Released: Wednesday, April 15 2009. **Due:** Wednesday, April 29 2009, 7:00pm.

Final Project Proposal

You are to write a 1–2 page proposal about what you plan to do for your final project, and we **must approve** your topic. The deadline is rolling—you can submit[1] drafts anytime before **April 29, at 7:00pm** and we will try to provide you with timely and useful feedback. Your proposals should include a clear and concise description of the problem, what you aim to do (research, programming, experimentation, etc), and the names of the people involved.

- You can discuss project ideas with the TAs through email or during office hours (we will post them). It is helpful if you can come up with a several project ideas you are interested in, rather than a single topic.
- Group work is allowed, but the project's size and scope should reflect the number of people in the group. Groups must include a section that describes the contributions of each member.
- Programming / constructive projects are encouraged. Such projects should be accompanied by a 5–8 page write-up.
- If your project is entirely written, it should be 15 pages in length, 1–1.5x spaced with proper margins and citations.
- The proposal is worth 5% of your final grade and the final project is worth 40%—get started early, and if you need help, meet with the TAs!
- The final project is due the last day of class, **Thursday, May 14th.**

Some good types of projects:

- An implementation of an architectural process from the *Emotion Machine*.
- Investigating the strengths and weaknesses of a particular knowledge representation.
- Simulating a particular architectural component from the *Emotion Machine/Society of Mind* in a particular problem setting.
- A thorough investigation relating a sub-field of AI with some architectural ideas from the *Emotion Machine*.
- A conversational agent that uses and learns commonsense knowledge to filter "obvious" statements.
- An application that uses or extends the OpenMind corpus, or another knowledge acquisition project.

Some tips:

- Articulate your problem. First you need to understand *what* your problem is before you can move it in any direction.
- If you are thinking too abstractly, try turning to a concrete example to ground your ideas in.

[1] Send an email to Bo, Dustin and Prof. Minsky. The email 6868.tas@gmail.com reaches us all.

- If you are still confused, narrow your focus. Make sure you understand the level of description that you are working on. Try to understand how it connects to both more abstract and more specific levels of descriptions. (Ask us for pointers. If you are doing something specific, it's likely a research field exists for this problem and we can help you discover pointers.)
- When brainstorming, enumerate your ideas as a list. Don't settle on your first good idea, keep pushing yourself for alternative explanations and counter examples.
- Avoid using suitcase words (*e.g.*, consciousness, attention, feelings, thinking) or excessively vague words (*e.g.*, good, true, perception, complex, dynamic). Instead, use more concrete computational concepts to communicate your point.
- Get started early! If it helps, set imaginary deadlines.