Before the Workshop: Set Up Your Laptop

AI Workshop for Sinitic Studies · Luce Hall Room 203, Yale · Saturday, November 7, 2026 · Kwok-leong Tang

Please do these steps at home before Saturday. Most take a few minutes. Updating your computer takes the longest, so start with that.

Don't worry if a step fails. Do as much as you can and write down where you got stuck. We will fix the rest together during the morning session.

> **The most important step: update your computer.**
> Most problems in past workshops came from computers that had not been updated. An old system can stop Git, Claude, and the AI models from installing. Please update even if you don't like to. Do it at home: an update can take an hour and needs a fast connection.

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1 Update your computer and Chrome

Mac: Apple menu → **System Settings** → **General** → **Software Update**. Install every update offered, and restart. Repeat until it says your Mac is up to date.

Windows: Start → **Settings** → **Windows Update** → **Check for updates**. Install everything, and restart.

Chrome: open Chrome, go to `chrome://settings/help`, let it update, and click **Relaunch**.

> Done when your system and Chrome both say they are up to date.

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2 Create a GitHub account

GitHub stores versions of your files online. We use it to save and share the work you do with AI.

1. Go to **github.com/signup** and create a free account. If you already have one, just sign in.
2. Pick a username you would be happy to see in a citation, such as `firstname-lastname`. It is hard to change later.
3. Keep your email private: go to **github.com/settings/emails**, then tick **Keep my email addresses private** and **Block command line pushes that expose my email**.
4. Below the first box, GitHub shows an address that ends in `@users.noreply.github.com`. **Copy it and save it.** You need it in Step 5.

> Done when you can sign in to GitHub and you have saved your noreply address.

3 Install Claude Desktop

1. Go to **claude.com/download** and install the app for your system.
2. Sign in. At the top of the window you should see three tabs: **Chat**, **Cowork** and **Code**.
3. Click **Code**. We use this tab most of the day.

> The Code tab needs a paid Claude plan (Pro, $20 a month, or a trial). If cost is a problem, ask Pauline Lin before Saturday.

4 Install Git and the GitHub tool (`gh`)

You type these commands in a **terminal**: a window where you give the computer text commands. On a Mac, open **Terminal** (search for it with Spotlight, ⌘ + Space). On Windows, open **PowerShell** from the Start menu.

First check: type these two lines. If both print a version number, skip to Step 5.

```
git --version
gh --version
```

Mac. First install Homebrew, a tool that installs other tools. Paste this line into Terminal and press Return:

```
/bin/bash -c "$(curl -fsSL
https://raw.githubusercontent.com/Homebrew/install/HEAD/install.sh)"
```

When it finishes, run:

```
brew install git gh
```

- When the terminal asks for your password, type your Mac login password. **Nothing appears on screen while you type.** This is normal. Press Return when done.
- Your Mac may download "Command Line Tools" (about 1.5 GB). Let it finish. It can take 15–20 minutes.
- Homebrew may print two or three lines that start with `echo` under "Next steps". Copy and run them, then run `brew install git gh` again.

> **Mac Plan B.** If you see "can't install the software because it is not currently available from the Software Update server", or Homebrew fails, use this instead. It does not need Apple's tools or Homebrew, and works on macOS 11 or newer:
> `curl -fsSL https://pixi.sh/install.sh | bash`
> Quit Terminal (⌘Q), open it again, then run:
> `pixi global install git gh`

Windows. Download Git from **git-scm.com/install/windows** and run it. Accept the defaults, except on these three screens:

Screen	Choose
Default editor	Notepad, or Visual Studio Code if you have it (not Vim)
PATH environment	"Git from the command line and also from 3rd-party software" (the middle option)
Line endings	"Checkout as-is, commit Unix-style line endings"

Then, in PowerShell:

```
winget install --id GitHub.cli
```

> "command not found" or "is not recognized"? Close the terminal, open a new one, and try again.

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5 Connect Git to your GitHub account

In a **new** terminal window, run:

```
gh auth login
```

Choose **GitHub.com** → **HTTPS** → **Login with a web browser**. Copy the one-time code, paste it in the browser page that opens, and approve.

Then tell Git who you are. Use your name, and the noreply address you saved in Step 2:

```
git config --global user.name "Your Name"
git config --global user.email "12345678+your-username@users.noreply.github.com"
```

Check it:

```
gh auth status
git config --global user.email
```

> Done when `gh auth status` says **Logged in**, and the email ends in `@users.noreply.github.com`.

> If the email shows your personal address, run the `user.email` line again. GitHub will refuse uploads that expose your private email.

6 Find the Claude Projects folder

Claude Desktop keeps its projects in **Documents** → **Claude** → **Projects**. We make all our projects there.

- Mac: `/Users/your-name/Documents/Claude/Projects`
- Windows: `C:\Users\your-name\Documents\Claude\Projects`

If the folder is not there yet, create it yourself, with the same names.

Make sure Documents is not synced to the cloud. Cloud sync breaks Git.

- Mac: **System Settings** → your name → **iCloud** → **Drive**. **Desktop & Documents Folders** should be off.
- Windows: click the OneDrive icon → **Settings** → **Sync and backup** → **Manage backup**. **Documents** should be off.

> If you must keep Documents in the cloud, make a folder called `work` in your home folder instead (`/Users/your-name/work` or `C:\Users\your-name\work`), and choose it every time the slides say "Projects folder".

7 Install Zotero and the CNE plugin

Zotero manages your references. **CNE (Cite Non-English)**, by Bo An, adds proper citations for Chinese, Japanese and Korean sources: original script, romanization, and translation.

1. Install or update Zotero from **zotero.org/download** (version 7 or newer).
2. Download the file `cne-cite-non-english.xpi` from **github.com/boan-anbo/cite-non-english/releases** (the latest release).
3. In Zotero: **Tools** → **Plugins**, click the gear icon, choose **Install Plugin From File…**, and select the file.
4. In Zotero **Settings** → **Advanced**, tick **Allow other applications on this computer to communicate with Zotero**.

> Done when the item panel on the right shows a **Cite Non-English (CNE)** section.

8 Install the Local LLM Teaching Lab (Chrome)

1. Install it from the Chrome Web Store: search for **Local LLM Teaching Lab**, or go to `chromewebstore.google.com/detail/local-llm-teaching-lab/pgiamcckeikfpelhfojoodjejfhpmmmh`
2. Click its icon, open the full console, go to **Models**, and download **LFM3 1.7B** (1.3 GB). **Do this at home**, not on the workshop Wi-Fi.
3. Wait until it says **ready for chat**, then send one short message to test it.

> If LFM3 fails, download **Qwen3 0.6B** instead, and tell me on Saturday.

9 Bring one source of your own

Bring one short passage from your research as plain text, plus one book or article you often cite. We will use both during the day.

Checklist

✓	Step	How to know it worked
☐	1. Computer and Chrome updated	Both say "up to date"
☐	2. GitHub account	You saved your noreply address
☐	3. Claude Desktop	The Code tab opens
☐	4. Git and `gh`	`git --version` and `gh --version` both print a version
☐	5. Connected to GitHub	`gh auth status` says "Logged in"
☐	6. Projects folder	Documents → Claude → Projects exists, and Documents is not synced
☐	7. Zotero and CNE	The item panel shows "Cite Non-English (CNE)"
☐	8. Teaching Lab	LFM3 says "ready for chat"
☐	9. Your source	A short passage and one reference

Stuck? That is fine. Note the step and the error message (a screenshot helps). We will solve it in the morning session.