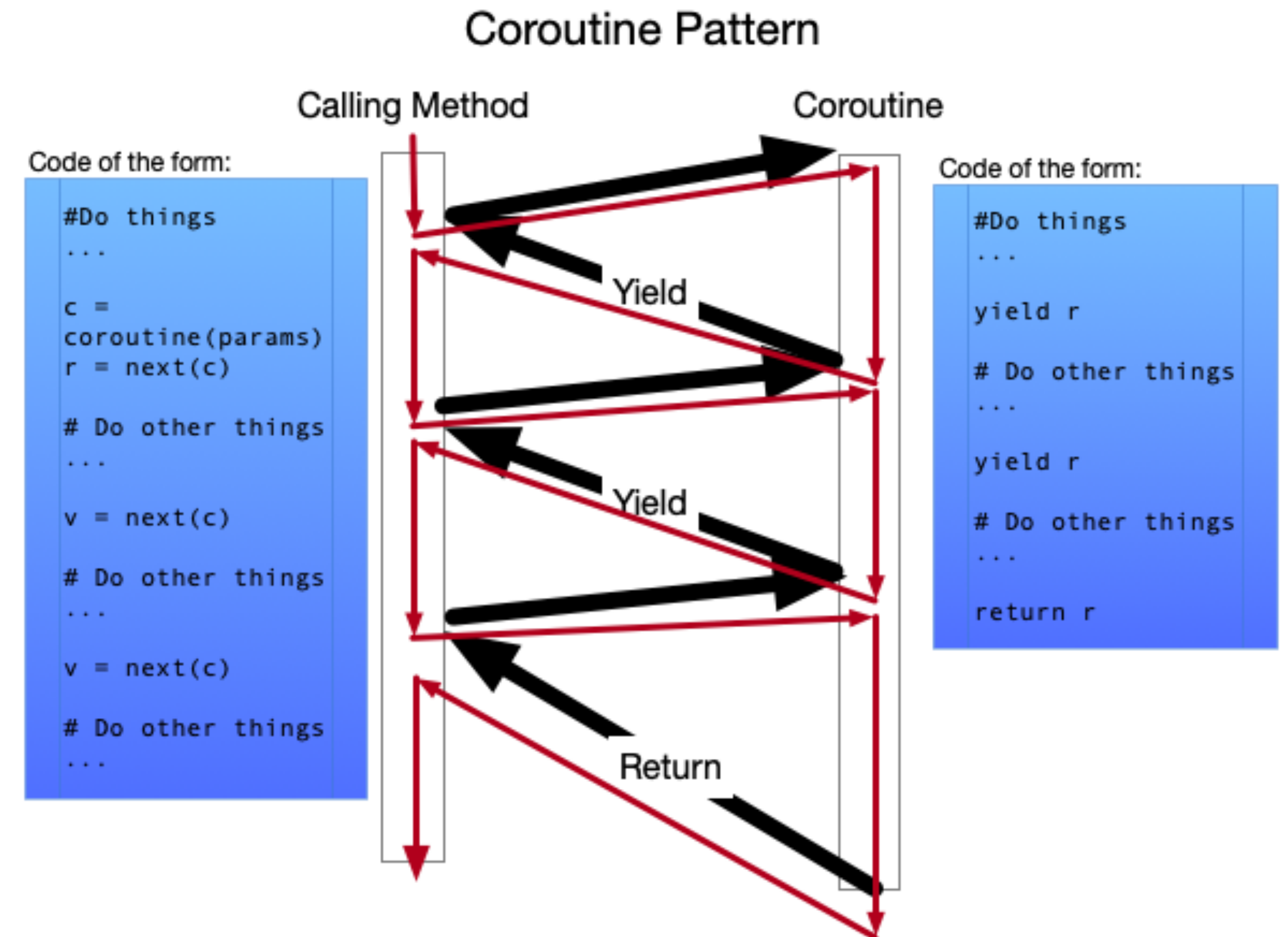
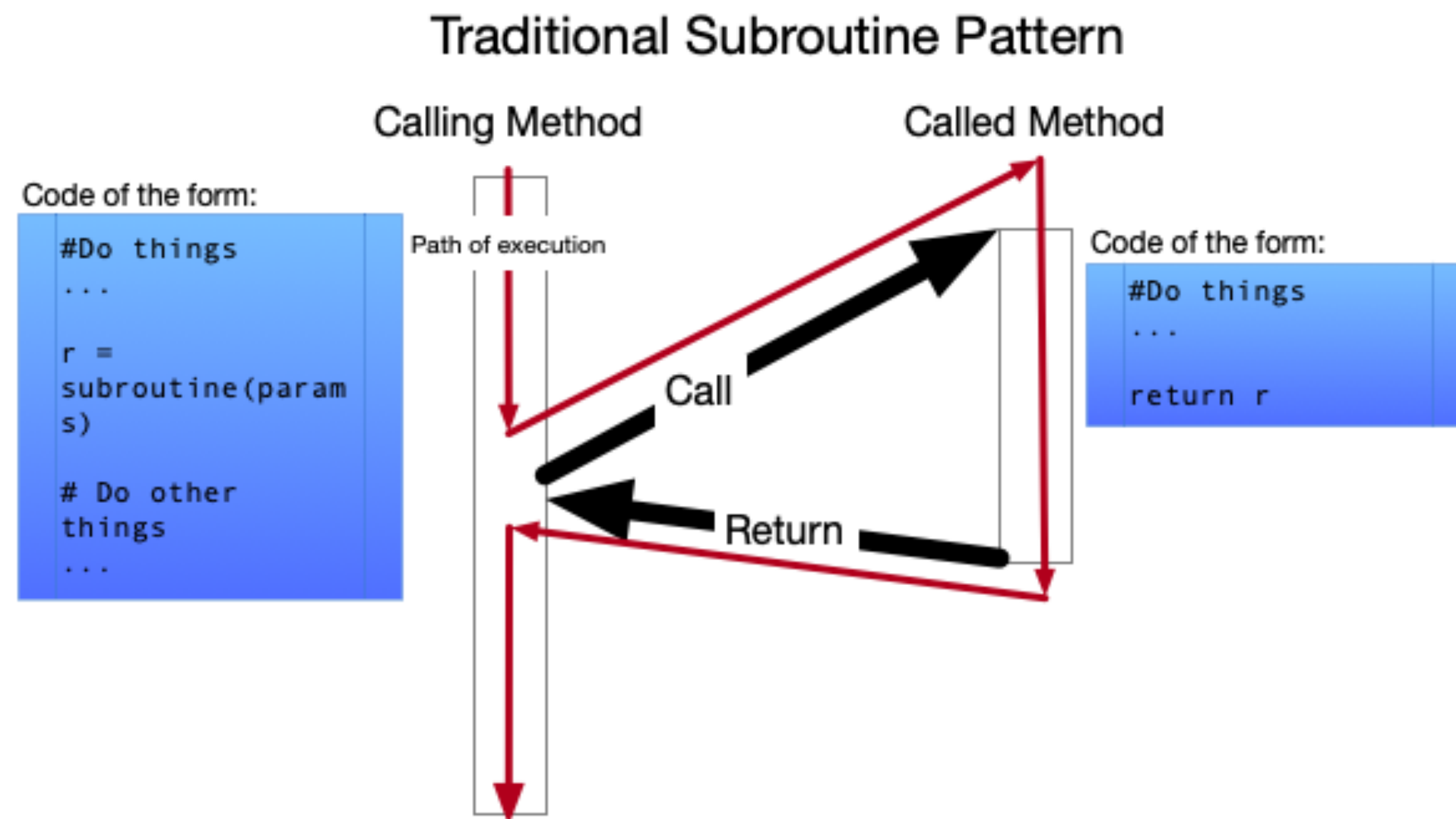
def dummy(num):
    time.sleep(5)
    return num ** 2

with concurrent.futures.ProcessPoolExecutor(max_workers=5,
                                             mp_context=mp.get_context('fork')) as executor:
    results = executor.map(dummy, range(10))
```
- `mp.get_context('fork')` changes from `'spawn'` used by default in MacOS, works in notebook

When to use threading or multiprocessing?

- If your code has a lot of I/O or Network usage:
 - Multithreading is your best bet because of its low overhead
- If you have a GUI
 - Multithreading so your UI thread doesn't get locked up
- If your code is CPU bound:
 - You should use multiprocessing (if your machine has multiple cores)

Subroutines vs. Coroutines



[J. Weaver]

Generators basically do this!

