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Thursday, May 14, 2026, 13:15 pm

Aula, Collegium Heliodori Świącicki,
Grunwaldzka 6

A HANDS-ON INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTATIONAL METHODS FOR WORKING WITH LANGUAGE DISTANCES

workshop

Abstract: In linguistics as well as in several other disciplines where languages have a role to play, such as economics or genetics, it is of great utility to be able to operate with some measure of distance (difference) between languages (or language varieties). For instance, Holman et al. (2008) show how lexical-phonological distances meaningfully translate into years of separation of languages, not unlike what was assumed by the glottochronological method; Wichmann et al. (2010) show that the same measure, called LDND, is also useful for classifying languages; and Wichmann (2017) showed how it can be employed for developing a distinction between languages and dialects. In this workshop I will show the audience how to work with language distances

using available software developed within the ASJP project (Automated Similarity Judgment Program). Participants are strongly encouraged to download software by Holman for calculating distance matrices and dates posted at <https://asjp.cld.org/software> as well as all the files by Wichmann at <https://github.com/Sokiwi/InteractiveASJP02>. In order to run the latter, you also need R, which can be downloaded from <https://www.r-project.org/>. RStudio (<https://posit.co/downloads>) is also useful, although not necessary. If you are not able to bring a laptop with these things installed, then just bring curiosity!



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