I suggest that you spend the first three days thinking about the project and choosing a game. That will leave four weeks. The project is due the night of Sunday, November 3, by 11:59 PM. Barring extreme circumstances, *there will be no extensions*. The late penalty will be 1.5 points per day rounded up (and that can add up fast).

Week #1:

* Implement your data structures and your legal moves function. (This is much harder for Checkers than for Othello.) Efficiency matters more than elegance here!
* Create and test a function to display the board.
* Provide yourself a convenient way to specify any board position and whose turn it is, and test the legal move function thoroughly (especially for Checkers).

Week #2:

* Implement a function to apply a move to a position.
* Create an ASCII interface and enable your program to play a complete game:
  + Allow the user to select who makes the first move.
  + On each of the computer's moves, choose between all moves randomly (or choose the move that maximizes a very simple heuristic).
  + On each of the players' move, give the option of listing all the legal moves (or list them automatically) and verify that the player selects a legal move.
  + Display the board after every move and check to see if the game is over.
  + Provide an option for the computer to play against itself.

Week #3:

* Implement the alpha-beta search and iterative deepening (this is difficult for both projects):
  + If you implement a single recursive function, make sure you are handling the alpha and beta parameters correctly (especially if the perspective changes, as in negamax).
  + Make sure your program is handling the time limit correctly.
  + Provide yourself the option of producing an ASCII representation of the searched portion of the game space; this can be very useful for debugging.
* Implement a semi-simple heuristic and test your program thoroughly from various starting positions.

Week #4:

* Experiment with your heuristic function and discover one that makes your program play great! (This is somewhat harder for Othello than for Checkers.)
* Remember that the heuristic function should be efficient.
* If you organized your program well, you should be able to make it play itself using various heuristics against each other to see which ones perform the better than others.
* Reread the project requirements carefully and make sure you are not forgetting anything.

Feel free to read up on the game of your choice (in fact, I strongly advise it). For those of you implementing Checkers, I find that Jim Loy's Checkers website is helpful. It is also possible to play Chinook on-line! For Othello, I find that Gunnar Andersson's Othello website is helpful, and I recommend downloading his free Othello program called Zebra. You can also play both games against other humans at Yahoo games (Othello is known as Reversi there).