Key points:

1. Russell Conjugation in Prof. Argamon’s words: Bertrand Russell first expounded this concept in 1948. This concept is behind the game that people generally play: I am firm, You are obstinate, He is a pig-headed. So here we are conjugating the word stubborn. In this game, I can use different words that can roughly mean the same thing denotatively but have very different emotive connotations. And if you look at news, you can very often see, especially if you are on the other side of the issue, from the way that they are writing it that they use these and introduce subtle bias, usually – intentionally/or unintentionally. So the question is, how do you improve people’s reading of the news, or debias news? So there is a great research problem here… we can we identify cluster of words which are these alternations, by doing some corpus analysis or stuff like that. Then further, build it into browser plugin, so that when you read a news story, so that when you press a button you get a different random assortment ( it randomly changes the word appropriately), so that it makes the bias visible. And there can be some really cool psych research to see how does it affect people’s perception of the individuals in the stories. The larger problem is framing and this a small piece of framing. A part of the approach will be determining the cognitive values of adjectives and then determining which adjective is substitutable for which.
2. Data collection (dataset development) should be kept separate from algorithm development so that no bias gets introduced to the data.
3. We want to have phrases in our dataset so that we have the possibility in the future to extend our method to those phrases. When we start looking at phrases, we will notice that from the structural standpoint it would be complicated in more than one way. So while creating dataset, we wont go out of way to look for phrases, but if we come across them easily, lets include them in for the future. One of the deliverables of the project is the dataset. So creating the best possible dataset is also a goal.
4. We need to fix a format that we need to work with, for example: Adjective-noun / Verb-noun. In this project we would be looking at adjectives, verbs and noun. If we find pair of Russell conjugates where one is an adjective and the other is a verb, enter these examples as it is in the example file, but convert both to either adjective or verb when entering into the dataset.
5. “Labelling discourse and aspect of nominal group lexical choice” in the reference section of the paper by Richard Alexander on Russell conjugation can be an interesting read. Another one: “Beyond hypocrisy decoding news in the age of propaganda”. Our over-arching goal is aligned with that title atleast.
6. Online centralized repository for the project – github.
7. Prof. Argamon spoke to his colleague if he knew any work being done on Russell Conjugation. He did not. He said he could get back to Prof. Argamon with some material that could be useful to us around emotive words in general, which is only a part of Russell conjugation project.
8. He suggested to look at how different news networks cover the same story. For example, MSNBC vs Fox news. How different are they in describing the same people and situations. This will not only help with identifying current Russell Conjugtions, but also highlight why the research work on Russell Conjugation is important.
9. Faculty members in Northwestern University have a company that writes new stories automatically from data. They might know about this (Russell Conjugations), though we do not want to tell them what we are doing at this time. Prof. Argamon to send me a mail with some language to use in the email that I should send to those faculty members, along with their IDs. If there is any computational work being done on Russell Conjugation, they might know about it. They may or may not respond. We’ll be asking them that what can they say about the use or analysis of emotional language in news. That’s sort of the topic but we are more specific than that. This is strategizing but we want to be the first people out there with this idea. But at the same time we should know what’s out there so that we do not re-invent the wheel. A way of asking them would be “ Looking for uses of emotive lexicons in understanding news”
10. Look at ACL (Association of Computational Linguistics) for last few years and look through the paper titles or anything that’s even slightly related.
11. Next meeting with Prof. Argamon on Thursday, 24th Jan 2019, 10:30 am.

Things to do:

1. Create Github project and add Prof. Argamon to it.
2. Put dataset, papers, another file for just examples, examples linked to news stories. These examples will help us talk to people and also get our data out after analysis.
3. Start collecting examples of emotive conjugations by reading news.
4. Look through ACL papers to see any work related to ours.
5. Go through work on word sense disambiguation on google scholar, ACL and arxiv.org
6. Go through papers/work on polarized news
7. Go through papers/work on emotive language
8. Go through papers/work on word embeddings.