



# Introduction to Bioinformatics using Python

## Lecture 2: Introduction to Python

**Dr. Alexey Larionov**

**28 October 2024**

[www.cranfield.ac.uk](http://www.cranfield.ac.uk)



# Lecture plan

- Python features
- Installing Python(s) on your PC
- Using Python
  - Interactive use in terminal & IDLE
  - Scripts & Python IDEs
  - Hello Word in VS Code
- Comments & Indentation
- Python packages and environments
  - PIP, Conda, Venv

# What is Python?



Python is an interpreted, high-level, general-purpose programming language

- Developed in the Netherlands, early 1990s by Guido van Rossum
- Official website: <http://www.python.org>



“Python is an experiment in how much freedom programmers need... ..”  
- Guido van Rossum



# What is Python?



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Named after a British comedy team  
**Monty Python !**



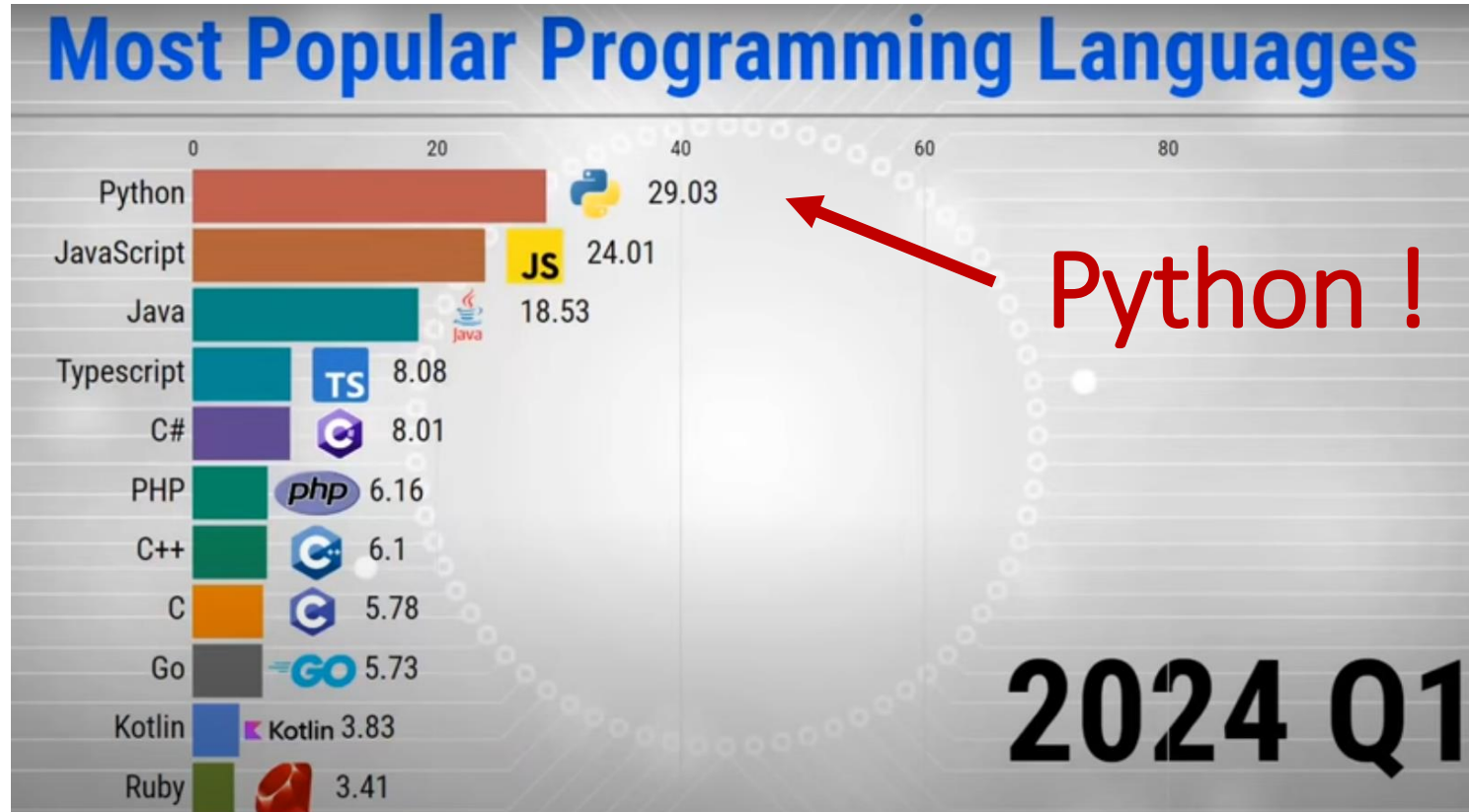
“Python is an experiment in how much freedom programmers need... ..”  
- Guido van Rossum

<https://spotify.link/ADz0wBup6Db>

3 hrs podcast with GVR in 2022  
about Python and future of  
programming



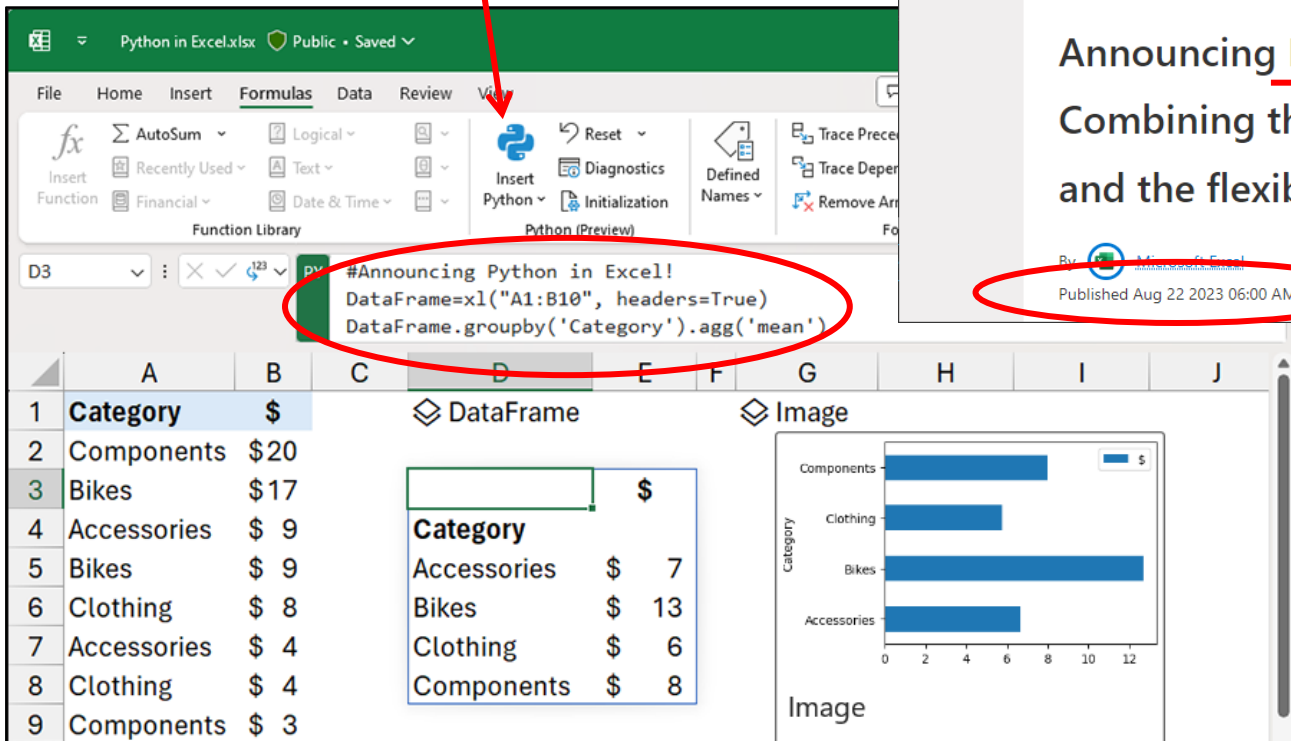
# The Most Popular Programming Language in 2024



See ranks from 1965 till 2024 : [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOW3Cehg\\_qg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOW3Cehg_qg)



You can find it  
everywhere:  
even in Excel !



Python in Excel.xlsx Public • Saved

File Home Insert Formulas Data Review View

Function Library

Insert Python

#Announcing Python in Excel!  
DataFrame=x1("A1:B10", headers=True)  
DataFrame.groupby('Category').agg('mean')

	A	B
1	Category	\$
2	Components	\$20
3	Bikes	\$17
4	Accessories	\$ 9
5	Bikes	\$ 9
6	Clothing	\$ 8
7	Accessories	\$ 4
8	Clothing	\$ 4
9	Components	\$ 3

Category

Category		
Accessories	\$	7
Bikes	\$	13
Clothing	\$	6
Components	\$	8

Image

Components

Category

Components

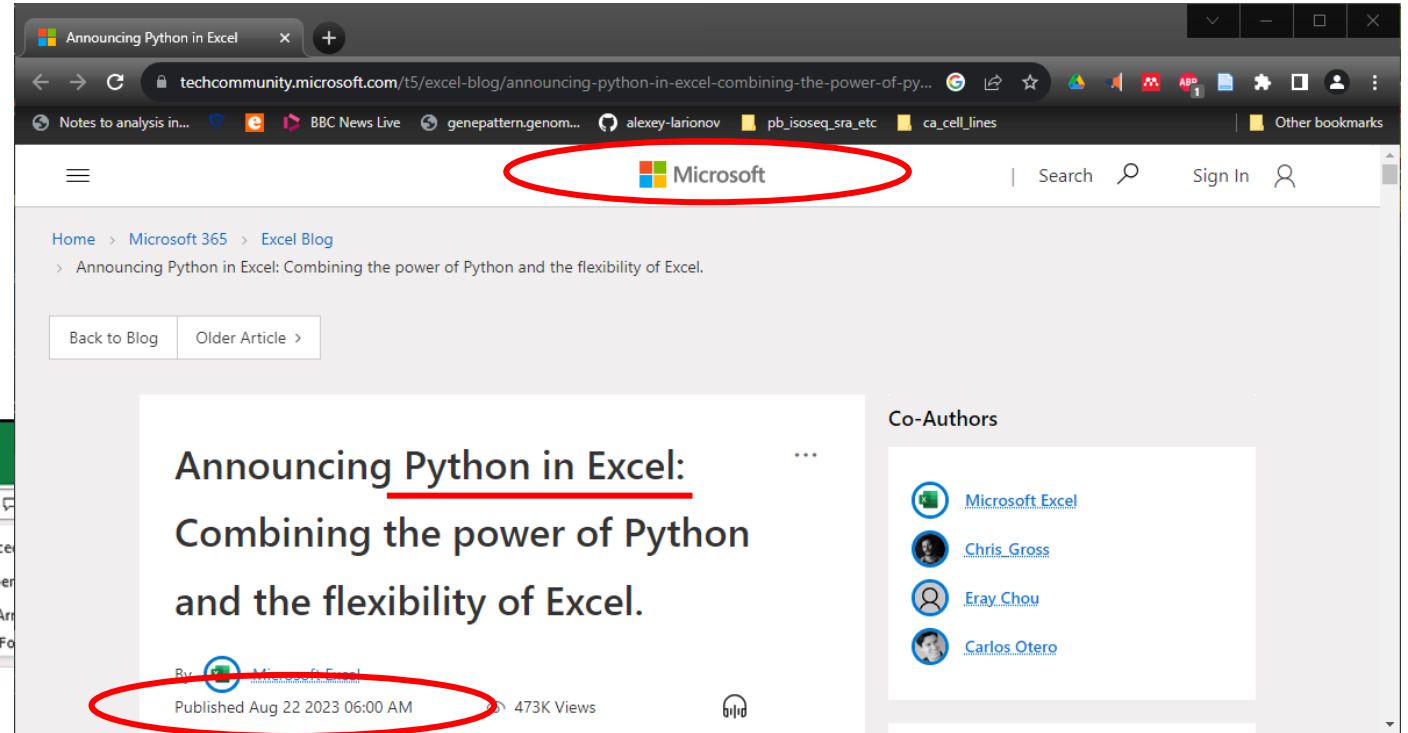
Clothing

Bikes

Accessories

0 2 4 6 8 10 12

Image



Announcing Python in Excel

techcommunity.microsoft.com/t5/excel-blog/announcing-python-in-excel-combining-the-power-of-py...

Microsoft

Home > Microsoft 365 > Excel Blog

> Announcing Python in Excel: Combining the power of Python and the flexibility of Excel.

Back to Blog Older Article >

Announcing Python in Excel:  
Combining the power of Python  
and the flexibility of Excel.

By Microsoft Excel

Published Aug 22 2023 06:00 AM 473K Views

Co-Authors

- Microsoft Excel
- Chris Gross
- Eray Chou
- Carlos Otero

Components

Category

Components

Clothing

Bikes

Accessories

0 2 4 6 8 10 12

Image



# Why Python?

- **Widely used in *bioinformatics*** : many libraries available, and their number is growing ...
- Object-oriented and Functional from the beginning
- Interpreted : you can run the program straight from the source code
- Portable : Linux, Windows, Mac (anywhere where a Python interpreter is installed)
- Extensible : easily import other code
- Embeddable : easily place your code in non-python programs



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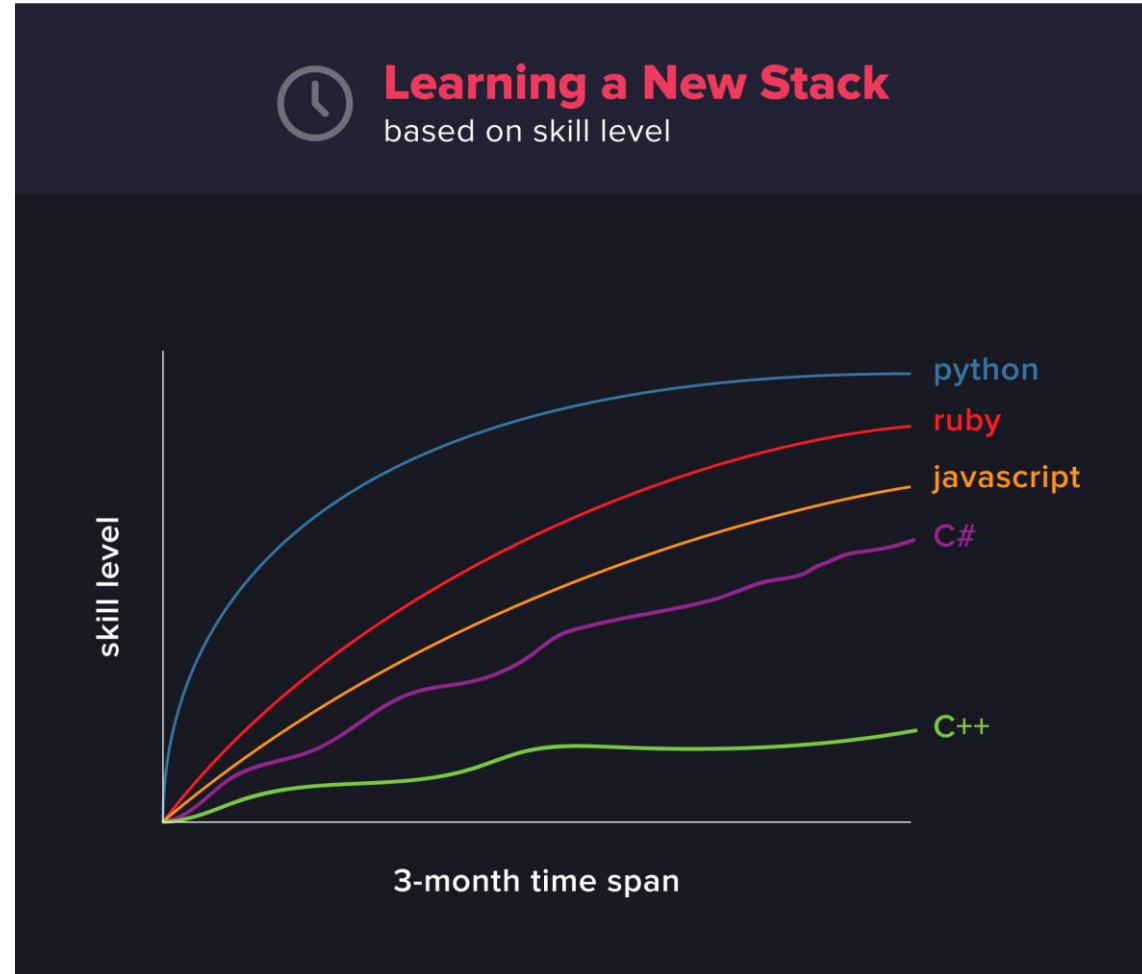
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- **Embeddable** : easily place your code in non-python programs

