F21SC Industrial Programming: Python Advanced Language Features

Hans-Wolfgang Loidl

School of Mathematical and Computer Sciences,
Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh

Semester 1 — 2020/21

[0]No proprietary software has been used in producing these slides

Outline

Overloading

- Operators such as `+`, `<=` and functions such as `abs`, `str` and `repr` can be defined for your own types and classes.

Example

```
class Vector(object):
  # constructor
  def __init__(self, coord):
    self.coord = coord
  # turns the object into string
  def __str__(self):
    return str(self.coord)

v1 = Vector([1,2,3])
# performs conversion to string as above
print (v1)
```


Overloading

Example

```
class Vector(object):
  # constructor
  def __init__(self, coord):
    self.coord = coord
  # turns the object into string: use <> as brackets, and ; as s
  def __str__(self):
    s = "<"
    if len(self.coord)==0:
        return s+">"
    else:
        s = s+str(self.coord[0])
    for x in self.coord[1:]:
        s = s+";"+str(x);
    return s+">"

v1 = Vector([1,2,3]); print (v1)
```

Overloading arithmetic operations

Example

```
import math     # sqrt
import operator # operators as functions

class Vector(object):
  ...
  def __abs__(self):
    '''Vector length (Euclidean norm).'''
    return math.sqrt(sum(x*x for x in self.coord))
  def __add__(self, other):
    '''Vector addition.'''
    return map(operator.add, self.coord, other.coord)

print(abs(v1))
print(v1 + v1)
```


Overloading of non-symmetric operations

- Scalar multiplication for vectors can be written either `v1 * 5` or `5 * v1`.

Example

```
class Vector(object):
  ...
  def __mul__(self, scalar):
    'Multiplication with a scalar from the right.'
    return map(lambda x: x*scalar, self.coord)

  def __rmul__(self, scalar):
    'Multiplication with a scalar from the left.'
    return map(lambda x: scalar*x, self.coord)
```

- `v1 * 5` calls `v1.__mul(5)`.
- `5 * v1` calls `v1.__rmul(5)`.

Overloading of indexing

- Indexing and segment-notation can be overloaded as well:

Example

```
class Vector(object):

  def __getitem__(self, index):
    '''Return the coordinate with number index.'''
    return self.coord[index]

  def __getslice__(self, left, right):
    '''Return a subvector.'''
    return Vector(self.coord[left:right])

print v1[2]
print v1[0:2]
```


Exercise (optional)

- Define a class `Matrix` and overload the operations + und * to perform addition and multiplication on matrices.
- Define further operations on matrices, such as `m.transpose()`, `str(m)`, `repr(m)`.

Types

- `type(v)` yields the type of `v`.
- Type-membership can be tested like this `isinstance(val,typ)`. E.g.

```
>>> isinstance(5, float)
False
>>> isinstance(5., float)
True
```

- This check observes type-membership in the parent class. E.g.

```
>>> isinstance(NameError(), Exception)
True
```

- `issubclass` checks the class-hierarchy.

```
>>> issubclass(NameError, Exception)
True
>>> issubclass(int, object)
True
```


Manual Class Generation

- `type(name,superclasses,attributes)` creates a class object with name `name`, parent classes `superclasses`, and attributes `attributes`.
- `C = type('C',(),{})` corresponds to `class C: pass`.
- Methods can be passed as attributes:

Example

```
def f (self, coord):
  self.coord = coord

Vec = type('Vec, (object,), {'__init__' : f})
```

- Manual class generation is useful for **meta-programming**, i.e. programs that generate other programs.

Properties

- *Properties* are attributes for which read, write and delete operations are defined.
- Construction:
  `property(fget=None, fset=None, fdel=None, doc=None)`

Example

```
class Rectangle(object):
  def __init__(self, width, height):
    self.width  = width
    self.height = height
  # this generates a read only property
  area = property(
    lambda self: self.width * self.height,  # anonymous functio
    doc="Rectangle area (read only).")

print("Area of a 5x2 rectange: ", Rectangle(5,2).area)
```


Controlling Attribute Access

- Access to an attribute can be completely re-defined.
- This can be achieved as follows:

```
__getattribute__(self, attr)
__setattr__(self, attr, value)
__delattr__(self, attr)
```

- Example: Lists without append

Example

```
class listNoAppend(list):
  def __getattribute__(self, name):
    if name == 'append': raise AttributeError
    return list.__getattribute__(self, name)
```

Static Methods

- A class can define methods, that don't use the current instance (`self`).
  - Class methods can access class attributes, as usual.
  - Static methods can't do that!.

