Comments on papers:

Generally the papers were good. There are specific comments on your papers – which you will get back on Wednesday. Here is a random list of comments about ALL of the papers (not just yours specifically):

Use your references. You aren’t creating a bibliography of related articles, but a list of papers YOU REFER TO. (See the cite http://www.cs.usu.edu/~allanv/cs6890/writingArticle.html for more information about writing style). How you use references is VERY important.

Be careful about taking too much space describing preliminary material. I know there is a desire to “fill up” the pages, but the MAIN goal is to build a strong case for your research given the pages you have. Don’t be so concerned about filling up the pages that you don’t fill them up WELL! Develop the main idea. Gloss over (or omit) non-essential items.

Be specific. Don’t say, “I’ll examine XYZ”. It sounds weak and unconvincing. Say, “I have shown that when I combine X and Y using the new algorithm, results are superior to either X or Y alone.”

Use formal writing. Avoid contractions. Avoid beginning a sentence with BUT or AND. Avoid using “etc” as it doesn’t add anything to the writing. Similarly “very” is an empty word, usually.

Don’t be afraid to use the writing center to help with grammar and punctuation. Some of you use capitals strangely or have problems with commas or awkward sentence constructs.

I have now provided a format for you to use (see the webpage) – so that eight pages is the same for all people. In a fixed format, you can’t just make the margins wider to make it look like you have more material. Watch the focus of your report. If your topic spans multiple foci, make sure you emphasize the game theory part!

Rely HEAVILY on the research of others. It just isn’t convincing to say you are going to develop something wonderful from scratch. It is MUCH more convincing to say how you can make improvements to other known techniques. Some of you still haven’t found the edge between the known and the unknown.

Be confident. Don’t say, “I’ll somehow find a way to improve the current techniques.” It is not convincing. Say, “We have discovered a superior way to achieve xxx.”

It is okay to invent a term. It may be easier than restating your idea each time.

A classic way of doing research is to “tweak” the presumptions of a standard technique. I think this is an “easy” way to do research. You’ve seen that in class material – assume the decisions are made sequentially, assume you don’t know what node you are at, assume nature makes a decision you can’t control, assume you don’t know the payoffs (but only know a probability). Look at the assumptions current research makes and see if you can solve the problem better for a class of problems that have different assumptions.