# Why Python?

## Easy to Learn

- Python is simple and minimalistic in nature
- Less syntax memorisation



<https://dev.to/programmerthings/language-review-python-episode-one-5hh6>

“Stack” in programming means a set of sequential tasks  
(e.g. writing a front-end or a back-end of a web site)



# Lecture plan



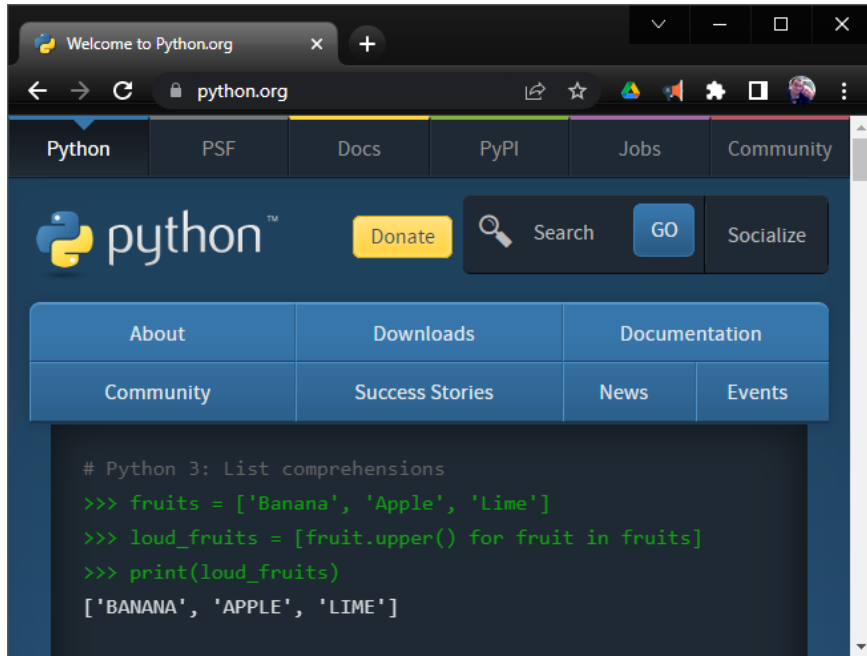
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# How to install Python to your PC ?

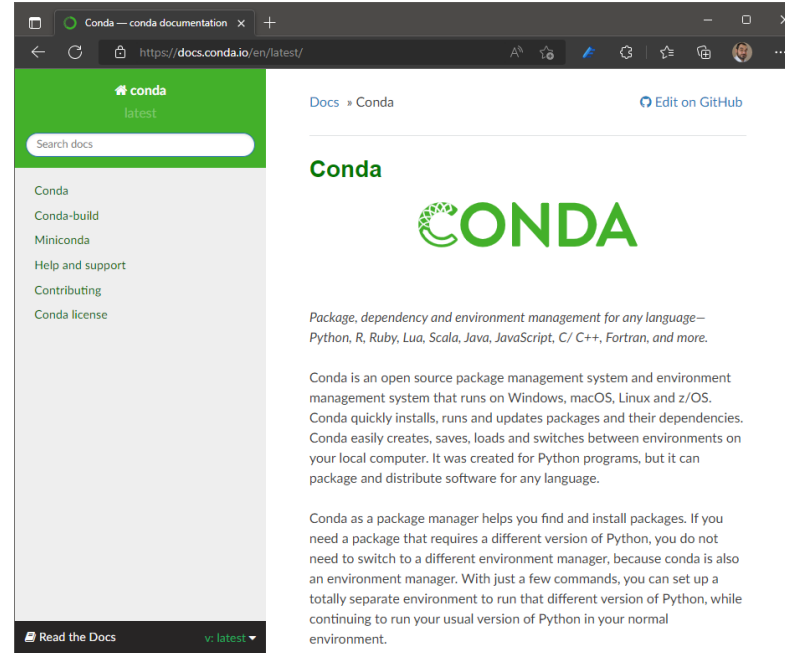
Linux has Python installed

Python Foundation



<https://www.python.org>

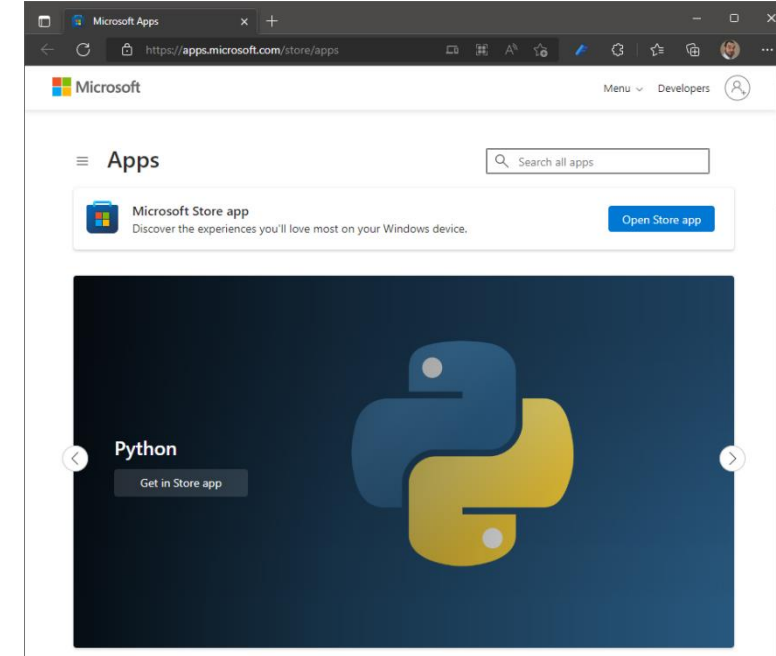
Conda



<https://docs.conda.io>

Miniconda, Anaconda...

Other providers  
Windows: MS Store  
MacOS: Brew



<https://apps.microsoft.com/store>



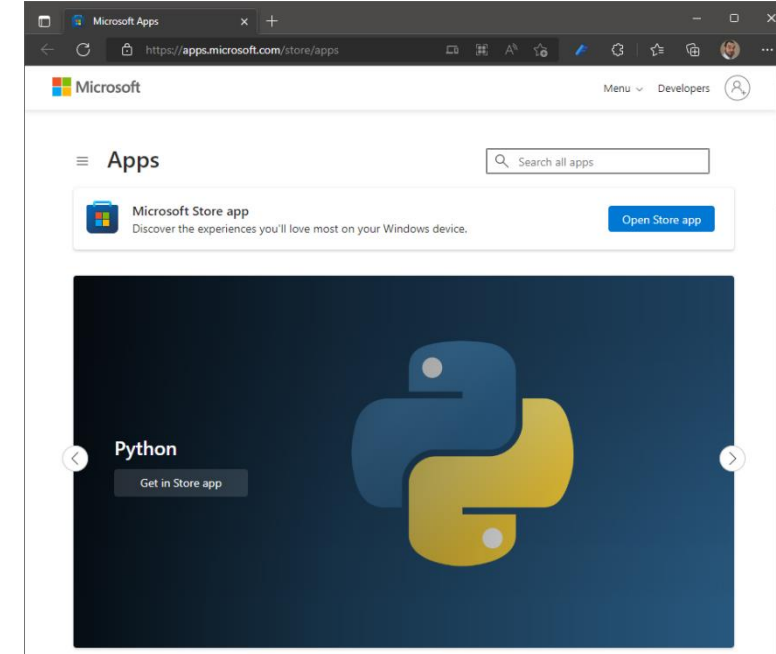
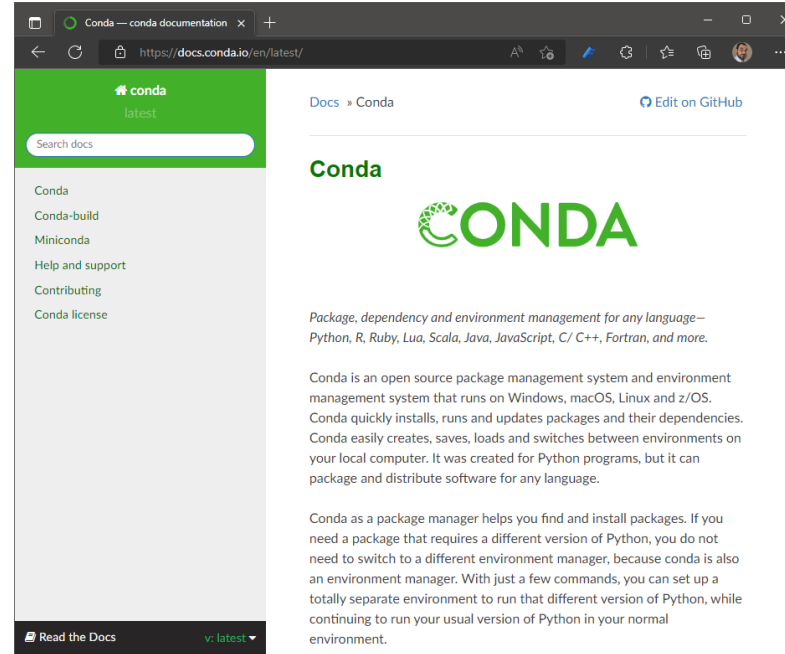
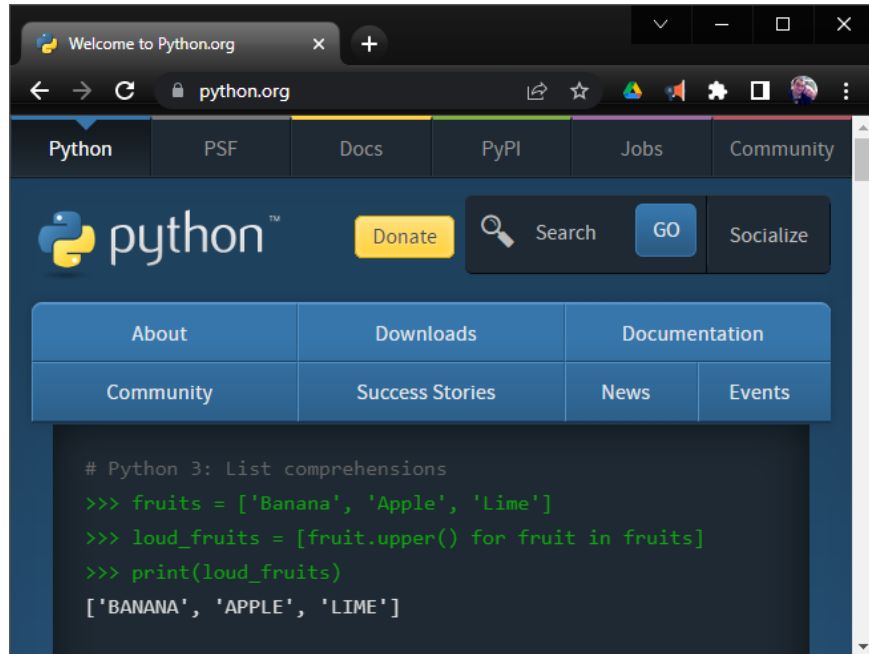
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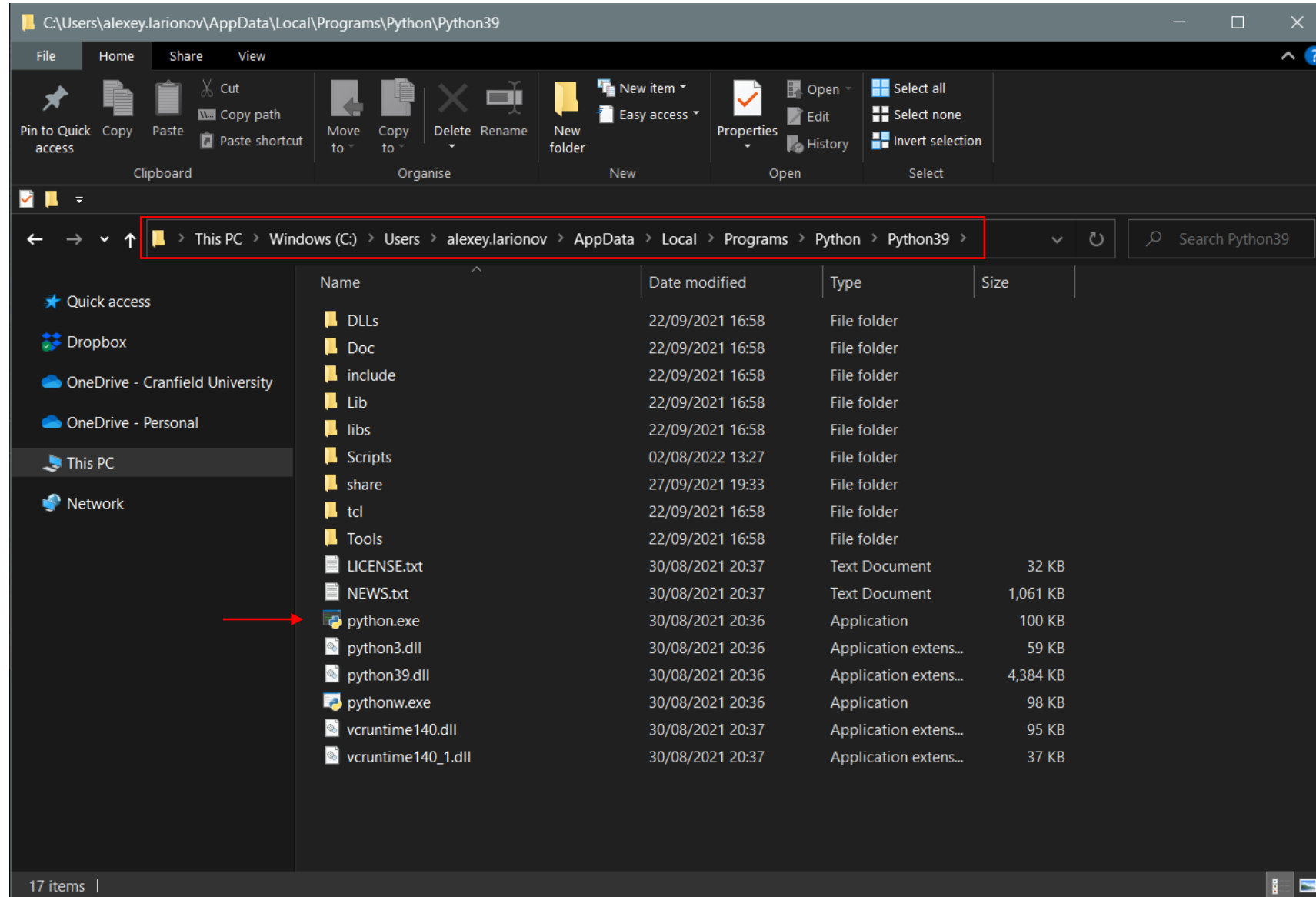
<https://docs.conda.io>

