

Instructions For Project Proposals

CSC 720, Artificial Intelligence II, Spring 2021

Purpose

The primary purpose of a proposal is to give the instructor enough information to distinguish between the following three cases (see Goldilocks, Bear, Bear & Bear, 1837).

- Projects that are too ambitious for a term project. These might be fine for a dissertation or a lifetime, but this is a one-semester course.
- Projects that are too uninformative for a term project. These will waste your time.
- Projects that are neither too big or too small. These are just right.

The secondary purpose is to help the instructor offer suggestions on relevant ideas or works in the literature.

Grading

Proposals are graded on their informativeness, not on their content. Regardless of whether the proposal idea is good or bad, if the instructor cannot tell which of the preceding three categories includes the proposed project, the proposal has *failed*. If it provides enough information to identify the category, the proposal has *succeeded*.

Only one reading

Do not ask the instructor to read a draft of a proposal or to listen to an oral summary. That defeats the purpose of the assignment. The purpose of the proposal is to give the instructor enough information to make a judgement on suitability and a basis for suggestions. Thus:

- The grade on the proposal assignment will be based on the first proposal document provided to the instructor.
- Oral summaries will always be graded as failures, as the instruction is for a written proposal. Continued queries about proposal ideas suggest that the student is attempting to get the instructor to write the proposal incrementally. In this assignment, the student is expected to do the thinking needed to identify and describe the project.

That said, the instructor is happy to continue to discuss project ideas following submission of the proposal, and is happy to discuss project progress throughout the semester. The initial effort of thinking and writing, however, falls on the student alone.

Submission

Before the deadline indicated in the syllabus, submit a PDF file describing the intended topic in a written proposal of one to two pages.