

# **Classes and Objects**

## **Object Oriented Programming**

Genome 559: Introduction to Statistical and  
Computational Genomics

**Elhanan Borenstein**



# Classes and Objects

What is a class?

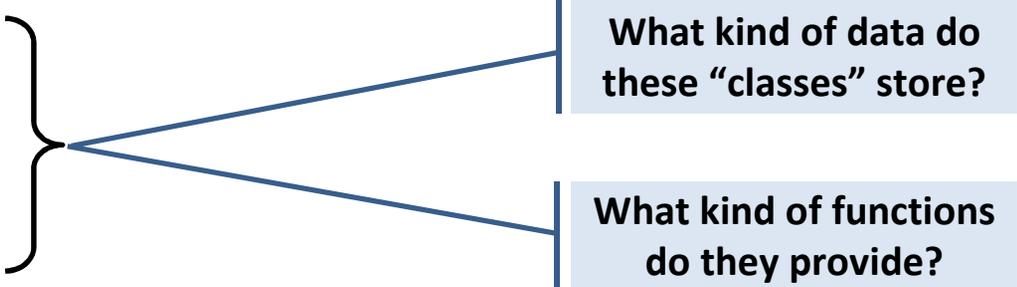
What is an object?

Why do we need them?

How do we use them?

How do we define new classes?

# Classes

- A class defines the “type” of variables:
  1. What kind of data is stored
  2. What are the available functions
- Python includes (and you used) several built-in classes:
  - String
  - Dictionary
  - Number

What kind of data do these “classes” store?

What kind of functions do they provide?
- Modules may provide additional classes:
  - Match
  - Pattern

# Objects

- An object is an **instance** of a class:
  - **string** is a class
  - `my_str = "AGGCGT"` creates an object of the class string, called `my_str`.
- You can only have one class named "string"
- But .. You can have many string objects
  - `my_str = "AGGCGT"`
  - `your_str = "Jim"`

# Using objects

(surprise: you've been doing so all along)

```
>>> my_str = "ATCCGCG"  
>>> your_str = "Jim"  
>>> print my_str.find("C")
```