<https://apps.microsoft.com/store>



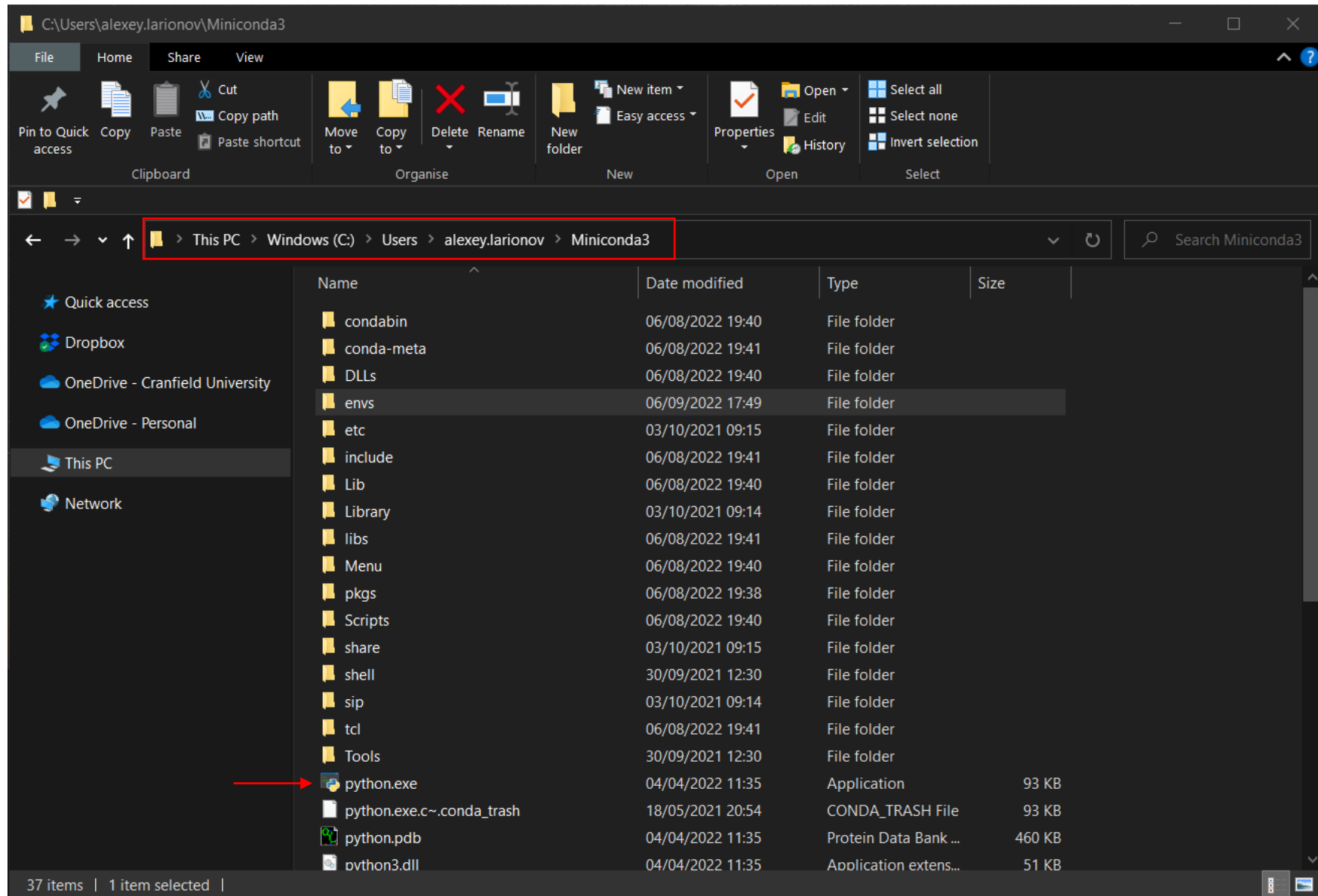
# There could (should!) be many Pythons on your PC

`C:/Users/alexey.Larionov/AppData/Local/Programs/Python/Python39/python.exe`



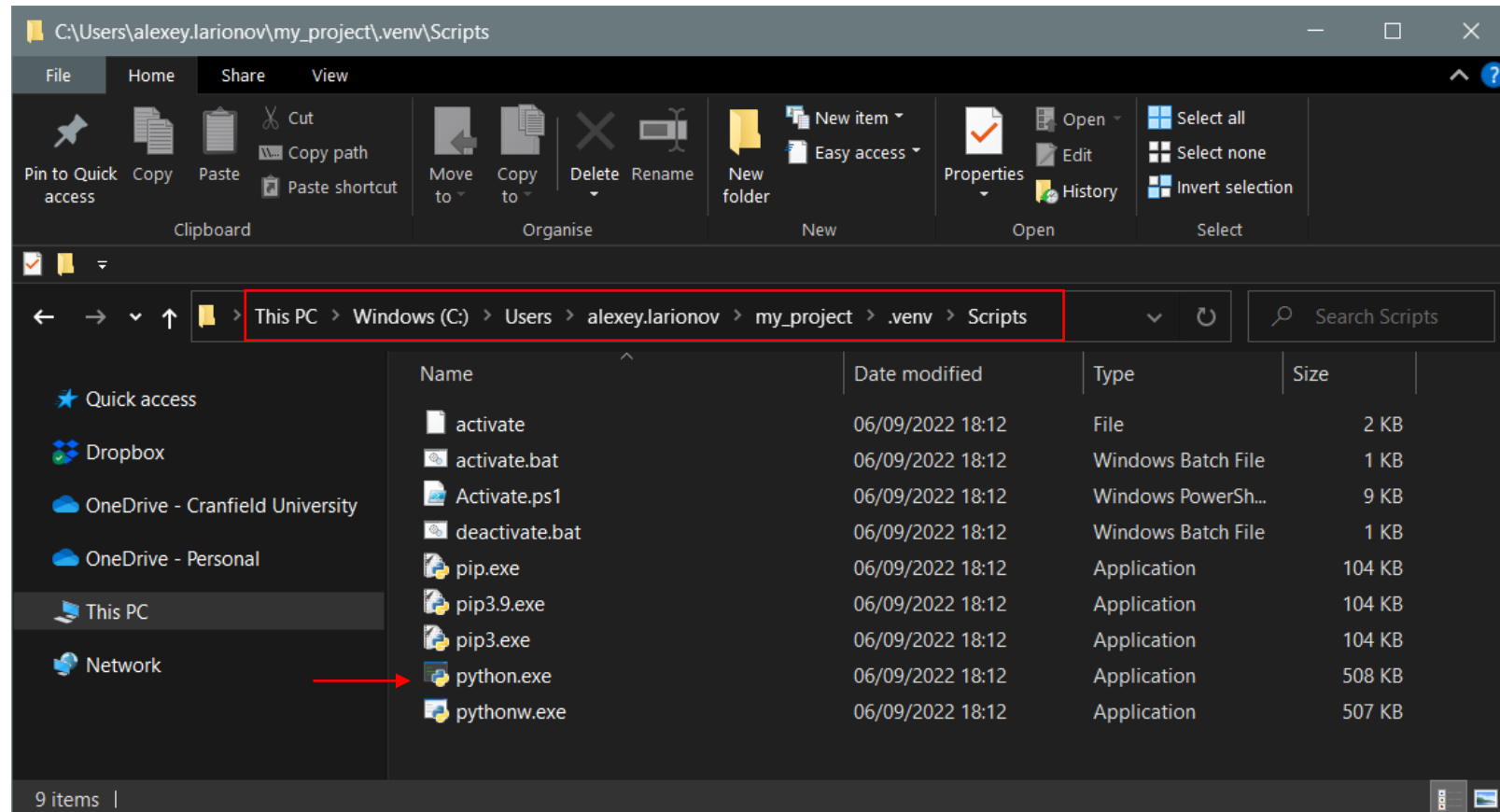
# There could (should!) be many Pythons on your PC

`C:/Users/alexey.larionov/Miniconda3/python.exe`



# There could (should!) be many Pythons on your PC

`C:/Users/alexey.larionov/my_project/venv/Scripts/python.exe`





# There could (should!) be many ~~Python~~s on your PC

C:/Users/alexey.larionov/AppData/Local/Programs/Python/Python39/python.exe

C:/Users/alexey.larionov/my\_project/venv/Scripts/python.exe

C:/Users/alexey.larionov/Miniconda3/python.exe

In fact, I have many more Python environments on my PC ...

Called

Interpreters (VS Code)

or

Kernels (Jupyter)

or

Virtual Environments (venv)

**It's a good programming practice to create a separate virtual environment for each Python project !**

(using **conda** or **venv** – as we will discuss later)

The “system / global” Python interpreter is the one that is called by default when you type “python” on the system terminal

The “system” Python interpreter is defined by what of the available Pythons is in PATH variable of the terminal (shell)



# Lecture plan



- Python features



- Installing Python(s) on your PC

- **Using Python**

- Interactive use in terminal & IDLE
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- Hello Word in VS Code

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# Interactive use in terminal

Open command prompt

1 Type `python`  
to start Python interpreter

2 Type `print("Hello, world!")`  
within the Python interpreter

In some Linux systems you may need  
to use **python3** instead of `python`

In Windows you may use **py**  
instead of `python`

<https://docs.python.org/3/using/windows.html#launcher>

Use `exit()` command to exit

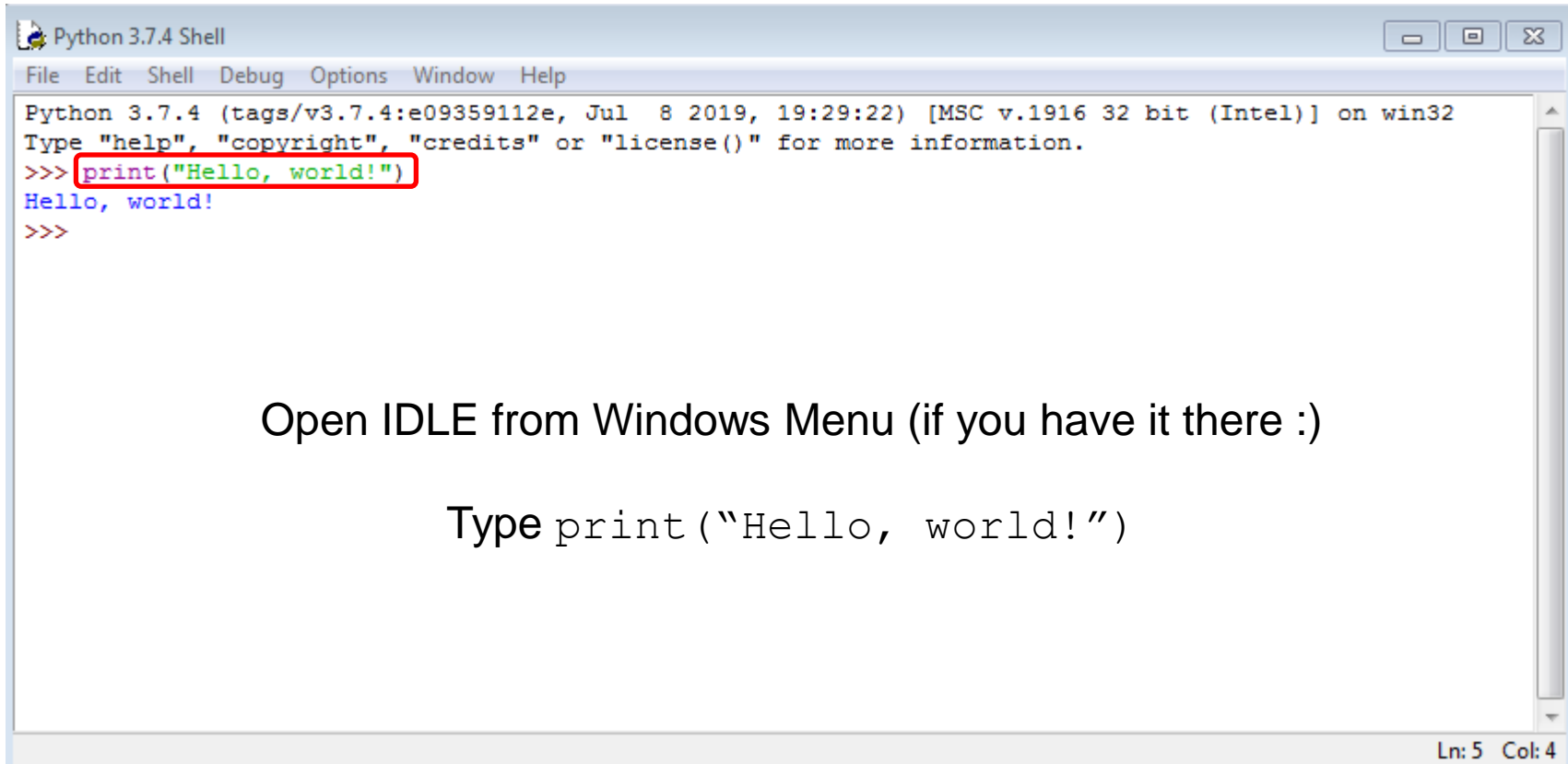
```
Command Prompt - python
(c) Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\alexe>python 1
Python 3.9.6 (tags/v3.9.6:db3ff76, Jun 28 2021, 15:26:21) [MSC v.1929 64 bit
(AMD64)] on win32
Type "help", "copyright", "credits" or "license" for more information.
>>> print("Hello World!") 2
Hello World!
>>>
```

Sometime this interactive way of using Python is called  
Read-Evaluate-Print-Loop: **REPL**

# Python IDLE

- Integrated **D**evelopment **E**nvironment: a tool traditionally supplied with many Python distributions
- It is not actually a proper IDE (like RStudio, NetBeans, VisualStudio etc)
- It's an interactive Python terminal with syntax highlighting, auto-completion, smart indentation etc



```
Python 3.7.4 Shell
File Edit Shell Debug Options Window Help
Python 3.7.4 (tags/v3.7.4:e09359112e, Jul  8 2019, 19:29:22) [MSC v.1916 32 bit (Intel)] on win32
Type "help", "copyright", "credits" or "license()" for more information.
>>> print("Hello, world!")
Hello, world!
>>>
```

Open IDLE from Windows Menu (if you have it there :)

Type `print("Hello, world!")`





# Lecture plan



- Python features



- Installing Python(s) on your PC
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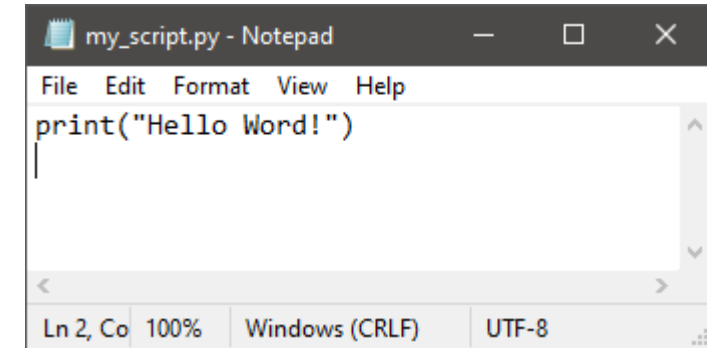
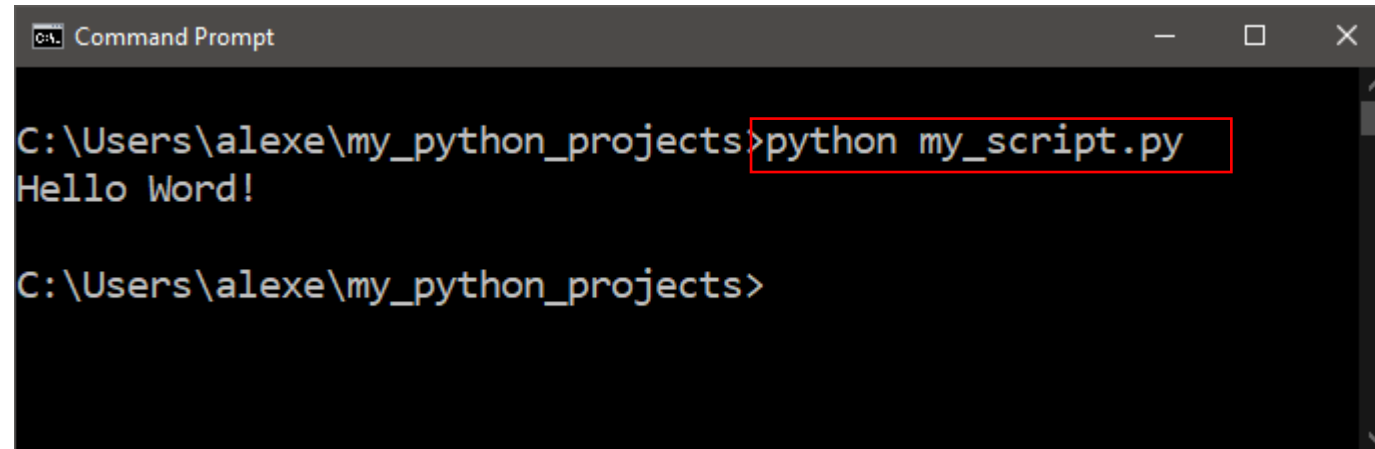
# Writing a Python script

Create a text file called `my_script.py`

Write in the file `print("Hello, world!")`

Open terminal in the folder containing your script

Type in the terminal `python my_script.py`

A screenshot of a Notepad window titled 'my\_script.py - Notepad'. The window has a menu bar with 'File', 'Edit', 'Format', 'View', and 'Help'. The text area contains the code `print("Hello Word!")`. The status bar at the bottom shows 'Ln 2, Co 1', '100%', 'Windows (CRLF)', and 'UTF-8'.A screenshot of a Command Prompt window titled 'Command Prompt'. The prompt shows the directory `C:\Users\alexe\my_python_projects`. The command `python my_script.py` is entered and highlighted with a red box. The output `Hello Word!` is displayed below the command. The prompt then shows `C:\Users\alexe\my_python_projects>`.