- ```
def random_numbers(start=1, end=1000):
 while True:
 yield random.randint(start, end)
for x in random_numbers():
 print(x)
```
- The `yield` statements pause execution of the function and go back to the main function
- They are almost coroutines except you can't pass anything in
- Hard to have multiple things going on

# asyncio

---

- Single event loop that controls when each task is run
- Tasks can be ready or waiting
- Tasks are **not interrupted** like they are with threading
  - Task controls when control goes back to the main event loop
  - Either waiting or complete
- Event loop keeps track of whether tasks are ready or waiting
  - Re-checks to see if new tasks are now ready
  - Picks the task that has been waiting the longest

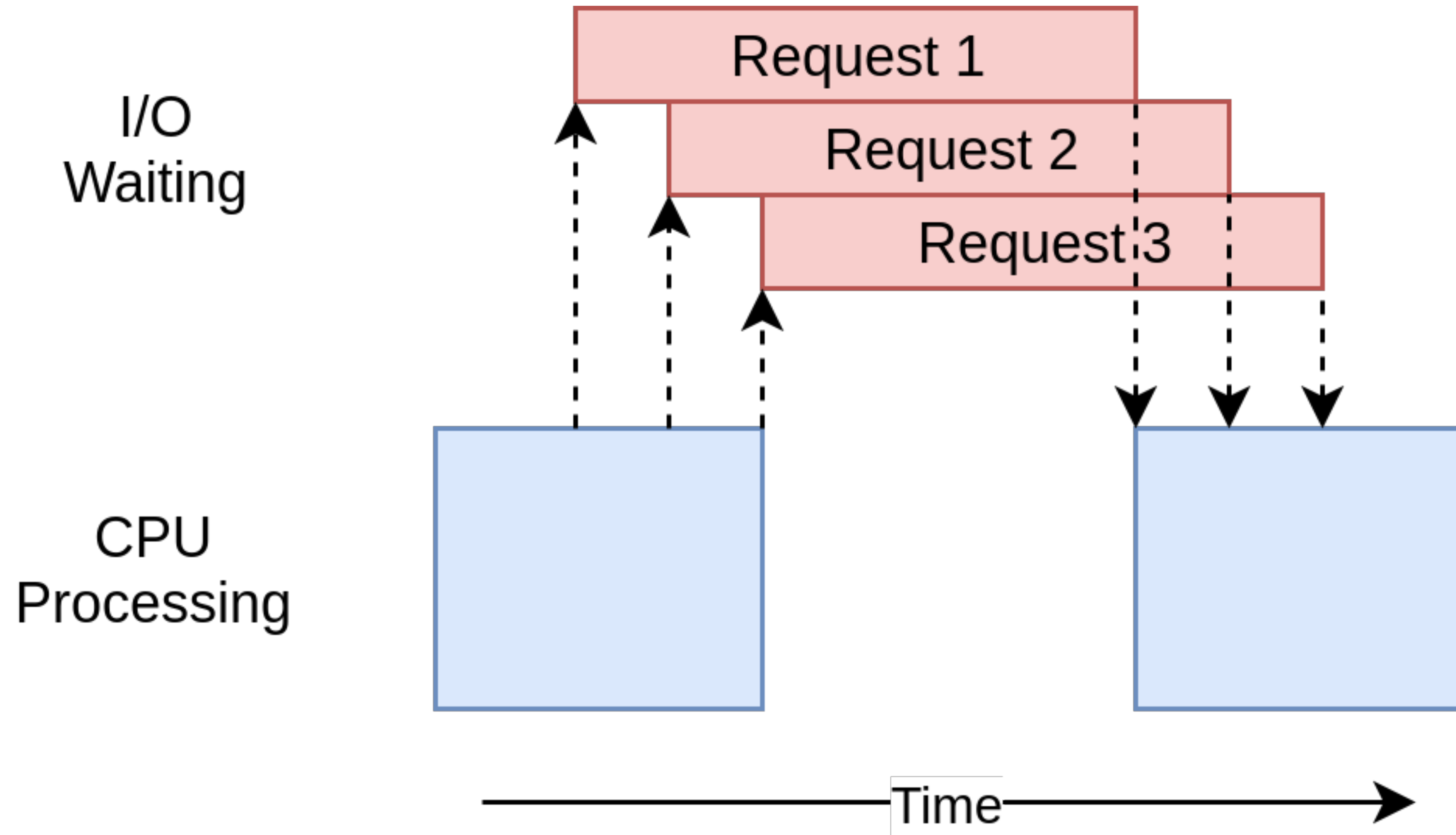
[J. Anderson]

# async

---

- `async` is a keyword that tells Python that the function uses `await`
- Also `async` with context manager
- `async def download_site(session, url):`  
    `async with session.get(url) as response:`  
        `print("Read {0} from {1}".format(`  
            `response.content_length, url))`
- `asyncio` uses a single thread
- Requires special libraries (`aiohttp`)
- Tends to have less overhead than multiprocessing

# asyncio





# When to use threading, asyncio, or multiprocessing?

---

- If your code has a lot of I/O or Network usage:
  - If there is library support, use asyncio
  - Otherwise, multithreading is your best bet (lower overhead)
- If you have a GUI
  - Multithreading so your UI thread doesn't get locked up
- If your code is CPU bound:
  - You should use multiprocessing (if your machine has multiple cores)

[J. Anderson]



# Concurrency Comparison

| Concurrency Type                     | Switching Decision                                                    | Number of Processors |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Pre-emptive multitasking (threading) | The operating system decides when to switch tasks external to Python. | 1                    |
| Cooperative multitasking (asyncio)   | The tasks decide when to give up control.                             | 1                    |
| Multiprocessing (multiprocessing)    | The processes all run at the same time on different processors.       | Many                 |

[J. Anderson]