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Objects

Object attributes

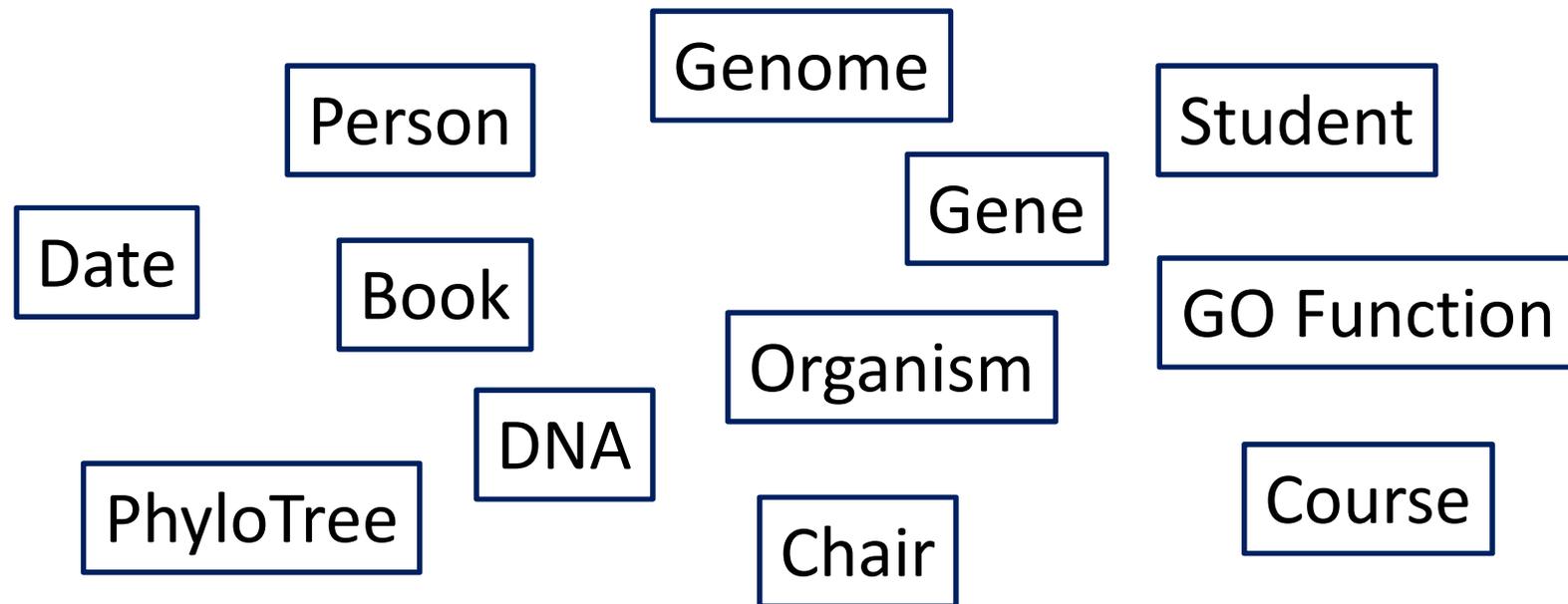
```
>>> print your_str.count("i")
```

3

This is useful ...

But ... why stop with built-in classes?

Wouldn't it be great if we could have many more classes?