# A good Python IDE shipped with Anaconda ...

Spyder or Spider ?  
<https://wikidiff.com/spyder/spider>

Spyder is an open-source cross-platform integrated development environment (IDE) for scientific programming in Python

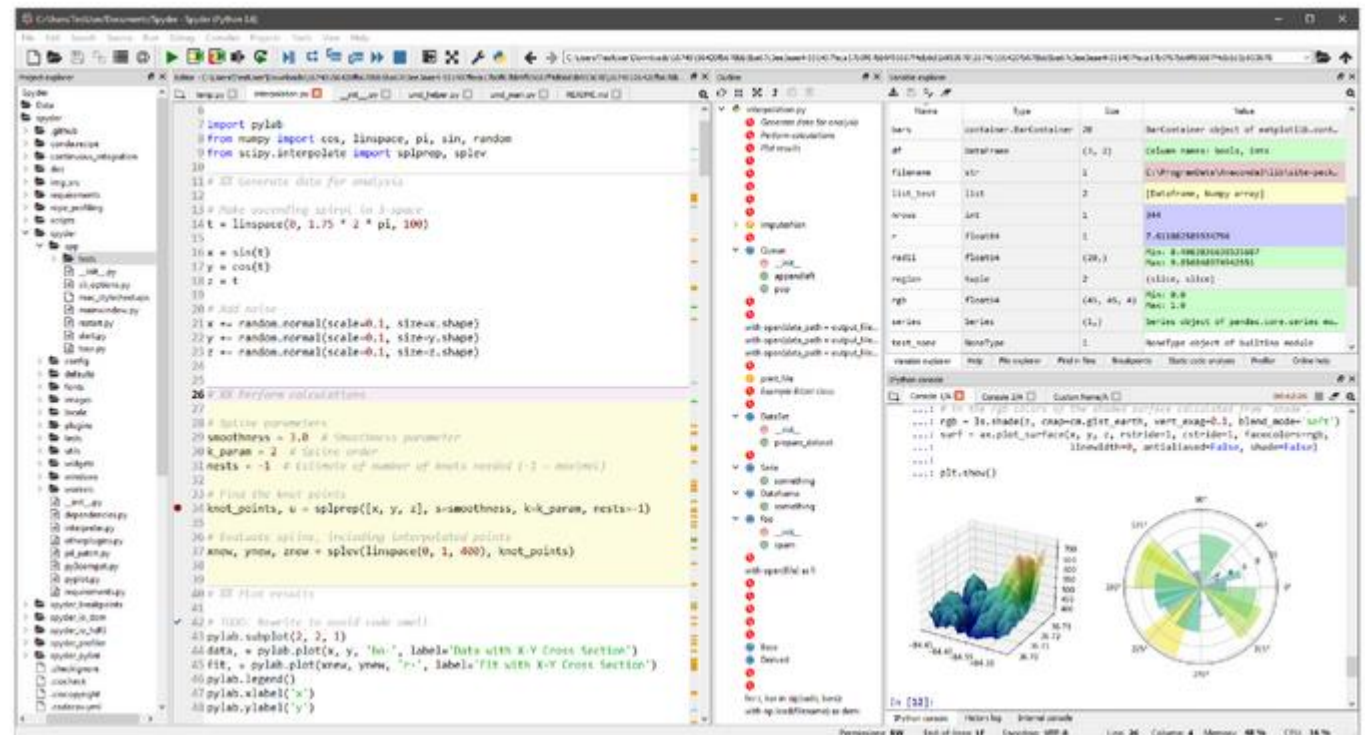
- Spyder installer includes a number of important Python packages, including NumPy, SciPy, Matplotlib, pandas, IPython, SymPy and Cython, as well as other open-source software



# SPYDER

The Scientific Python Development Environment

Feels like R-Studio for Python ...



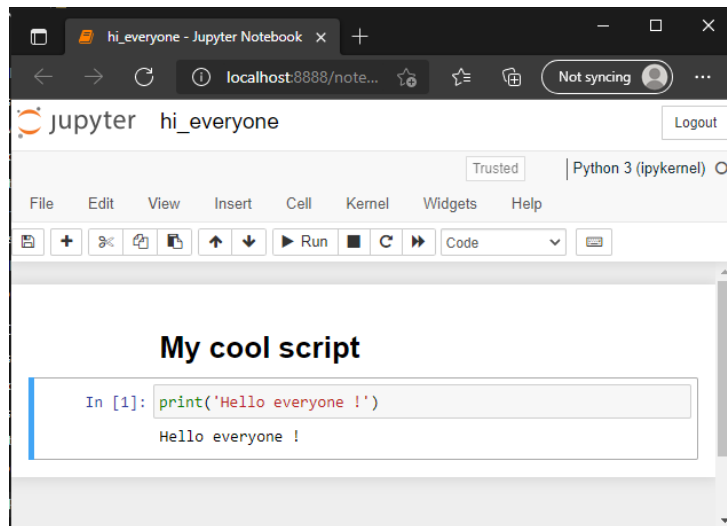
# The proper ways to write Python code

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project\\_Jupyter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Jupyter)  
Jupyter or Jupiter?

Now, forget all the ways of using Python shown in the previous slides !

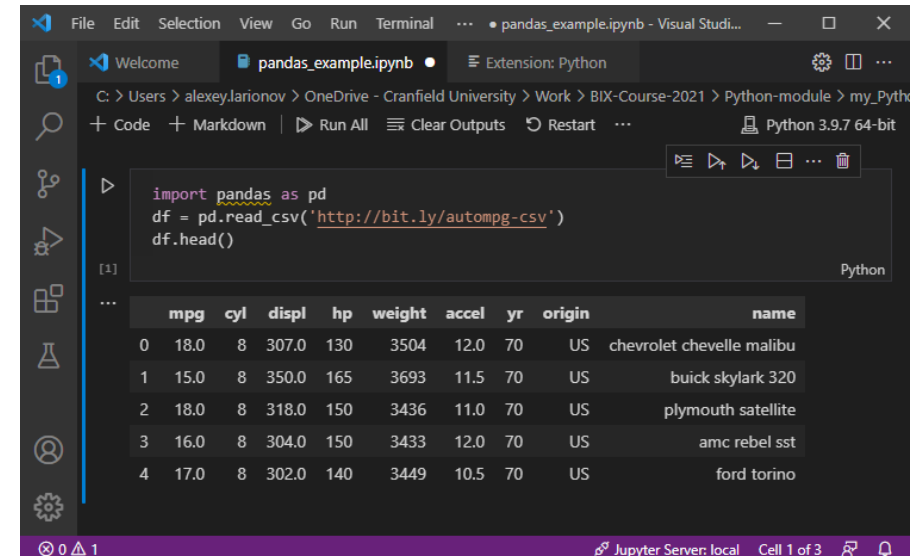
- **Jupyter Notebook for interactive analysis**

- De-facto standard in data science & bioinformatics
- Keeps well-formatted comments, plots and code together: Reproducible Research !



- **VS Code or PyCharm for coding**

- Good for software developers
- Could be confusing for beginners
- Supports Jupyter Notebooks too !

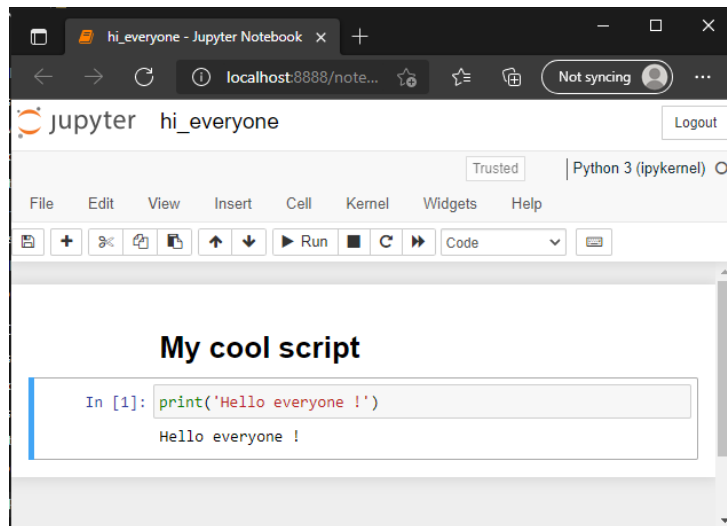


# The proper ways to write Python code

<https://blog.jetbrains.com/pycharm/2017/09/pycharm-community-edition-and-professional-edition-explained-licenses-and-more>

- **Jupyter Notebook for interactive analysis**

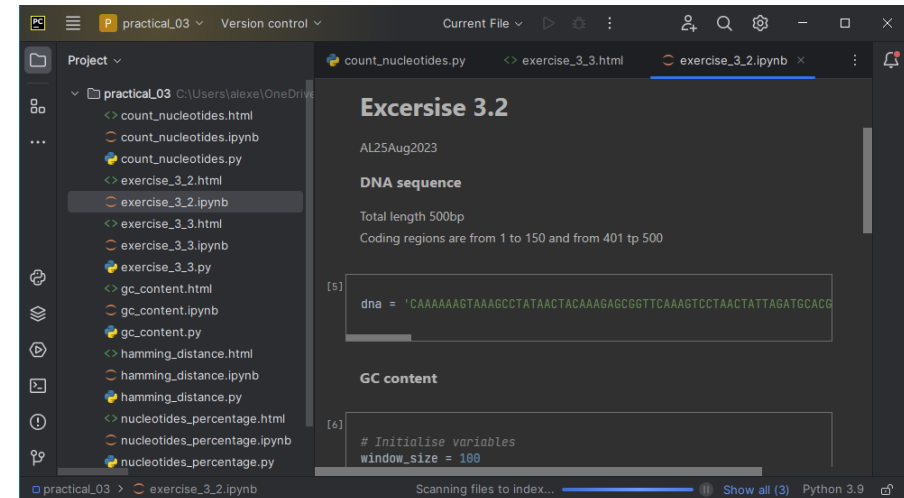
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Mac users ?



<https://www.jetbrains.com/pycharm/download/other.html>



# Lecture plan



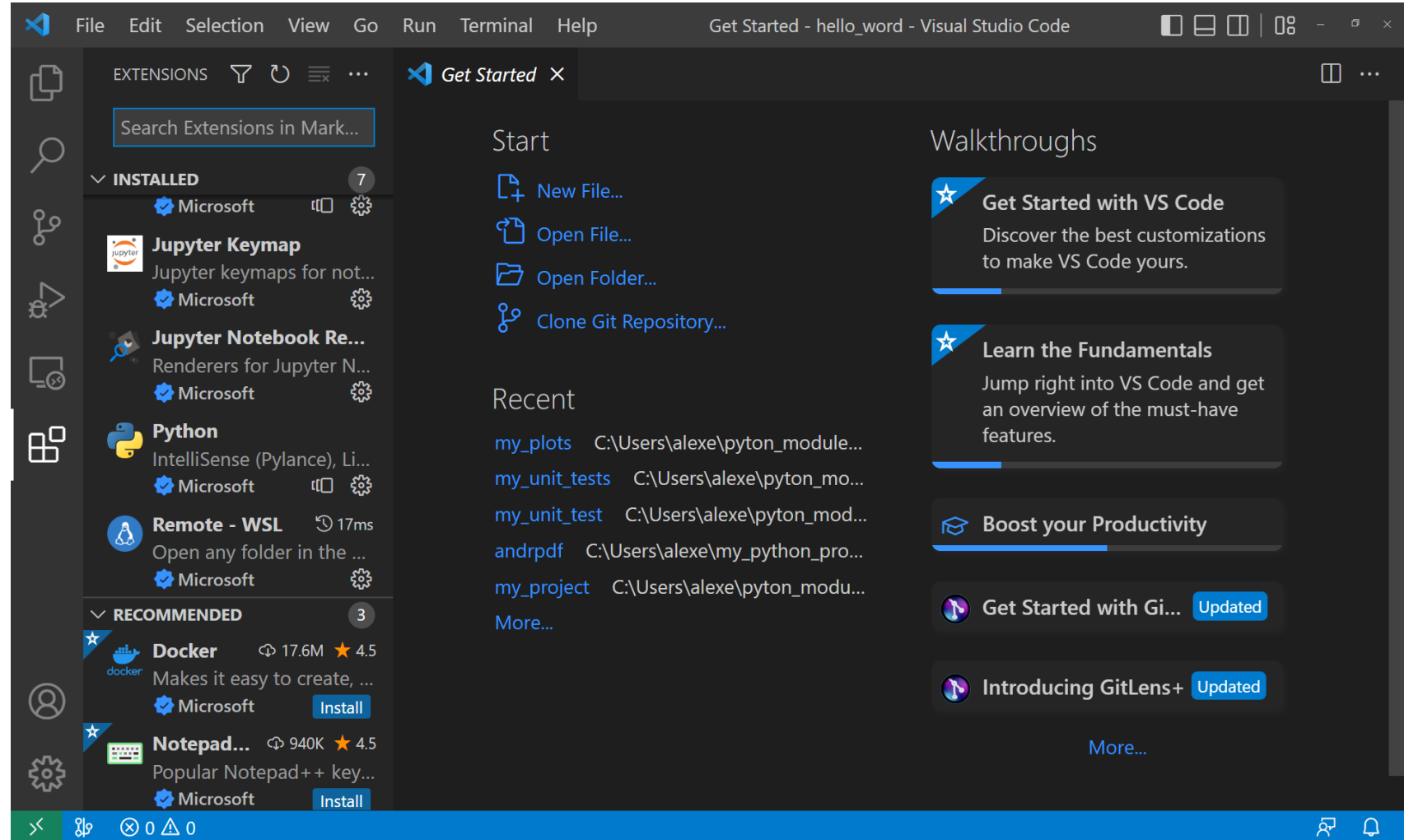
- Python features



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# Using VS-Code for “Hello World !” script in Python

