There are A LOT of ways to get Linux. We chose to use a virtual machine for the purposes of this course. This will provide a unified virtual image for all of us and minimizes the "but it works on my machine" problem. Getting and firing it up this way is very safe and painless. (Read the **WARNINGS** section below to understand what we mean by that!)

- Download **VirtualBox** (freely available for all platforms)
- Download the virtual appliance (neon.ova)
- Open **VirtualBox** and navigate to **Files** → **Import Appliance...**
- Choose **Local File System** → Locate the file you downloaded → click **Next >**
- Choose the number of **CPU**s (we recommend at least 2 and at most the number of your physical CPUs - 2)
- Choose the size of **RAM** (we recommend at least 2 GBs and at most half of your physical RAM)
- Make sure your **Base Folder** has enough space available (minimum 10 GBs; recommend 20 GBs)
- Click **Import** and wait till it is done

If **VirtualBox** complains about **Virtualization** being disables at any step or cause errors at the last step, make sure **Virtualization** is enabled on your machine. This is done through the machine's system setup. Usually, you press **F2** or **F10** right after you power up your machine opening up the system setup before your OS kicks in. From **settings/preferences/etc** make sure **Virtualization** (sometimes called **VT-x/AMD-V**) is set to **Enabled**. The exact steps depend on your manufacturer, so you can Google it. However, *if you are not 100% sure, ask for our help*. Messing up these simple settings can get very problematic very quickly!

WARNINGS
There are easier ways to have Linux or Linux-like functionalities; native Linux distros, macOS, and Windows Subsystem for Linux (WSL; aka, Ubuntu in the Windows Store). *However, this will mean that you will be experimenting with your primary machine.* While typing in a wrong command and erasing the whole virtual machine may sound like a fun story to tell next semester, erasing your physical drive with all your data (personal and projects with deadlines!) will be much "less fun" to tell!
If you opt-in to download a bootable installation image and install it on your bare-metal machine, *you must be extremely careful as you may erase your whole hard drive!*