**Honors Thesis Project Summary**

**Name**: *Leanne Kendall*

**Final Thesis Title**:*Twitter’s Role in an Increasing Polarized Political Climate: A Look into the 2020 US Elections*

**Shortened Title**:*Twitter’s Role in an Increasing Polarized Political Climate*

**Faculty Advisor**:*Dr. Suhong Li*

**Editorial Reviewer**:*Dr. Ramesh Mohan*

**Type of Thesis**: *Exploratory Research*

**Research Question/Hypotheses**:

*Amidst politically strained times, one might wonder what has cause such an exaggerated gap between the views of democrats and republicans. For years, research has suggested the US’s voting population is becoming increasingly politically polarized, with one of the causes being social media. We hope to understand more about the role that social media plays in the polarization of parties in the US.*

**Methodology**:

*We will analyze over 32,000,000 tweets from 9/22/2020 through 11/10/2020 that mention or are written by senate and presidential candidates. We will use natural language processing, network graphing, and topic modelling to draw conclusions about the polarity in the 2020 election.*

**Results and Conclusion**:

*Based on the analysis, there are two distinct “echo chambers”—one republican and one democrat – that are very rarely interacting with one another. There are also spikes in sentiment around election day, suggesting polarity increases close to this day. Finally, popular negative topics gain rapid traction on twitter compared to more neutral topics, showing their infectious nature.*

**Contribution**:

*These findings will contribute to the existing body of research surrounding the effect that social media has on the polarization of parties in the US.*