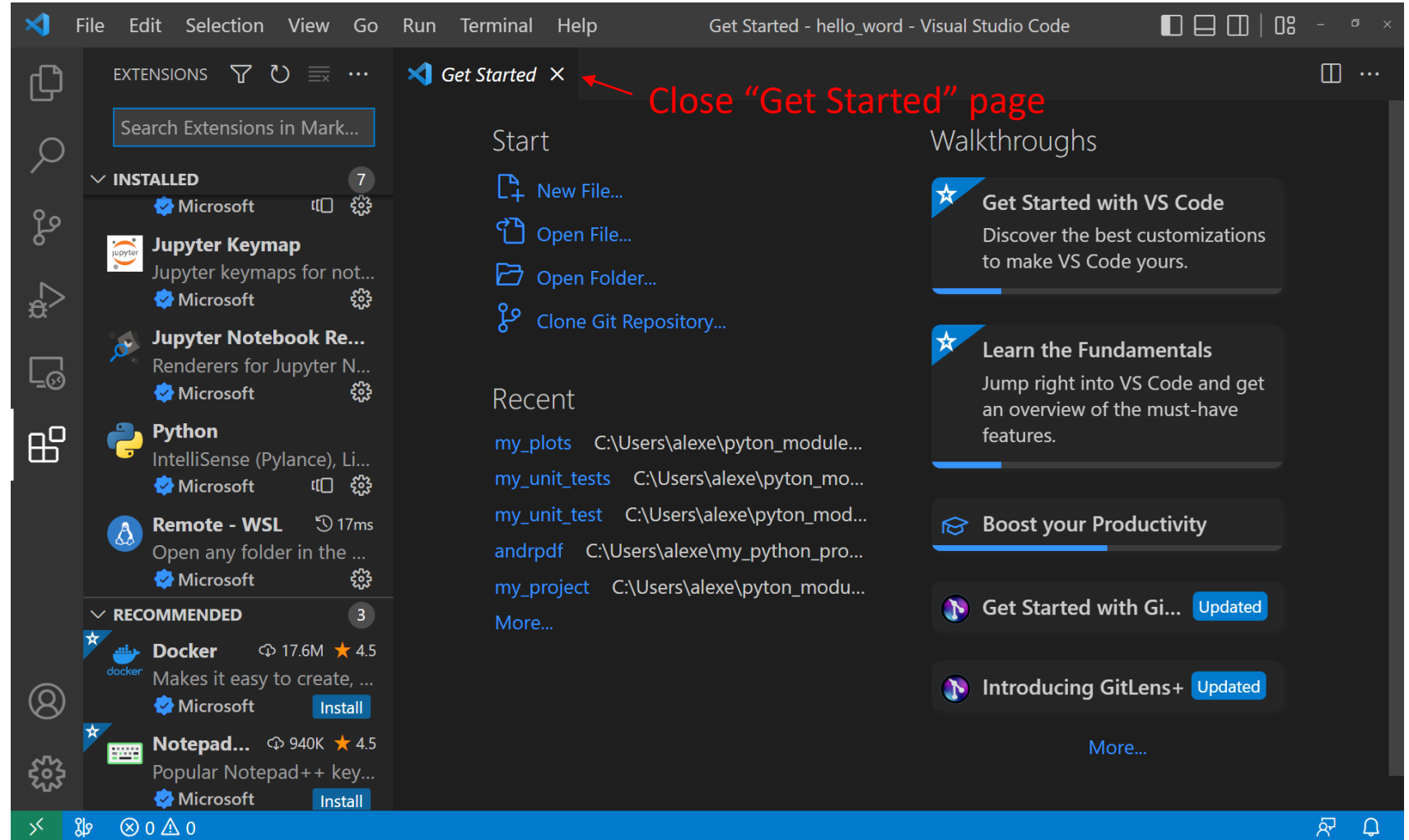
You will have time for this during the practical session !



VS Code may look confusing at the beginning ...

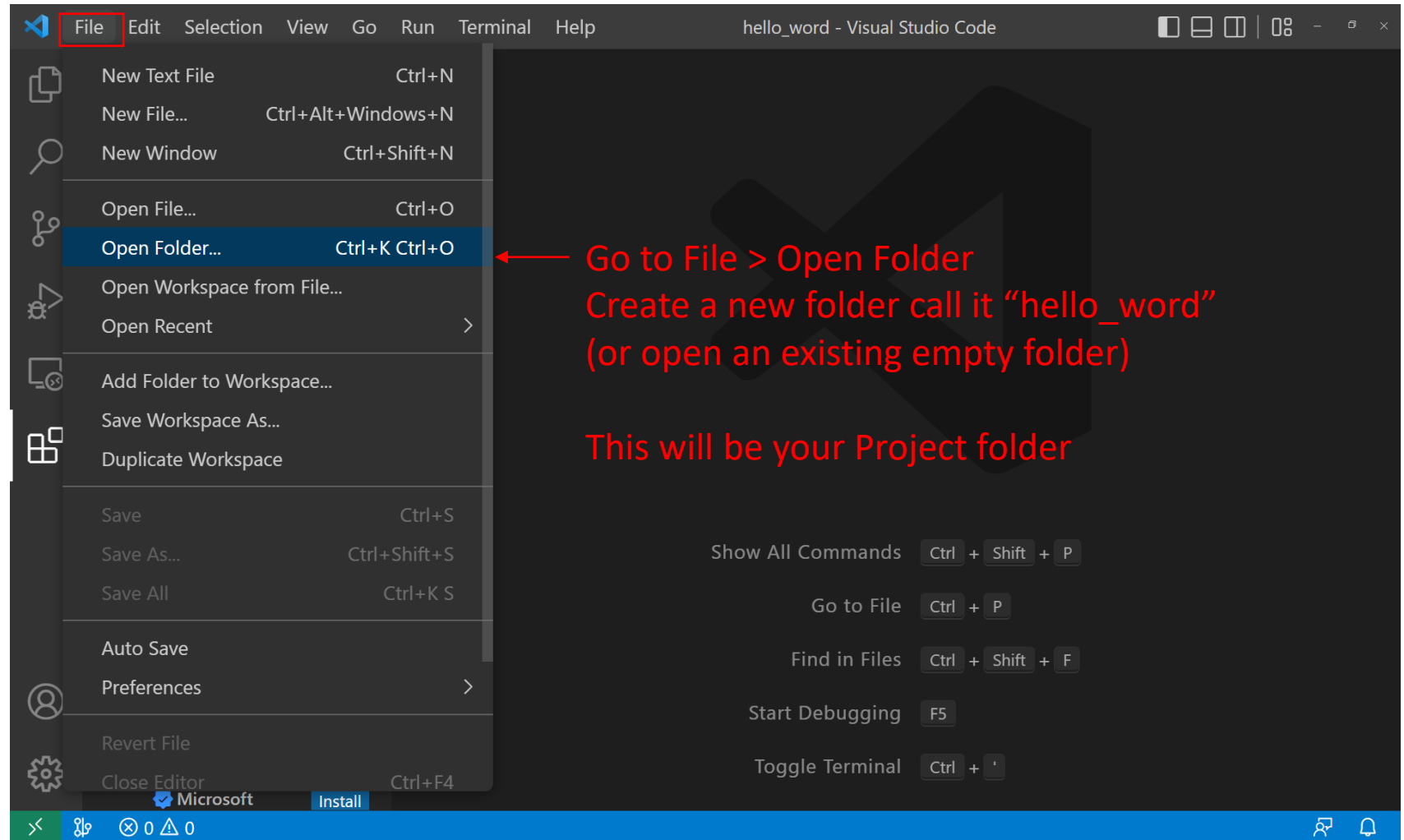


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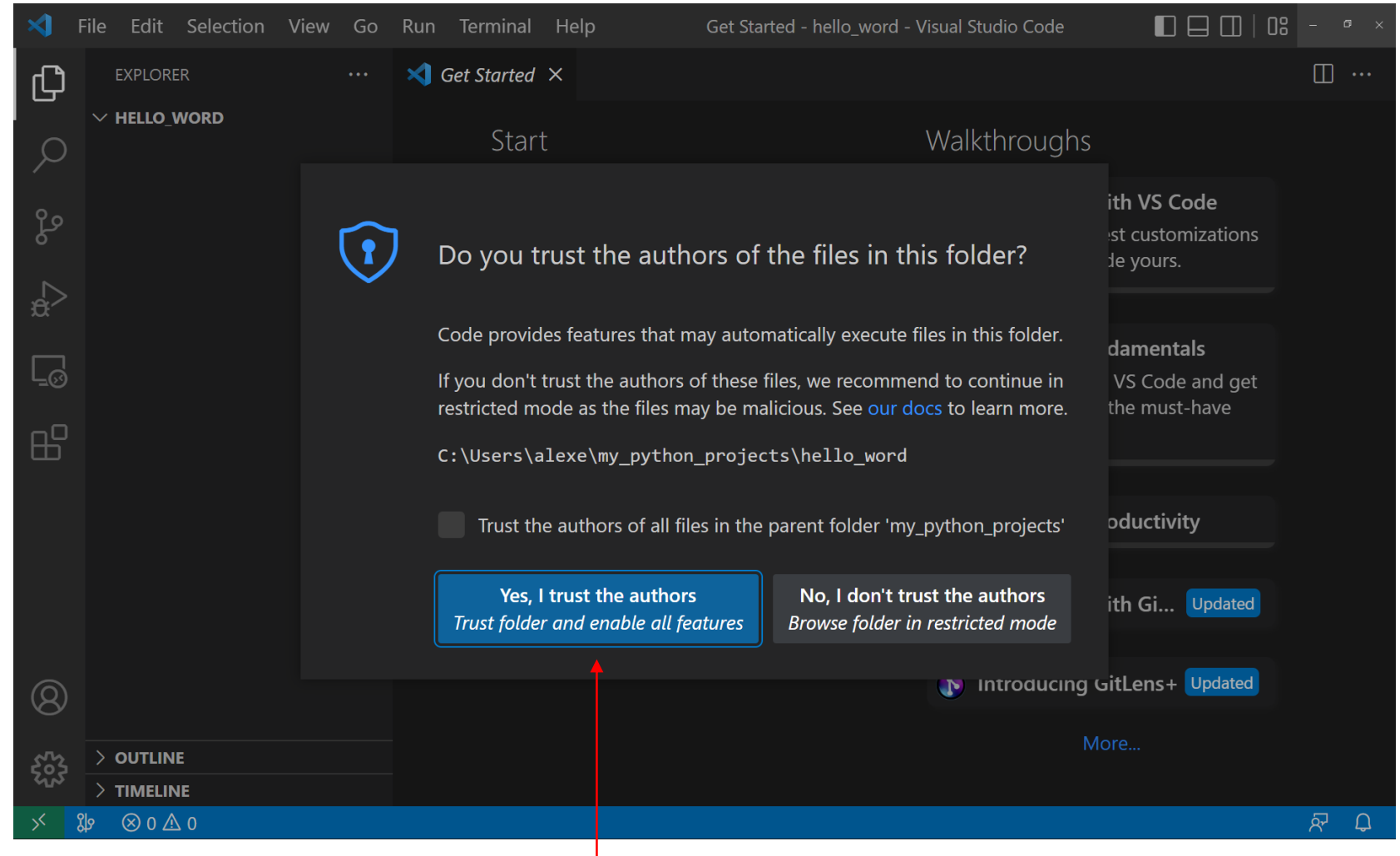
VS Code may look confusing at the beginning ...

# Using VS-Code for “Hello World !” script in Python ...



# Using VS-Code for “Hello World !” script in Python

Sorry, VS-Code is slightly paranoid :)

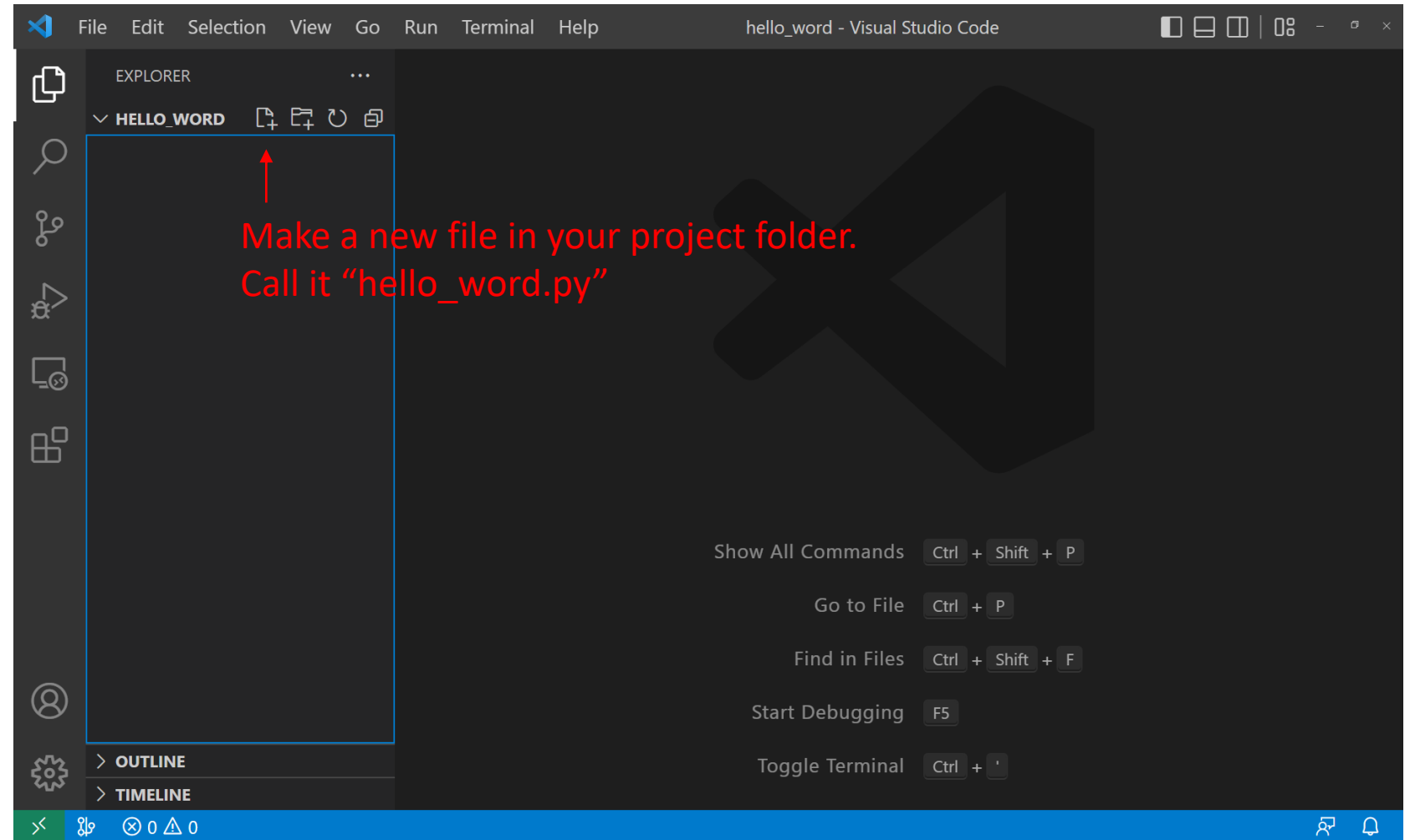


Decide whether you trust yourself ...



