Thesis Research Design notes: Part I Questions

1. Which candidate is MORE NEGATIVE?
   1. Importance: the level of negativity in campaigns is important for several reasons. On one hand there are theorists like Iyengar that believe there are demobilizing effects to negativity. Other scholars like Greer in *“Defense of Negativity”* point out that negative ads are more information rich and inform voters better. Good or bad, knowing the amount of negativity and by which candidate is helpful to understanding the election
   2. Operationalization: determining if something is negative and to what degree is essential to this project. Thankfully there is a litany of sources (Jamieson et al.) that give a guideline to how to interpret media for negativity. This project will utilize past work to categorize multimedia from SNS into the three categories of: negative, comparison and positive advertisements.
      1. There is the option of using Naïve Bayes Algorithm and Support vector machine Modeling (SVM) to classify sentiment
      2. Additional option is to set up code guidelines and utilize students to code. Testing for inter coder reliability is a must and thus instructions must be incredibly clear
      3. Consider negativity in ***Frequency*** IE which candidate was negative more often
   3. Data: using Application Program Interface (API) a set of routines will be set up to collect bulk data directly from twitter. Not only will all tweets from both Trump and Hillary be accessible, but also all likes, retweets, location, times of activity, and all users that share content will be accessible through tools provided by twitter (python and tweepy are separate downloads needed to execute after gaining dev access).
2. How receptive are people to NEGATIVITY?
   1. Importance: a key contention noted previously is that between thinkers like Iyengar and Greer. The general public also resoundingly agrees with the view that negative ads are bad, or at least annoying. Therefore, it will be helpful to understand how the differences of SNS compared to traditional media outlets facilitate transmission of negative political commentary. Are people more accepting in this medium? Less? Conditionally more critical or accepting?
   2. Operationalization: sharing content is very traceable in both sources used. By examining the rate of retweets for negative content, as well as shares for facebook, show the amount of people who actively participate spreading negative advertising. This is hard to compare to traditional media, because there isn’t any mechanism to so quickly share content. However, obtaining enough insight from the data can help illuminate the differences between SNS and traditional media.
   3. Data: all information will be gained through twitter API and facebook active tracking. Procedures will be completed daily to track if viewership or sharing is affected by negativity.
3. When are candidates MOST NEGATIVE?
   1. Importance: Negativity is a strategy on campaigns and a great deal of literature supports the idea it is used selectively and at certain times. By investigating specifically when candidates utilize this strategy (to shore up polls before an important deadline, to mitigate a bad debate or solidify a good performance), we can gain more insight into how new media is used to accomplish campaign goals.
   2. Operationalization: While posts can be clearly traced to a specific time, tracing out or even speculating if negativity was used in response or in anticipating to an event is perilous at best. To make the “when of negativity” into a variable, literature will be examined to classify conditions when going negative is traditionally expected. Then data in said time frame can be analyzed to data outside the time frame to established clustered patterns. If said clusters (in strategic times versus outside of) show changes, then it can be postulated that at the very least, negativity is employed dynamically.
   3. Data: again API and facebook active tracking will be used. However, to designate strategic times to use negativity, a calendar of events will be used in conjunction with combined polling. These together will indicate expected times that the campaigns will go negative.