This approach is known as

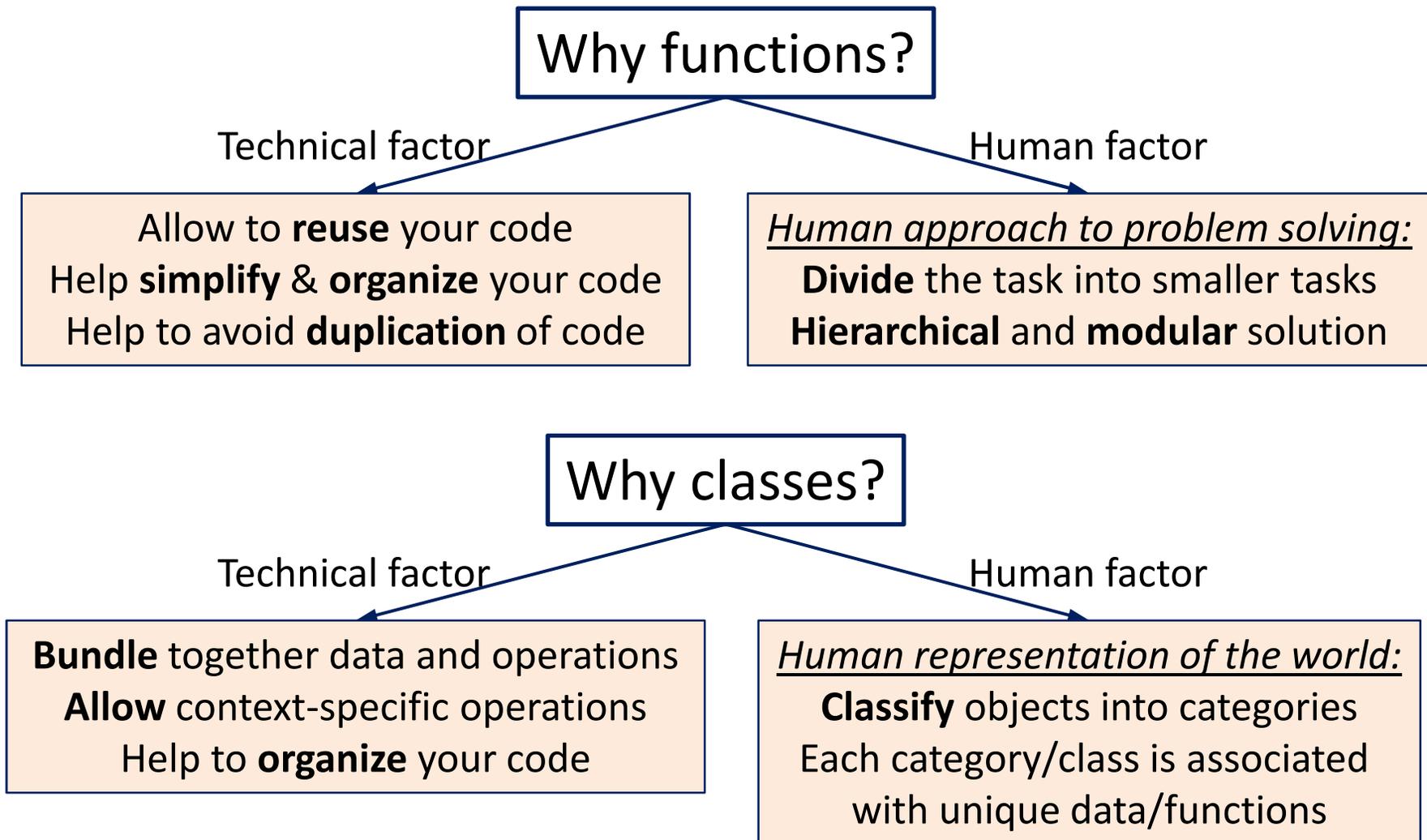
# **Object Oriented Programming (OOP)**

**(P.S. not supported in all programming languages)**

# Why classes?

- **Bundle together data and operations on data**
  - Keep related data together
  - Keep functions connected to the data they work on
- **Allow special operations appropriate to data**
  - “count” or “split” on a string;
  - “square root” on numbers
- **Allow context-specific meaning for common operations**
  - `x = 'a'; x*4` vs. `x = 42; x*4`
- **Help organize your code and facilitates modular design**
  - Large programs aren't just small programs on steroids

# Why classes? The more profound answer



# Defining our first new class

- As an example, let's build a ***Date*** class:
- The “dream” *Date* class should ...
  - **store** day, month, and year
  - provide functions that **print** the date in different formats
  - provide functions to **add** or **subtract** a number of days from the date
  - provide a way to **find** the difference (in days) between 2 dates
  - **check** for errors:
    - Setting month to “January”
    - Copying the month without the associated day
    - 14 days after Feb 18 probably shouldn't be Feb 32

} **Data  
(members)**

} **Functions  
(methods)**

# A very, very simple *Date* class

```
class Date:
```

```
    day = 0
```

```
    month = "None"
```

Note the  
Format

Define the class *Date*

Create and initialize  
class members  
(not mandatory!!!)

```
mydate = Date()
```

```
mydate.day = 15
```

```
mydate.month = "Jan"
```

```
print mydate
```

Create a new *Date*  
object

(instance of the class *Date*)

Access and change  
object members

```
<__main__.Date instance at 0x1005380e0>
```

Print object members

```
print mydate.day, mydate.month
```

```
15 Jan
```

```
yourdate = mydate
```

Copy the object into  
another object

# Hmmm... a good start

- What do we have so far:
  - **Date data are bundled together (sort of ...)**
  - **Copying the whole thing at once is very handy**
- Still on our wish-list:
  - **We still have to handle printing the various details**
  - **Error checking - e.g., possible to forget to fill in the month**
  - **No Date operations (add, subtract, etc.)**

# A slightly better *Date* class

class functions  
(methods)

```
class Date:
    day = 0
    month = "None"

    def printUS(self):
        print self.month , "/" , self.day
    def printUK(self):
        print self.day , "." , self.month
```

Special name "self" refers to the object in question (no matter what the caller named it).

```
mydate = Date()
mydate.day = 15
mydate.month= "Jan"
```

```
mydate.printUS()
```

```
Jan / 15
```

```
mydate.printUK()
```

```
15 . Jan
```

Call method functions of this Date object

Where did the argument go?  
Answer to come .

# We're getting there ...

- What do we have so far:
  - Date data are bundled together (sort of ...)
  - Copying the whole thing at once is very handy
  - **Printing is easy and provided as a service by the class**
- Still on our wish-list:
  - ~~We still have to handle printing the various details~~
  - Error checking - e.g., possible to forget to fill in the month
  - No Date operations (add, subtract, etc.)

# An even better *Date* class

```
class Date:
```

```
    def __init__(self, day, month):  
        self.day = day  
        self.month = month
```

```
    def printUS(self):  
        print self.mon , "/" , self.day
```

```
    def printUK(self):  
        print self.day , "." ,
```

```
mydate = Date(15, "Jan")
```

```
mydate.printUS()
```

```
Jan / 15
```

```
mydate2 = Date(22, "Nov")
```

```
mydate2.printUK()
```

```
22 . Nov
```

Special function "`__init__`" is called whenever a Date object instance is created. (class constructor)

It makes sure the object is properly initialized

Now, when "constructing" a new Date object, the caller MUST supply required data

Magical first arguments:

`__init__` defined w/ 3 args; called w/ 2;  
`printUS` defined w/ 1 arg; called w/ 0.