# Using VS-Code for “Hello World !” script in Python

Make sure you selected  
file explorer tab



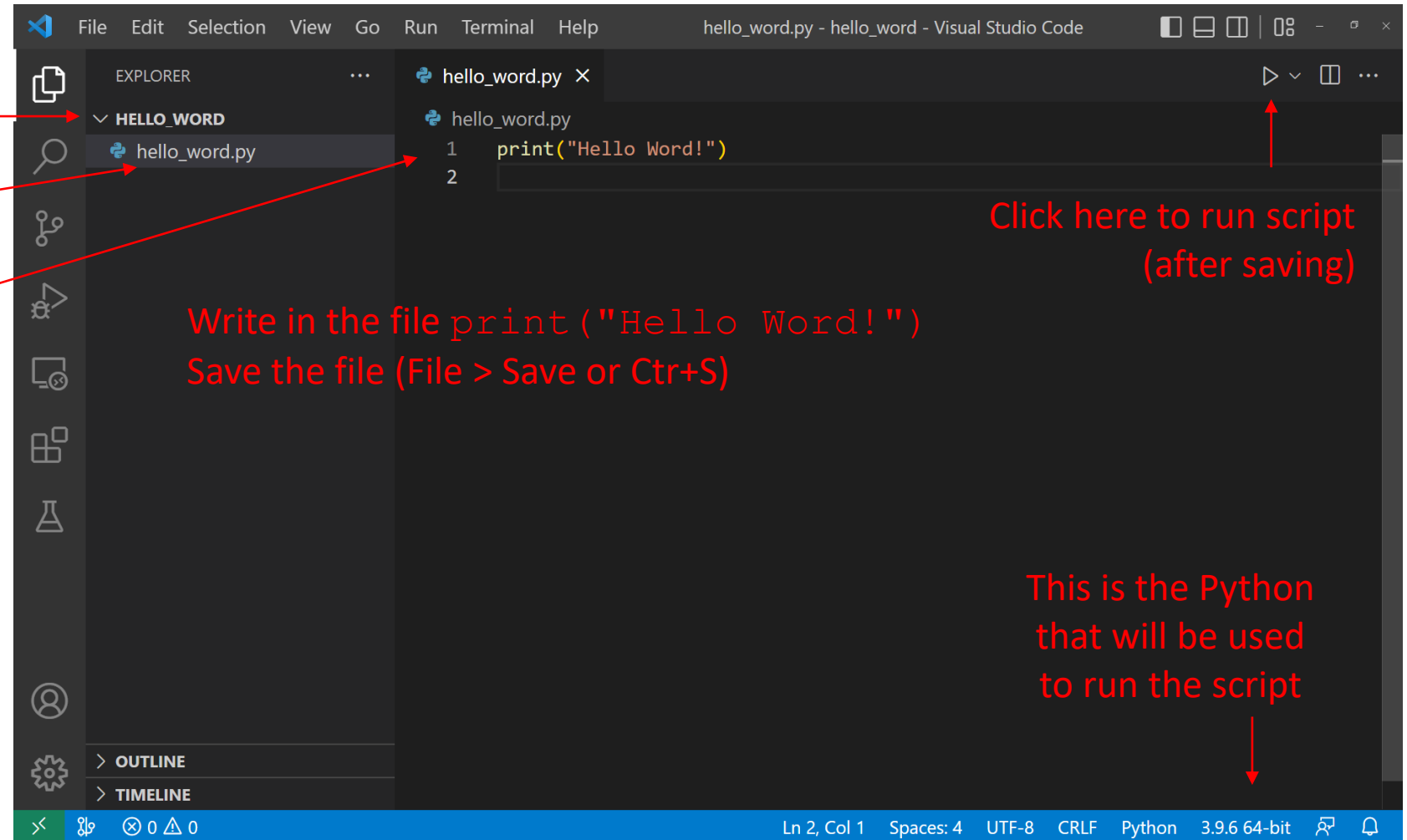
If you are prompted to **install Python extension**: agree to it :)

# Using VS-Code for “Hello World !” script in Python

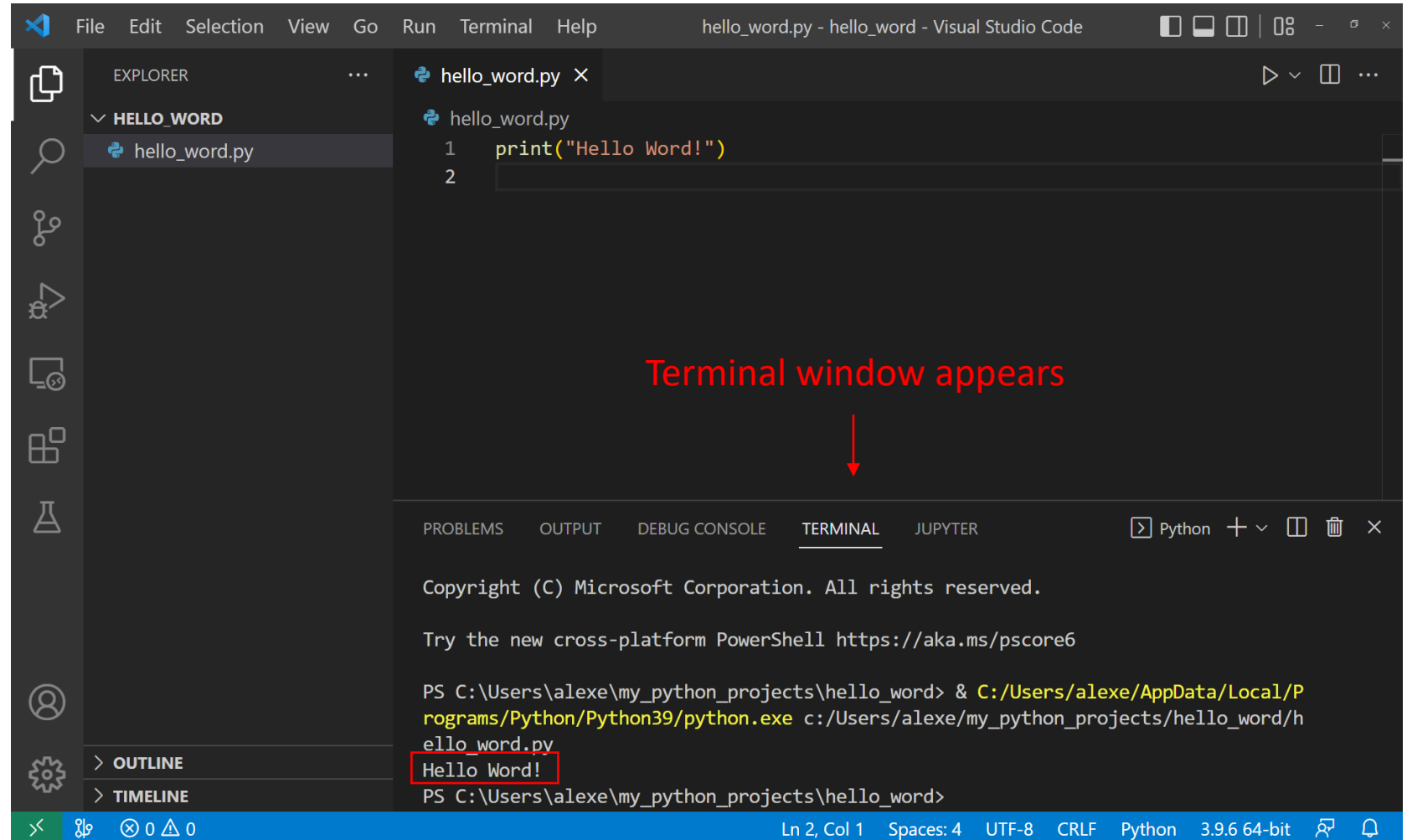
This is the name of your folder

This is the name of your file

This is the content of your file



# Using VS-Code for “Hello World !” script in Python



The screenshot shows the Visual Studio Code interface with a Python file named `hello_word.py` open. The file contains the following code:

```
1 print("Hello Word!")
2
```

A red arrow points from the text "Terminal window appears" to the terminal window at the bottom. The terminal window shows the command prompt output:

```
Copyright (C) Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

Try the new cross-platform PowerShell https://aka.ms/pscore6

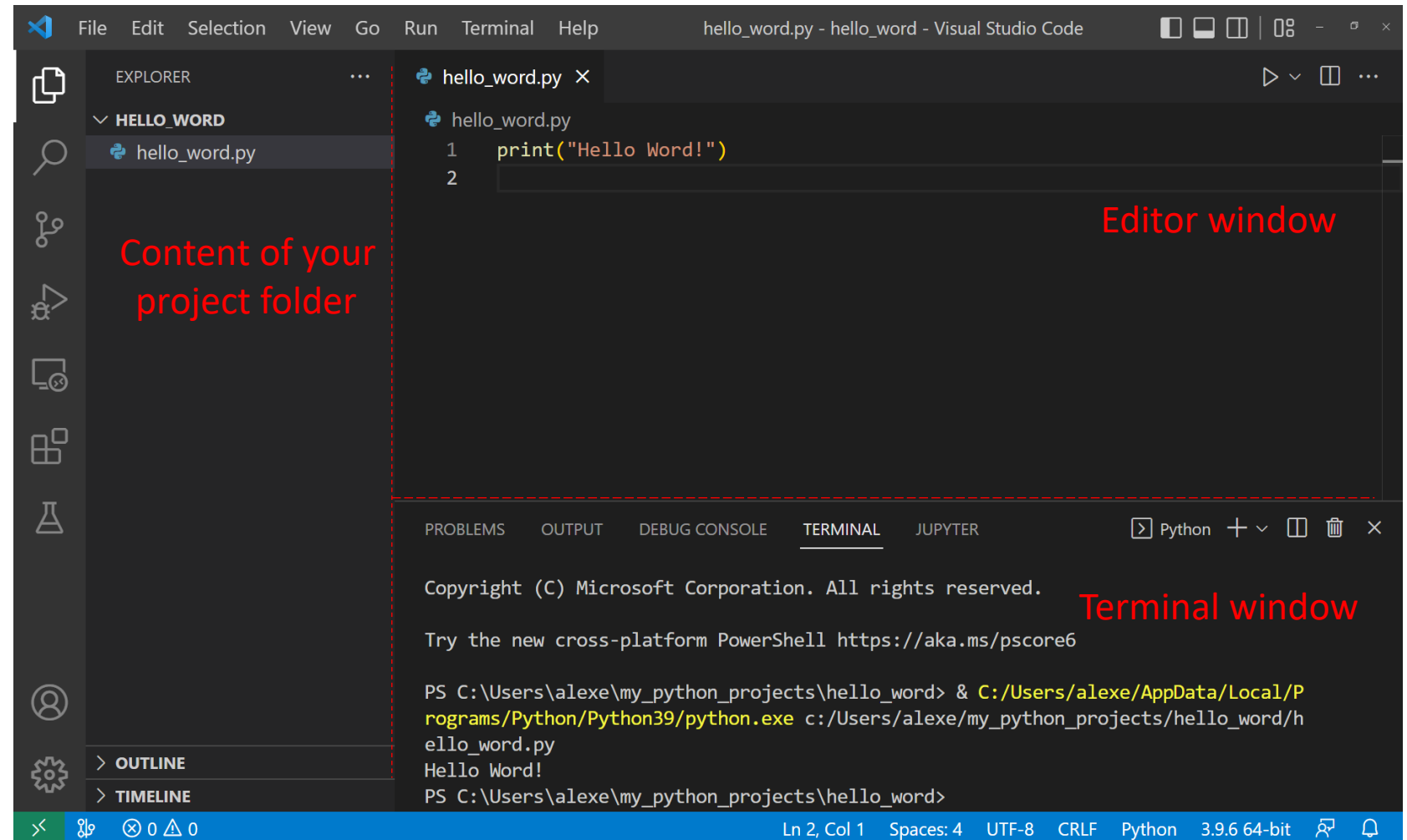
PS C:\Users\alexe\my_python_projects\hello_word> & C:/Users/alexe/AppData/Local/Programs/Python/Python39/python.exe c:/Users/alexe/my_python_projects/hello_word/hello_word.py
Hello Word!
PS C:\Users\alexe\my_python_projects\hello_word>
```

The output "Hello Word!" is highlighted with a red box.

Hurray !!! You have run your first Python script in VS Code !!!



# Using VS-Code for “Hello World !” script in Python







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# Comments in your script

**Comments are not executed.**

**However, it's a good practice to put comments in your script**

 A traditional one-line comment

'''

This is an example of multi-line comment:

You should not worry if comments make a half of your script !

'''

# Comments in your script

**Comments are not executed.**

**However, it's a good practice to put comments in your script**

Use  
English US  
Keyboard

English UK  
Keyboard  
may type £

# A traditional one-line comment

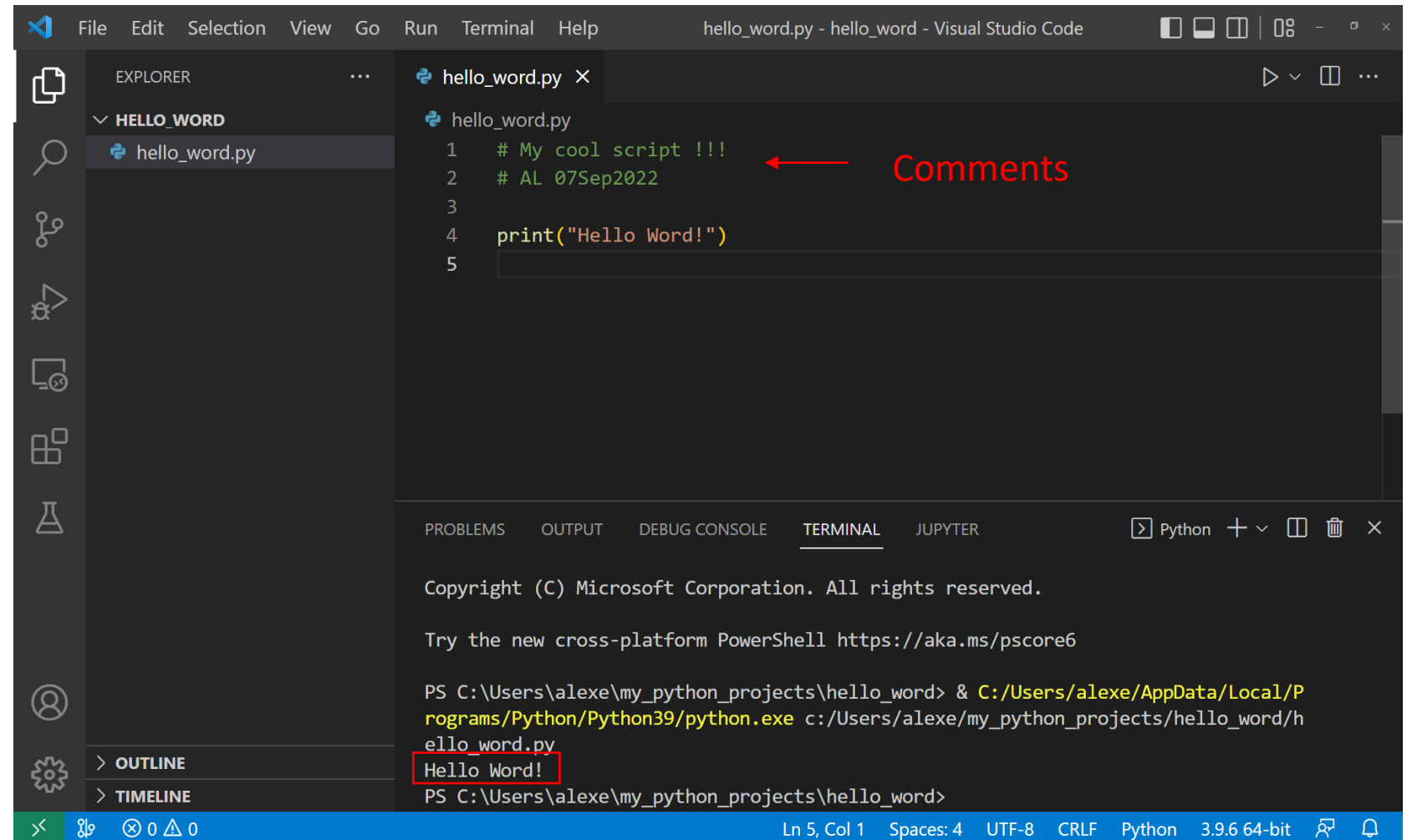
```
"""
```

```
This is an example of multi-line comment:
```

```
You should not worry if comments make a quote of your script !
```

```
"""
```

# Comments in Python



The screenshot shows the Visual Studio Code interface. The Explorer pane on the left shows a project named 'HELLO\_WORD' with a file 'hello\_word.py'. The main editor shows the contents of 'hello\_word.py':

```
1 # My cool script !!!  
2 # AL 07Sep2022  
3  
4 print("Hello Word!")  
5
```

A red arrow points to the comment lines, with the word 'Comments' written in red. The bottom panel shows the 'TERMINAL' tab with the following output:

```
Copyright (C) Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.  
  
Try the new cross-platform PowerShell https://aka.ms/pscore6  
  
PS C:\Users\alexe\my_python_projects\hello_word> & C:/Users/alexe/AppData/Local/Programs/Python/Python39/python.exe c:/Users/alexe/my_python_projects/hello_word/hello_word.py  
Hello Word!  
PS C:\Users\alexe\my_python_projects\hello_word>
```

The output 'Hello Word!' is highlighted with a red box. The status bar at the bottom indicates 'Ln 5, Col 1', 'Spaces: 4', 'UTF-8', 'CRLF', 'Python', and '3.9.6 64-bit'.

