This project took me on three different paths, but I am extremely proud of my final product. When first starting on the visual argument unit, I initially developed a poster for a vaccine campaign. I was hoping to influence people to get their Flu shot this Fall. In my first draft, I created a calendar with a red circle and a needle on that date, signifying that you had an appointment to get your Flu vaccine. When working with this idea, I felt like there wasn’t enough room for me to fully show my digital media and photo editing skills with this project. Because of this, I then decided to change paths with this project.

My next idea for this project was to create a flyer for an organization which I am a part of called, Pitt Pathfinders. I started to get excited about this because it was something which I was very familiar with so I felt like I could really excel with. I created a flyer with photographs of current Pathfinders and quotes about why they were a Pathfinder. I was proud of this creation, but then upon discussing with the class, I realized that I could push my skills even further. With that, I decided to move in a different direction which would give me more creative freedom to use many photo editing skills.

With that, my final project is on women’s health access and abortion rights. I chose this project because it was something which I was very passionate about, and I felt like I could really get creative with the design. My main goal was to layer many different pieces of media about this topic, and to represent all of the people who have been a part of this movement. With that in mind, my project has many different photographs of civilians standing up for this right to healthcare and abortion access. My goal was to not highlight any individual picture, but rather merge and layer them all to show one unified front. I imported many different photos from Flickr.com and transformed them. I cropped and layered the photographs on top of each other to make a full montage page. For this process I used the software Canva, because I felt like I had the most experience and control with this software. On one project I imported, layered, cropped, and rotated images to create this collage. Next, I saved this project as one image, to merge them all into one. Then, I imported this unified image into a new project. Here, I worked to turn this from a normal colorful collage, into a background. I increased the transparency of this collage, and decreased the saturation and brightness. Instead of editing this image to become “black and white” I instead used tools to decrease the saturation and remove all of the colors. By doing this instead, I found that my result was more muted and created a background which I was hoping to use as my next canvas. In regards to visual dominance, my goal was for no one picture to take over the viewers eye, but rather for them all work together to show the message of people being angry and protesting for the right to abortion access.

Now, I had one full background piece which I could then work to add dimension back in to. I hoped to add another element of visual rhetoric which we had discussed in class, the element of positive and negative space. I took some time to play with what might be the most powerful use of negative space in this piece. I first created positive space by creating the shape of a woman’s ovaries in all white in the middle of the page. This looked as if it was cut out from the photo collage background as the negative space, to show the uterus in the positive space. However, after further working with this design I felt like it didn’t fully encapsulate the message which I was conveying with the protesting and campaigning pictures in the background. Instead, I wanted the positive space to relate more to the call of action which was portrayed in the images I selected. With that, I incorporated positive space in the shape of a megaphone. I felt like this was the perfect way to connect with the background, negative space, images of people protesting for women’s rights. The images I chose to layer were all of people outside advocating for women’s health, rather than medical images in healthcare settings. With that, I felt like the choice of a megaphone was representative of the girls in these photographs.

Furthermore, at this point I was able to layer my photographs, mute them for decreased visual dominance, and then create this megaphone through positive and negative space. Now, I wanted to incorporate the use of text, color, and scale, to really send a message. I added the text “CAN YOU HEAR US NOW?” to the piece. I specifically used this language, because I felt like it was extremely representative of the lobbying images which I chose, as well as the megaphone in the positive space, and that it truly wrapped it up together. In a previous draft, when I had created the positive space with a uterus, I added the text “MY BODY MY CHOICE.” While this was a nice poster, I felt like it was too familiar, something which we have seen so many times. Instead, I really enjoyed how I focused on a citizen's right to lobby and freedom of speech, being an aspect in this women’s movement. In regard to visual rhetoric with the text, I chose the color pink to stand out to viewers against a muted background. I also chose the color pink because many of the photos which I originally used had aspects of pink in them, and it is a color typically used to signify feminism. Additionally, I selected this font because of the way it appears to look like paint or graffiti. With this font, I wanted to mimic a poster which would be held at a women’s health rally, as seen in many of the photos chosen. I also increased the scale of the text so that it takes up the entire page, truly looking like a mock poster. Lastly with the text, I increased the intensity of the text, which added a shadow to the letters. This was able to create an illusion where the words seem to look above the background, like a shadow. This intensity effect added a lot of dimension to my piece which I felt was a key component of bringing it all together.

Overall, I am extremely proud of this piece. I am most proud of the work and behind the scenes trials that it took me to get to this final draft. With this assignment, I did not settle for mediocre, but I continued to push myself until it was perfect - I pushed myself creatively and also technically, playing with digital editing which I had never used before. I hope this final product is indicative of my passion for this topic and the details which went in to creating the visual argument.