Example

```
class Static:
  # static method
  def __bla(): print ("Hello, world!")
  hello = staticmethod(__bla)
```

- The static method `hello` can be called like this:

```
Static.hello()
Static().hello()
```


Class/Instance Methods

- A class or instance method takes as first argument a reference to an instance of this class.

Example

```
class Static:
  val = 5
  # class method
  def sqr(c): return c.val * c.val
  sqr = classmethod(sqr)

Static.sqr()
Static().sqr()
```

- It is common practice to overwrite the original definition of the method, in this case `sqr`.
- **Question:** What happens if we omit the line with `classmethod` above?

Function Decoration

- The pattern

```
def f(args): ...
f = modifier(f)
```

  has the following special syntax:

```
@modifier
def f(args): ...
```

- We can rewrite the previous example to:

Example

```
class Static:
  val = 5
  # class method
  @classmethod
  def sqr(c): return c.val * c.val
```

- More examples of using modifiers: Memoisation, Type-checking.

Memoisation with Function Decorators

- We want a version of Fibonacci (below), that remembers previous results ("**memoisation**").

Example

```
def fib(n):
    """Compute Fibonacci number of @n@."""
    if n==0 or n==1:
         return 1
    else:
        return fib(n-1)+fib(n-2)
```

- **NB:** This version performs an exponential number of function calls!

Memoisation with Function Decorators

- To visualise the function calls, we define a decorator for **tracing:**

Example
```
def trace(f):
  """Perform tracing on function @func@."""

  def trace_func(n):
    print("++ computing", f.__name__," with ", str(n))
    return f(n)

  return trace_func
```

- and we attach this decorator to our `fib` function:

Example
```
@trace
def fib(n): ....
```


Memoisation with Function Decorators

- Now, we implement memoisation as a decorator.
- **Idea:**
  - Whenever we call `fib`, we remember input and output.
  - Before calling a `fib`, we check whether we already have an output.
  - We use a dictionary `memo_dict`, to store these values.
- This way, we never compute a Fibonacci value twice, and runtime becomes linear, rather than exponential!

Memoisation with Function Decorators

Here is the implementation of the decorator:

Example
```
def memoise(f):
  """Perform memoisation on function @func@."""
  def memo_func(n, memo_dict=dict()):
    if n in memo_dict.keys():
      return memo_dict[n]
    else:
      print("++ computing", f.__name__," with ", str(n))
      x = f(n)
      memo_dict[n] = x
      print(".. keys in memo_dict: ", str(memo_dict.keys()));
      return x

  return memo_func
```


Memoisation with Function Decorators

- We attach this decorator to the `fib` function like this:

Example
```
@memoise
def fib(n): ...
```

- Nothing else in the code changes!
- See online sample `memofib.py`

Interpretation

- Strings can be evaluated using the function `eval`, which evaluates string arguments as Python expressions.

```
>>> x = 5
>>> eval ("x")
5
>>> f = lambda x: eval("x * x")
>>> f(4)
16
```

- The command `exec` executes its string argument:

```
>>> exec("print(x+1)")
5
```


Compilation

- This performs compilation of strings to byte-code:

```
>>> c = compile("map(lambda x:x*2,range(10))", # code
  'pseudo-file.py',       # filename for error msg
  'eval')  # or 'exec' (module) or 'single' (stm)
>>> eval(c)
<map object at 0x7f2e990e3d30>
>>> for i in eval(c): print(i)
0 ...
```

- Beware of indentation in the string that you are composing!

```
>>> c2 = compile('''
... def bla(x):
...   print x*x
...   return x
... bla(5)
... ''', 'pseudo', 'exec')
>>> exec c2
25
```