**Most programming languages do not care about indentations ...**

**But most human do ...**

Non-indented C-style Code:

```
if(condition_1){  
if(condition_2){  
function_X()  
}  
else{  
function_Y()  
}  
}
```

Indented C-style Code:

```
if(condition_1){  
    if(condition_2){  
        function_X()  
    }  
    else{  
        function_Y()  
    }  
}
```



# Indentation is **required** in Python

Indented C-style Code:

```
if(condition_1){  
    if(condition_2){  
        function_X()  
    }  
    else{  
        function_Y()  
    }  
}
```

Indented Python Code:

```
if(condition_1):  
    if(condition_2):  
        function_X()  
  
    else:  
        function_Y()  
  
...
```



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# The Python philosophy

A small (!) core language ...



and lots (!) of modules

Module = Package = Library



math



sys



os

only load what you need &  
do not reinvent the wheel





## Built-in modules: for standard tasks

*built-in* modules come with Python, they don't need to be installed

- However, to use a built-in module, you still need to import it: `import <module name>`

### Examples:

```
import sys # system module  
sys.executable # the Python that you use ...
```

```
import os # os module  
os.getcwd() # working folder ...
```

```
import math # math module  
math.sin(0.5) # math functions ...
```

If you want to find what modules are installed in your Python environment:

```
help("modules")
```

For specific module:

```
help("math")
```



# Multiple ways of importing a module

- Simple import

```
import math  
factorial = math.factorial(5)  
print(factorial)
```

- Modify the names of modules and their functions by aliasing

```
import math as m  
factorial = m.factorial(5)  
print(factorial)
```

- A specific function can be imported from a module

```
from math import factorial  
factorial = factorial(5)  
print(factorial)
```

**NOT**  
**import factorial from math**

- `import` statement may reference everything defined within the module by using an asterisk (\*)

```
from math import *  
factorial = factorial(5)  
print(factorial)
```

**Don't use this method !**



## Additional modules: your customised toolbox

There are LOTS of modules for specialized bioinformatics tasks !

- You must install additional modules (=packages) before use
- Packages (=modules) are installed outside of Python
  - You can not *install* a package inside a Python script
  - Inside a Python script you only *import* already installed packages
- Two main tools to install Python packages are PIP and Conda

Some cool Python modules:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o06MyVhYte4>

# PIP - Package Installer for Python

- PIP is PyPA recommended tool to install packages from PyPI
  - Tool to install packages
  - The repository of Python packages
- Installs Python packages and their Python dependencies
- Installs into currently active Python environment
- PIP usually comes with Python installation
  - May be missed in Conda Python environments (although could be easily added by Conda)



Python Packaging Authority



Python Packages Repository

```
pip install ...
```



This is how you install a module with PIP  
from the system terminal !



# Where PIP installs the additional libraries ?

What is the “currently active environment” ?

C:/Users/alexey.Larionov/AppData/Local/Programs/Python/Python39/**python.exe**  
/pip.exe  
/Libs/<libraries>

C:/Users/alexey.larionov/my\_project/.venv/Scripts/**python.exe**  
/Scripts/pip.exe  
/Libs/<a different set of libraries>

C:/Users/alexey.larionov/Miniconda3/**python.exe**  
/pip.exe  
/Libs/<a third set of libraries>

Packages/libraries  
are only visible within a  
specific Python environment

Different Python environments  
may have different sets of  
installed packages/libraries



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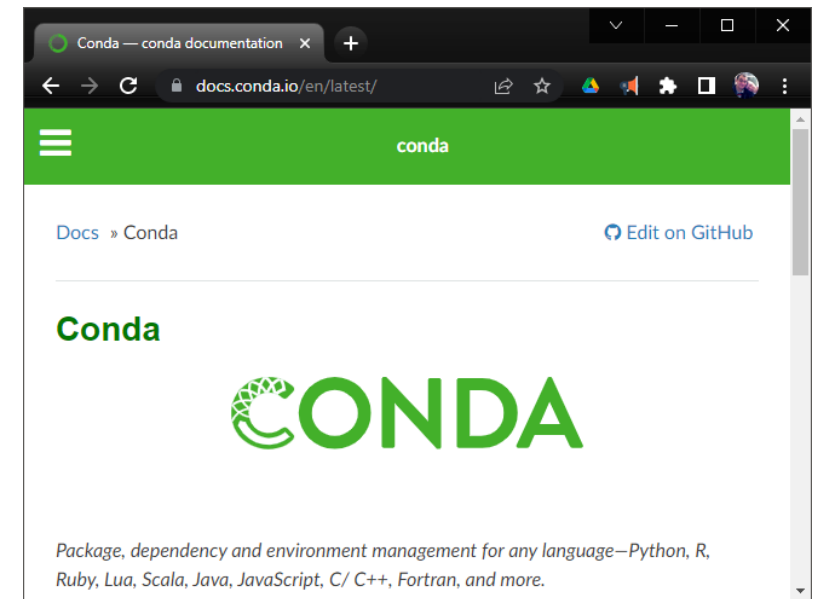


# Conda: a third-party package manager

Conda  $\neq$  Python

C:/Users/alexey.larionov/Miniconda3/python.exe  
/conda.exe

- Supports Python and other languages
- Installs Python and non-Python dependencies (uses pre-compiled binaries for installation)
- Many repositories (in addition to defaults)
  - conda-forge, bioconda, etc
- Organises Python environments
  - maintains CONDA environments tree
- By default, installs into currently active CONDA environment



<https://docs.conda.io/en/latest>





# CONDA environments

C:/Users/alexey.larionov/Miniconda3/python.exe

/conda.exe

/Libs/<base set of libraries>

/envs/emoji\_env

/matplotlib

/cutatapt

/my\_project\_1

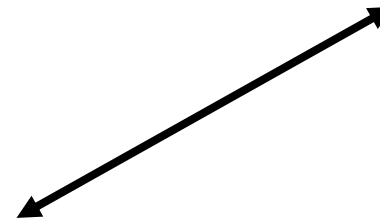
/my\_project\_2

/...

Currently active Conda environment



```
(base)> conda env list
(base)> conda create --name emoji_env
(base)> conda activate emoji_env
(emoji_env)> conda install emoji
(emoji_env)> ...
(emoji_env)> conda deactivate
(base)> ...
```

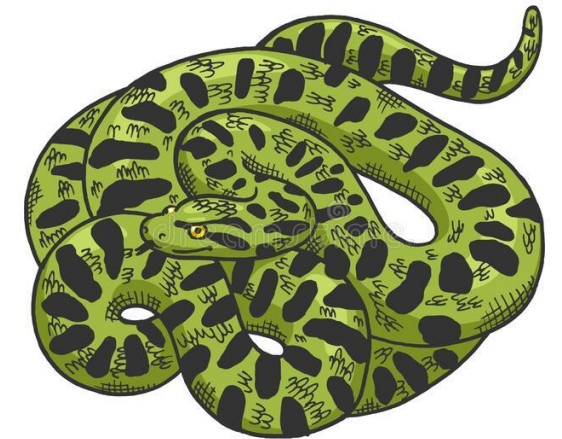
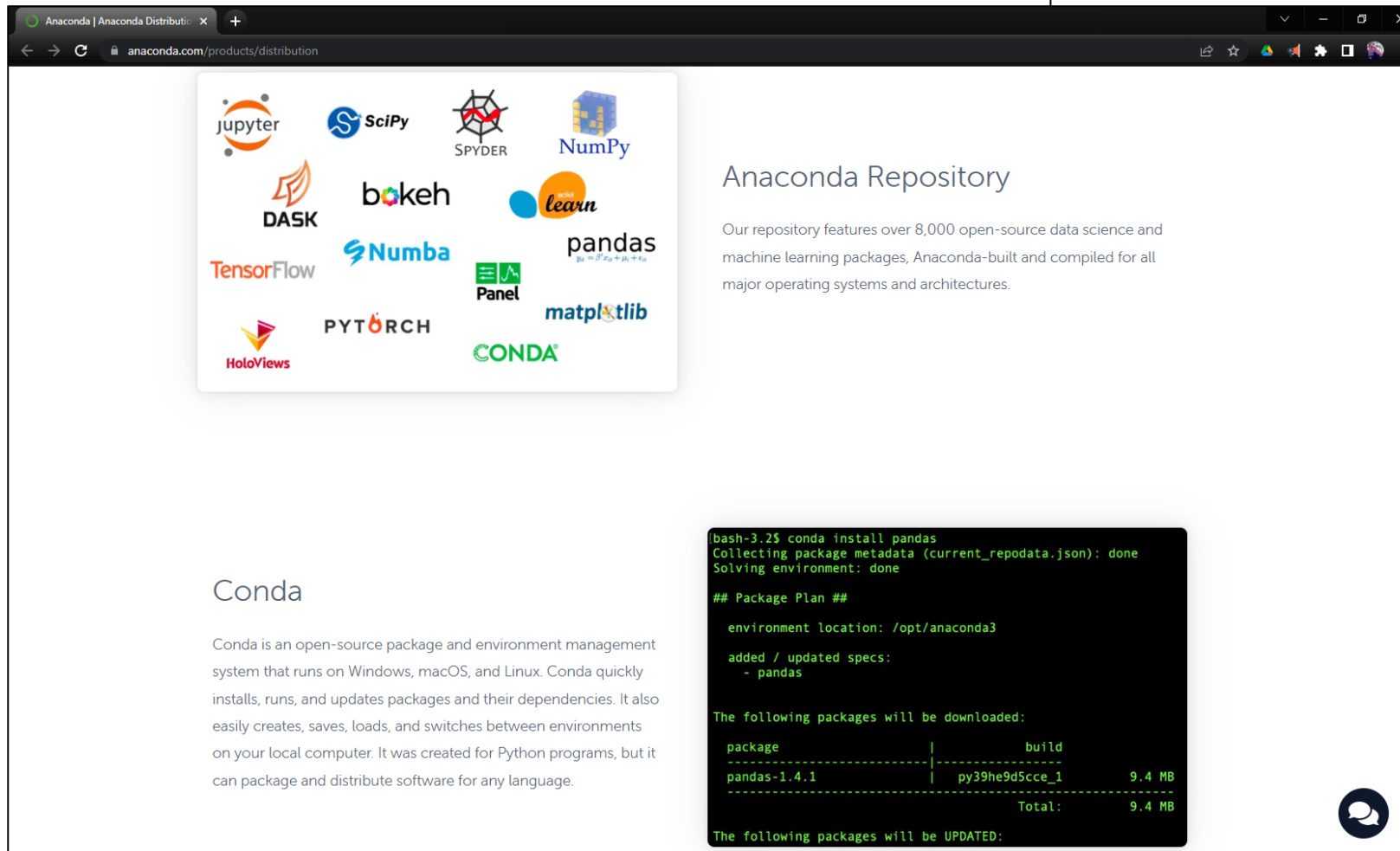
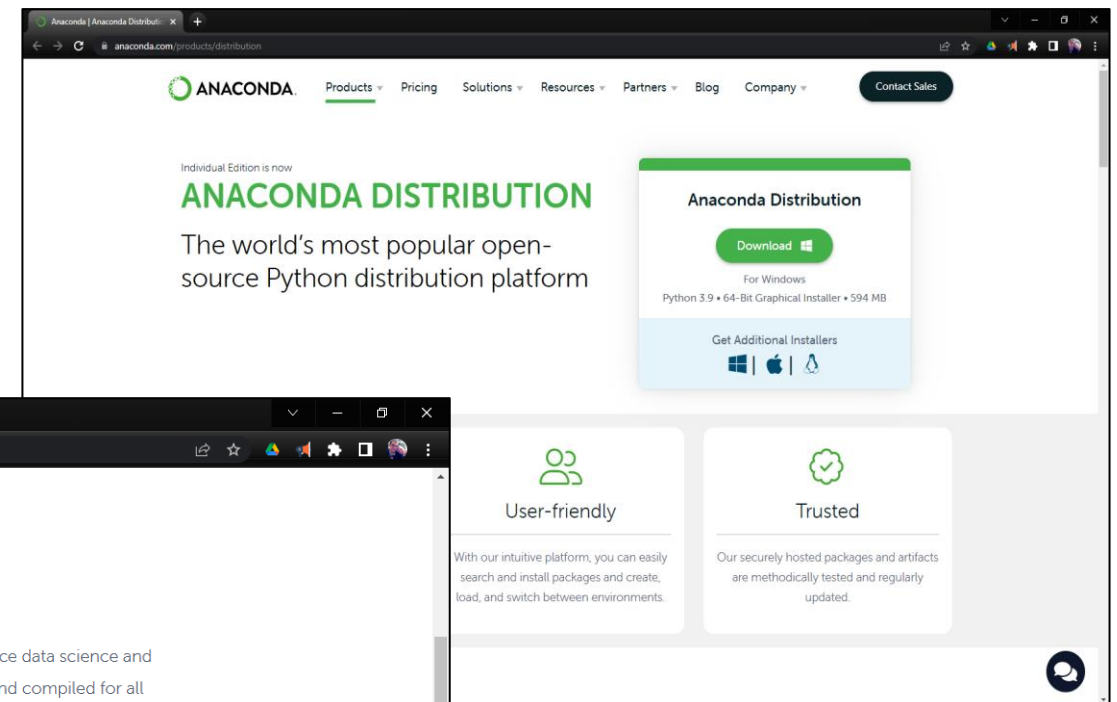




# Anaconda

Anaconda = Python + Conda + Many packages + ...