`mydate` passed in both cases as 1<sup>st</sup> arg, so each function knows on which object it is to act

# Dreams do come true (sometimes)

- What do we have so far:
  - Date data are bundled together (sort of ...)
  - Copying the whole thing at once is very handy
  - Printing is easy and provided as a service by the class
  - **User MUST provide data when generating a new Date object**
  
- Still on our wish-list:
  - ~~■ We still have to handle printing the various details~~
  - ~~■ Error checking e.g., possible to forget to fill in the month~~
  - **No Date operations (add, subtract, etc.)**

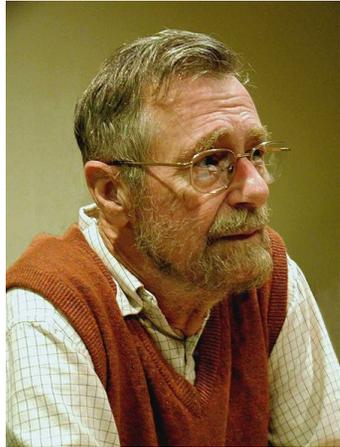
# Class declarations and usage - Summary

- The **class** statement defines a new class

```
class <class_name>:  
    <statements>  
    <statements> ...
```

- Remember the colon and indentation
- The special name **self** means the current object
  - *self*.<something> refers to instance variables of the class
  - *self* is automatically passed to each method as a 1<sup>st</sup> argument
- The special name **\_\_init\_\_** is the class constructor
  - Called whenever a new instance of the class is created
  - Every instance of the class will have all instance variables defined in the constructor
  - **Use it well!**

# Code like a pro ...



Edsger Wybe Dijkstra  
1930 –2002

*"Testing shows the presence,  
not the absence of bugs."*

- Code running  $\neq$  code is correct or bug-free
- Be much more concerned about the bugs you don't see than the ones you do!!
- **Especially true in bioinformatics, high-throughput data analysis, and simulations**

# Sample problem #1

- Add a year data member to the *Date* class:
  1. Allow the class constructor to get an additional argument denoting the year
  2. If the year is not provided in the constructor, the class should assume it is 2018  
*(Hint: remember the default value option in function definition)*
  3. When printing in US format, print all 4 digits of the year. When printing in UK format, print only the last 2 digits.  
*(Hint: str(x) will convert an integer X into a string)*

```
>>> mydate = Date(15, "Jan", 1976)
>>> mydate.printUK()
15 . Jan . 76
>>> mydate = Date(21, "Feb")
>>> mydate.printUS()
Feb / 21 / 2018
```

# Solution #1

```
class Date:
    def __init__(self, day, month, year=2018):
        self.day = day
        self.mon = month
        self.year = year

    def printUS(self):
        print self.mon , "/" , self.day , "/" , self.year

    def printUK(self):
        print self.day , "." , self.mon , "." , str(self.year)[2:]
```

# Sample problem #2

- Change the `Date` class such that the month is represented as a number rather than as a string.  
(What did you have to do to make this change?)
- Add the function `addMonths(n)` to the class `Date`. This function should add  $n$  months to the current date. Make sure to correctly handle transitions across years.  
(Hint: the modulo operator, `%`, returns the remainder in division:  $8 \% 3 \rightarrow 2$ )

```
>>> mydate = Date(22, 11, 1976)
>>> mydate.printUK()
22 . 11 . 76
>>> mydate.addMonths(1)
>>> mydate.printUK()
22 . 12 . 76
>>> mydate.addMonths(3)
>>> mydate.printUK()
22 . 3 . 77
>>> mydate.addMonths(25)
>>> mydate.printUK()
22 . 4 . 79
```

# Solution #2

```
class Date:
    def __init__(self, day, month, year=2018):
        self.day = day
        self.mon = month
        self.year = year

    def printUS(self):
        print self.mon , "/" , self.day , "/" , self.year

    def printUK(self):
        print self.day , "." , self.mon , "." , str(self.year)[2:]

    def addMonths(self, n=1):
        new_mon = self.mon + n
        self.year += (new_mon-1) / 12
        self.mon = (new_mon-1) % 12 + 1
```

# Challenge Problem

1. Add the function `addDays(n)` to the class *Date*. This function should add `n` days to the current date. Make sure to correctly handle transitions across months AND across years (when necessary). Take into account the different number of days in each month.
2. Revise the *Date* class such that it will again work with the month's name (rather than its number), while preserving the functionality of the `addMonths` and `addDays` functions.

