

**CMSC-327**  
**Machine Learning**  
**Final Project Guidelines**

## **Introduction**

This document provides information on the final project. It lists some datasets and possible directions to explore when formulating a problem statement for your project.

## **How to Start**

1. **Form a project group:** Maximum number of members-3. If you prefer to work individually, you may do so. However, the minimum project requirement will be the same as the other teams.
2. **Approach 1-** You can adapt an idea from an existing paper and re-run the experiments using the stated algorithm(s) or your own choice of algorithm(s). You should check if the dataset used in the paper is publicly available. [This](#) link may help you explore datasets with cited papers. You can also choose one of the papers discussed in the class for this (if the data is publicly available).
3. **Approach 2-** Use the options below to explore various datasets. Based on your interest, choose the dataset, visualize/understand it and decide on the problem you want to explore.

## **Datasets**

Here are some datasets that you could use for the project.

1. <https://data.gov/>
2. [OpenML](#)
3. [Kaggle](#)
4. [UC Irvine Machine Learning Repository](#)
5. [TensorFlow Datasets](#)
6. [Wikipedia's List](#)
7. Political Science Dataset (shared by Dr. Sandra F. Joireman, Global Studies Program, and Dr. Mmachi Obiorah, Department of Computer Science). Please reach out to me if you are interested in reviewing this dataset.

You may also choose some other publicly available dataset if you prefer.

## Project Timeline

Task	Due on	Description	Deliverable
Project proposal	October 16, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On a high level, describe the overall plan (goal, plan, etc.).</li> <li>An assignment link will be created on Blackboard Learn, and a template will be shared for the proposal.</li> </ul>	Proposal document Referred paper (if using approach 1).
Project progress	November 21, 2025 (tentative).	I will discuss the progress with each team.	
Project Files Submission	December 05, 2025	All members are required to submit the code files.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Well-documented Jupyter Notebook project files (code)</li> <li>➤ Team Evaluation Form</li> </ul>
Final project presentation	December 15, 2025 2-5 PM, Jepson-G06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each team will present the findings to the class.</li> <li>A template will be shared for the presentation and report.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Presentation slides</li> <li>➤ A project report (template shared).</li> </ul>

1. All submissions should be made individually by all team members.
2. Please note that the final presentation should be based on the files submitted by the deadline—December 5, 2025. No further changes should be made to the project code/results after the deadline has passed.

3. If you start working on the deliverables on time, they will be feasible within the given timeline. NO project extensions will be provided. As stated in the course syllabus, a two-day late submission policy will be in effect.

## Minimum Requirement

While you can include several tasks in your analysis, the project MUST include the following-

1. If using approach 1- Replicate the experiments used in the paper. If you are replacing an algorithm with another one, that's fine. The overall direction should be similar to what was discussed in the paper. Once your proposal is ready, I will evaluate if it meets the project requirements.
2. If using approach 2-
  - a. Data cleaning: The dataset should include substantial cleaning and preprocessing efforts. Often, some websites have already preprocessed datasets. Please do not use them for our class project.
  - b. Data visualization
  - c. Feature extraction
  - d. Dimensionality reduction (if applicable)
  - e. Correlations
  - f. Supervised learning
  - g. Unsupervised learning

Steps e, f, and g may vary depending on the dataset being used.

Ultimately, the project proposal will decide if the planned approach meets the project requirements.

## IMPORTANT

### Project Authenticity and Use of AI Tools

The project must be original and demonstrate both collaborative and individual contributions. While it is acceptable to use generative AI tools to look up specific machine learning/visualization functions or clarify technical concepts, the overall project should not be created or generated by such tools. The primary objective is to apply the conceptual knowledge gained in the classroom to a hands-on implementation, showcasing genuine understanding and effort.

## **Grading Rubric**

<b>Project proposal</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Presentation</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Report&amp; code</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Analysis and quality of work</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Going above and beyond</b>	<b>20% (BONUS)</b>

The bonus section is for exceptional work and will be assessed based on factors such as the idea, conceptualization, and notable findings. If using approach 1, you can build on the authors' existing work.

## **Grading**

---

Equal project grades will be assigned to all team members if the work is distributed equally. Otherwise, the scores will be assigned based on each member's responsibility for the project. Please be honest in your team evaluation form about the individual contributions (yourself and members).

The final grade will be determined by the components listed in the grading rubric above.

## **Final Project Report**

---

1. A project template is shared in the folder for the final report.
2. The final report should be detailed and explained in depth.
3. The minimum page requirement is 3.
4. Similar to our class labs, the report should contain visualizations for data preprocessing and results (if applicable).
5. Present your results in a table and explain them.

## **Final Presentation Guidelines**

---

1. Each team will get 20 minutes (presentation) + 5 minutes (for Q&A).
2. Please include the following in your presentation:
  - a. Project title with team member names
  - b. Goal
  - c. Introduction
  - d. Motivation
  - e. Approach
  - f. Dataset and Features Used

- g. Data Visualization
- h. **Methodology** — Include the technical details of the machine learning algorithm and any analysis scenarios (if applicable).

Analysis scenarios should explain how you structured your analysis and considered different subsets or conditions within your domain.

For example, in an ADHD monitoring study, you might compare classification results using only daytime data versus a full 24-hour window. Similarly, if your dataset spans multiple countries or genres, you could design experiments that analyze each subset individually.

- i. Results
- j. Learnings and Challenges (include your challenges and significant learnings while working on this project).
- k. Future Directions
- l. Conclusion
- m. Q&A