<https://www.anaconda.com/download>





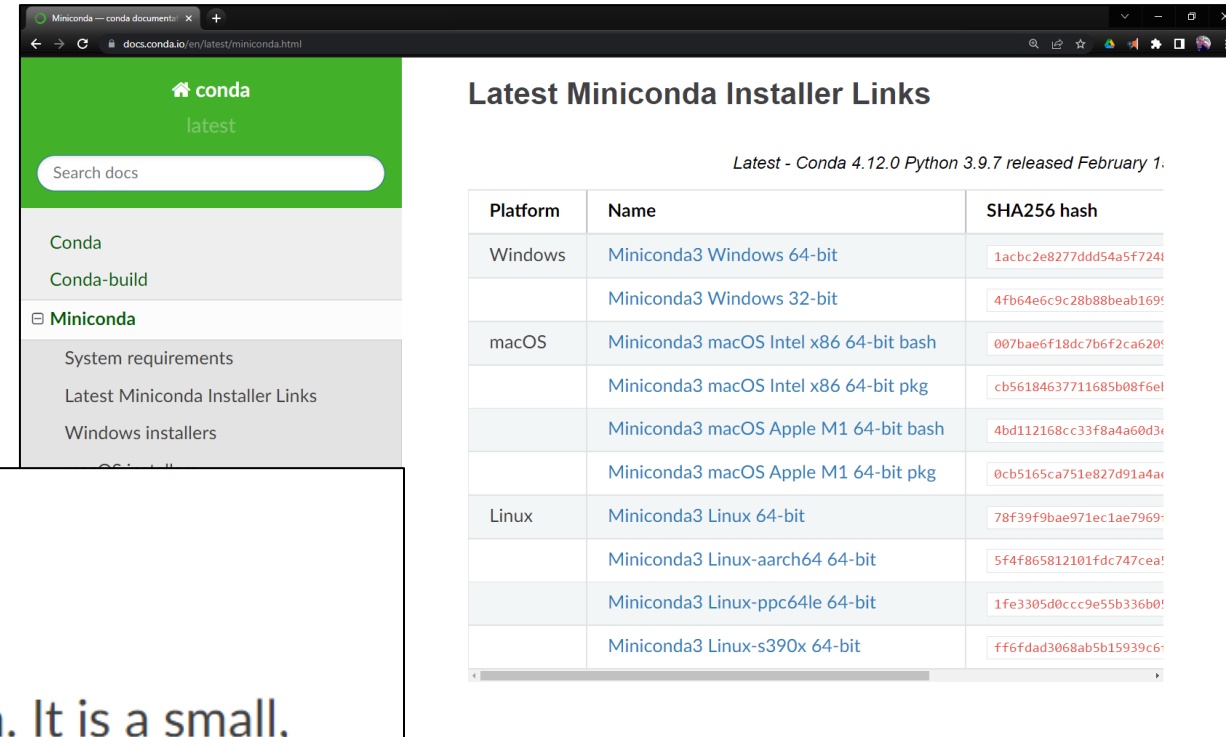
# Miniconda

Miniconda = Python + Conda

<https://docs.conda.io/en/latest/miniconda.html>

## Miniconda

Miniconda is a free minimal installer for conda. It is a small, bootstrap version of Anaconda that includes only conda, Python, the packages they depend on, and a small number of other useful packages, including pip, zlib and a few others. Use the `conda install` command to install 720+ additional conda packages from the Anaconda repository.



The screenshot shows the 'Latest Miniconda Installer Links' section of the documentation. It includes a table with columns for Platform, Name, and SHA256 hash. The table lists installers for Windows, macOS, and Linux across various architectures and Python versions. A note above the table states: 'Latest - Conda 4.12.0 Python 3.9.7 released February 1.'

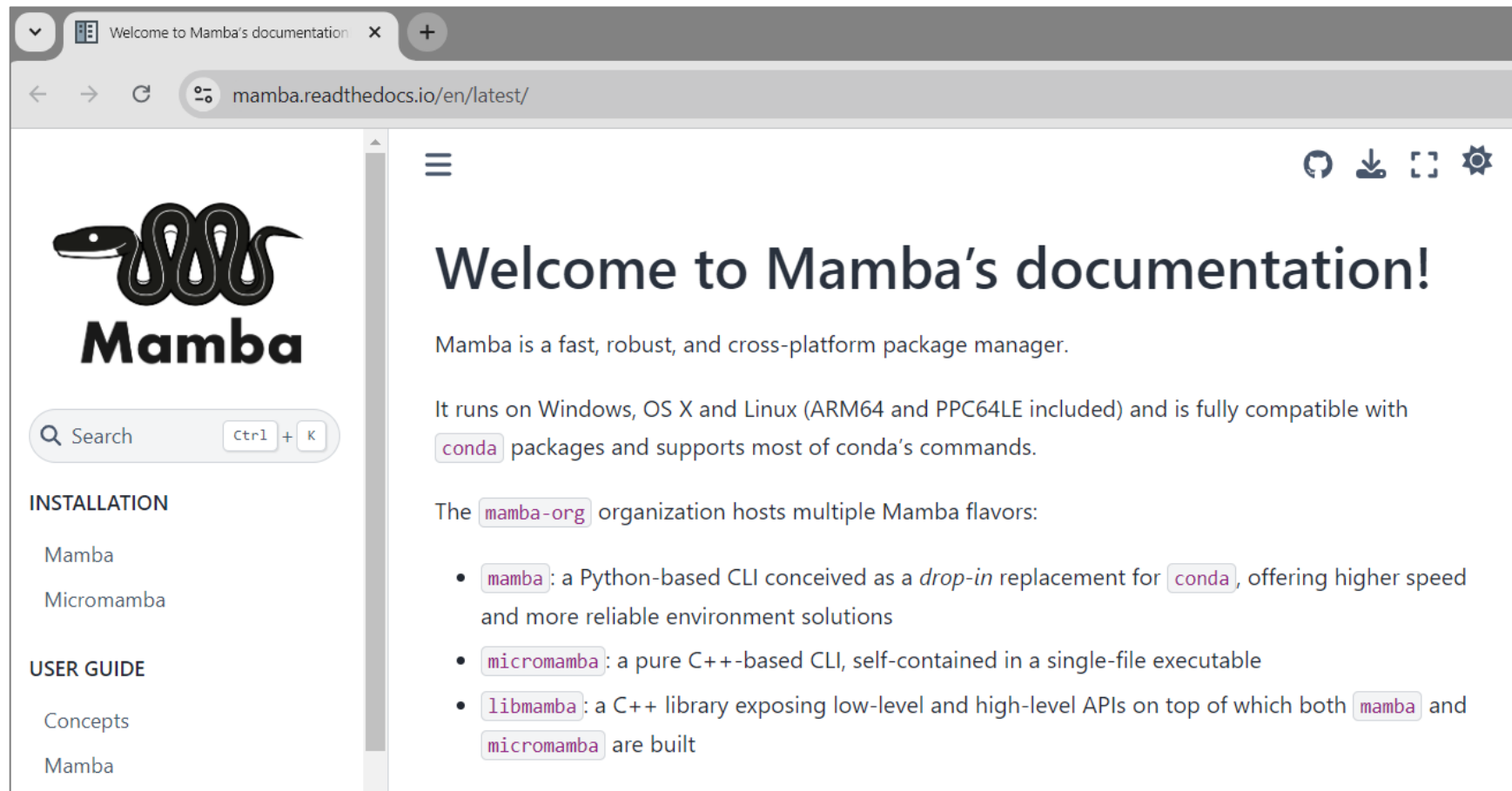
Platform	Name	SHA256 hash
Windows	Miniconda3 Windows 64-bit	1acbc2e8277dd54a5f7241
	Miniconda3 Windows 32-bit	4fb64e6c9c28b88beab1695
macOS	Miniconda3 macOS Intel x86 64-bit bash	007bae6f18dc7b6f2ca6205
	Miniconda3 macOS Intel x86 64-bit pkg	cb56184637711685b08f6e1
	Miniconda3 macOS Apple M1 64-bit bash	4bd112168cc33f8a4a60d34
	Miniconda3 macOS Apple M1 64-bit pkg	0cb5165ca751e827d91a4a
Linux	Miniconda3 Linux 64-bit	78f39f9bae971ec1ae79697
	Miniconda3 Linux-aarch64 64-bit	5f4f865812101fdc747cea1
	Miniconda3 Linux-ppc64le 64-bit	1fe3305d0cc9e55b336b05
	Miniconda3 Linux-s390x 64-bit	ff6fdad3068ab5b15939c65



# Mamba

An efficient implementation of Conda

Not recommended in this course



<https://mamba.readthedocs.io/en/latest>



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# Python environments

## “Global” environments

Created when you install Python (including **base** Conda env)

C:/Users/alexey.Larionov/AppData/Local/Programs/Python/Python39/...

Never recommended to use directly

## CONDA environments created by user

C:/Users/alexey.larionov/Miniconda3/...

/envs/emoji\_env

/matplotlib

/cutatapt

/my\_project\_1

/my\_project\_2

/...

```
(base)> conda env list
(base)> conda create ...
(base)> conda activate ...
(emoji_env)> conda install ...
(emoji_env)> ...
(emoji_env)> conda deactivate
(base)> ...
```

Recommended to use during this course

## “Local” venv environment

Within project folder, created by venv module

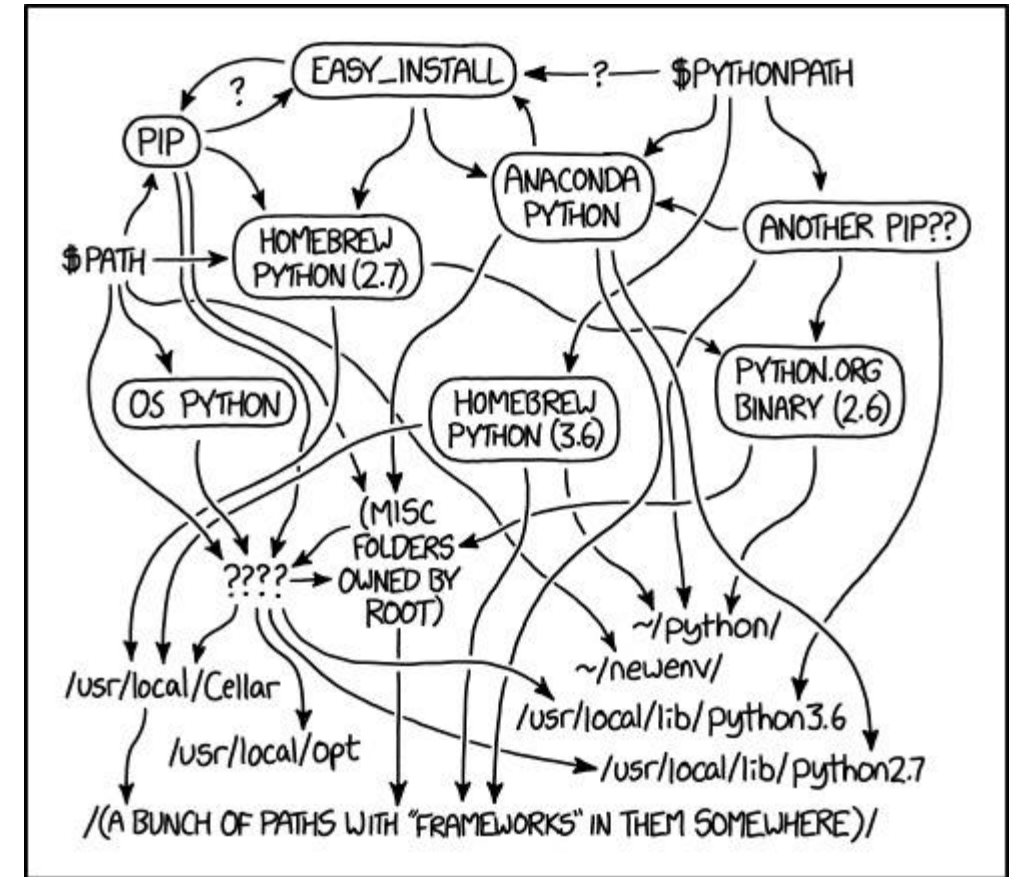
C:/Users/alexey.larionov/my\_project/venv/...

```
> python -m venv venv
> venv/Scripts/activate
(venv)> pip install ...
(venv)> ...
(venv)> venv/Scripts/deactivate
> ...
```

Not recommended during this course  
unless you already know what you are doing

# Python environments

- Using environments allows avoiding conflicts between Python packages
- It's **NOT** recommended to install bioinformatics packages into global (system) environments !!!
- A good practice is to create a separate environment for each bioinformatics project



MY PYTHON ENVIRONMENT HAS BECOME SO DEGRADED THAT MY LAPTOP HAS BEEN DECLARED A SUPERFUND SITE.\*

\* Superfund sites are “polluted locations requiring a long-term response to clean up hazardous materials” (Wikipedia)

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<https://www.python.org/doc/>



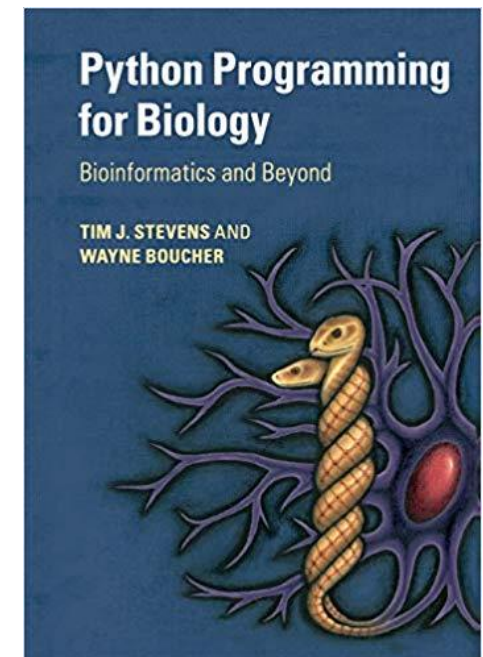
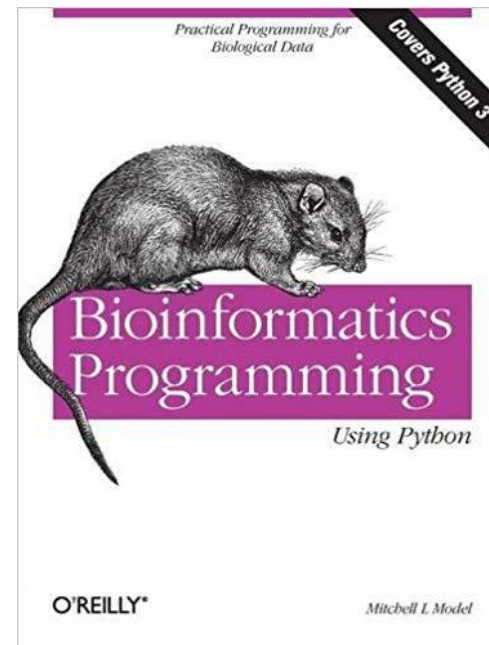
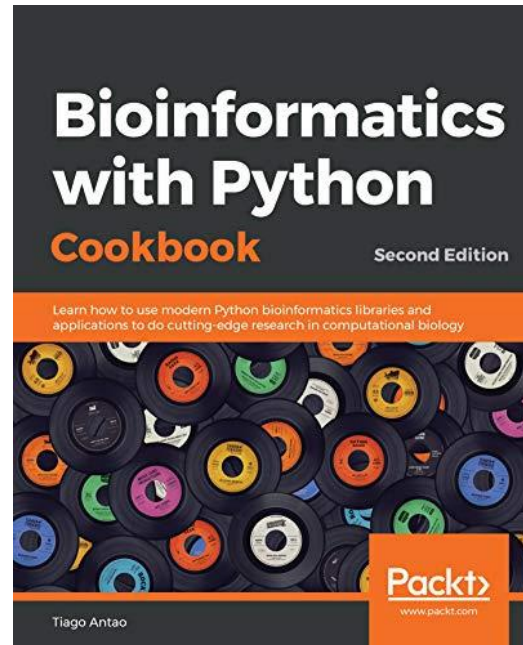
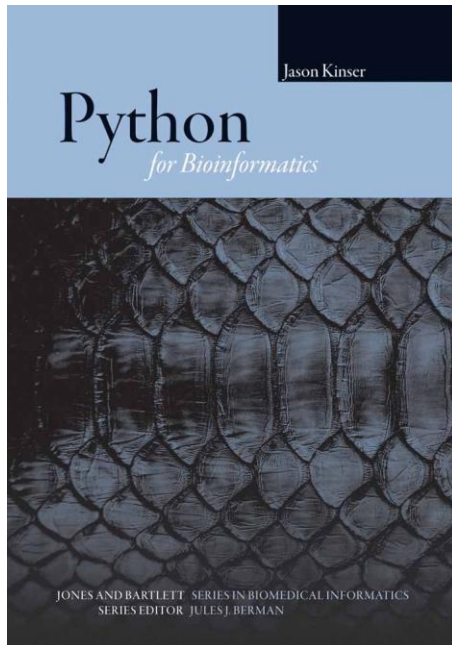
<https://wiki.python.org/moin/BeginnersGuide>

<https://realpython.com>

<https://realpython.com/python-beginner-tips>



## Some books (see more in the Reading List)



Many other resources on the Internet ...

e.g. LinkedIn-Learning course “Python Essential Training”

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/python-essential-training-18764650>

(set of video lectures and tasks, available through Cranfield LinkedIn)



**Questions**