Team: Malicious Machines (Emily Hamedian + The Ghost of Christmas Past)

Project: Trying to explore the feasibility of machine generated political ads and if such advertisements can be used to influence the public consciousness.

Readings:

Zhang, Yizhe, et al. "Adversarial feature matching for text generation." *Proceedings of the 34th International Conference on Machine Learning-Volume 70.* **JMLR. org, 2017.**
Paper link: https://arxiv.org/pdf/1706.03850.pdf

Zhang, Han, et al. "Stackgan: Text to photo-realistic image synthesis with stacked generative adversarial networks." Proceedings of the IEEE International Conference on Computer Vision. 2017
Paper link: http://openaccess.thecvf.com/content_ICCV_2017/papers/Zhang_StackGAN_Text_to_ICCV_2017_paper.pdf

"Appealing to Hopes and Fears" *Campaigning for Hearts and Minds: How Emotional Appeals in Political Ads Work***, by Ted Brader, University of Chicago Press, 2008, pp. 1–16.**
Scanned book pages: https://imgur.com/a/1Chyd46
Note: Some of the video screenshots in figures 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 have been removed for copyright reasons, but you can still search for the videos themselves on the internet and on YouTube!

Discussion Questions:

- In *Adversarial feature matching for text generation*, Zhang, Yizhe, et al. state one of textGAN's limitations is flawed semantics in longer sentences (and that their discriminator can still tell the difference between the real/synthetic sentences). Could a flawed text generation model still "pass" as human in the right conditions though? What are some of those conditions, if any?

- In *Campaigning for Hearts and Minds*, Brader focuses mostly on television-based political ads. Do you think his arguments can also apply to modern day social media ads, such as on Facebook or Twitter? Has there ever been a time that campaign or policy ads have ever left an impression on you? If so, how?

- Could StackGANs as described in Zhang, Han, et al's paper be used to synthetically create some of the imagery described in Brader's book? Why or why not? What are some of the ramifications of artificially created content when people don't know it's artificially created?