Scope

The final project is intended to be a limited investigation in an area of your choice that is related to the course. The purpose of the project is to enable you to study an area of your interest in greater detail. The project can take on many forms, including but not limited to,

- Projects that explore the application of course related techniques to a "real-world" problem.
- Projects that involve a theoretical or empirical study of models and techniques related to the course.
- Projects that do an experimental, comparative study of methods.
- Projects, that extend methods and models presented in class.
- etc.

Structure

The deliverables of the final project consist of three parts.

- Project proposal (due on 10/13). The project proposal is intended to get you thinking on what you will be doing and when. It should contain a short (tentative) description of the questions that you will address, what are the basic steps towards answering the questions, and a timeline of when you expect things to be done. The proposal should show that you have thought carefully about your project and should contain a list of resources that will help you achieve the goals (e.g. books, datasets, references to related works).
- Project presentation (last week of class). A short talk that presents the results of your project in class.
- Project report (due on 12/9). The report should summarize the questions you have addressed, the conclusions that you have reached, and the arguments that support your conclusions (e.g. experiments you conducted, arguments from the literature, proofs, etc.). It should also connect to relevant literature that will typically go beyond the particular papers we talked about in class. In short, the report should roughly look like a research paper...

Evaluation

The projects will be graded in the same spirit as research papers are assessed (though I don't expect you to do original work at the same level.) Here is a list of things that we will be looking for:

1. Originality
2. Relevance to course
3. Quality of arguments (are claims supported, how convincing are the arguments you bring forward)
4. Connection to related work
5. Clarity (how clearly are goals and achievements presented)
6. Scope/Size (how "big" are the questions you are addressing)
7. Significance (are the questions you are asking interesting)

Feel free to talk to me about the your project so that we can make sure that you are on the right track. Don't forget to have fun while doing it; its meant to be something that you are interested in doing!