This is a six-page double spaced assignment to help you explore the ideas of persuasion and the internet as well as the 2016 presidential election.  You don't need an essay (you can just outline your answer) but your outline should answer the following questions about language and the internet in politics. Your paper should accomplish the following tasks.

**A. You should first go to both of the following two sites and write 1.5 pages on each site:**

<https://www.hillaryclinton.com/>

<https://www.donaldjtrump.com/>

1. Tell me if you encountered any difficulties in logging on to either site.  Did you have to log on through Facebook or some similar approach?  Was there an attempt to make you donate?  Did you find that distasteful?

2. Summarize each site.  What is its purpose/goal?  Who is its audience?  (Be very specific--men, women, blacks, whites, younger people, older people, etc.) What information, graphics, and links does it provide (be sure to pay special attention to the video elements and not just the words)?  What relevant information about the campaign is included?  Does it present a variety of viewpoints?

3. Analyze each site's means of persuasion.  Pick ONE ISSUE in particular to analyze (try to research immigration reform OR jobs and the economy). Does the site make appeals to logic, to emotion, to ethics and values, to authorities on the subject?  What techniques does it use to attempt to persuade?  When covering the latter, be sure to cover the videos in depth--what type of people do you see in these videos? What is the tone of the video (upbeat, boring, etc.)?

4.Note whether or not the site is targeting swing states (states which could go either to the Democrats or the Republicans) in this 2016 election. How is it doing this?  Look for subtle persuasion.  What information are you provided on primaries/caucuses?

5. Discuss whether or not the site is convincing, fair and trustworthy based on your summary and analysis. If you critique the site, discuss how the site might defend itself, and refute this defense.

**B. Then go to two related blogs OR one blog and one web sites (one which favors the Democrats one which favors the Republicans). Make sure one is on the liberal side and one is on the conservative side. It is fine to go to other candidates' blogs or to party web sites.  Both blogs should be discussing a policy issue--hopefully a policy which was mentioned at the web site.  Make sure at least one blog is an EXTERNAL blog--not ones at the two sites listed above. [A blog is short for web log and these are public web sites, which are similar to discussions which we have in the forums.]**

You should write one  page for each blog/web site (**for a total of two pages)** considering the following questions:

1.  Does the related site/blog introduce practical or realistic ideas which the  President could enact?  Why or why not?  In what ways?  Be sure to explain what you mean by practical or realistic.

2.  Analyze each site's/blog's means of persuasion--is it similar to the initial web site's means of persuasion?

3.  Regarding an opinion on the site/blog, suggest at least one counter argument. This may best be done by participating in the blog.  If you do so, let us know your post (word for word) and some of the more revealing responses. If  you don't participate, just let us know what your view is on the theme of the blog and why.

C. Write a final paragraph about the way in which this assignment has impacted your voting preferences for 2016.  If there is no change, tell us why, and if there is a change tell us why.  In other words, which elements of which sites/blogs were most persuasive to you and why? If your preferences have not changed at all, tell us if you learned anything in particular from this assignment.  If not, why not?

Also, let me know if it is okay if I share portions of your paper with the full class.

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Below are some ideas and definitions to help you understand selection, slanted, and charged language.  This section is taken from Norman P. Birk and Genevieve B. Birk "Selection, Slanting, and Charged Language" in A Writer's Reference: "Assessing Web Sources" (314-316)

Slanting can be achieved by not only selection of facts but by favorable or unfavorable slanting such as the following, which are examples taken from Birk.

Favorable slanting                          Less Favorable Slanting

He is awkward and strong.             He is strong and awkward.

He is awkward but strong.             He is strong but awkward.

Although he is somewhat awkward,     He may be strong, but

he is very strong.                                he's very awkward.

"Of course communications vary in the amount of charge they carry and in their effect on different people; what is favorably charged for one person may have little or no charge, or may even be adversely charged, for others.  It is sometimes hard to distinguish between charged and uncharged expression.  But it is safe to say that when ever we wish to convey any inner knowledge-feelings, attitudes, judgments, values-we are obliged to convey that attitudinal meaning through the medium of charged language; and when we wish to understand the inside knowledge of others, we have to interpret the charged language that they choose, or are obliged to use.  Charged language, then, is the natural and necessary medium for the communication of charged or attitudinal meaning.  At time we have difficulty living with it, but we should have even greater difficulty in living without it.

Some of the difficulties in living with charged language are caused by its use in dishonest propaganda, in some editorials, in many political speeches, in most advertising, in certain kinds of effusive salesmanship, and in blatantly insincere, or exaggerated, or sentimental expressions of emotion. . . But however charged language is abused and whatever misunderstandings it may cause, we still have to live with it--and even by it.  It shapes our attitudes and values even without our conscious knowledge; it give purpose to, and guides, our actions; through it we establish and maintain relations with other people and by  means of it we exert our greatest influence on them."

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Below are a few blogs on the left and a great link to both blogs and web sites on the right of the political spectrum, which may work for the purposes of this assignment.  Feel free to come up with better sites and blogs:

[http://www.huffingtonpost.org](https://myetudes.org/portal/tool/6c2c7aee-0f79-43d9-801c-6902f05f968f/question/23155470/q40801600/-/www.huffingtonpost.org)

[http://www.dailykos.com](http://www.dailykos.com/)

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/politics.html>

<http://www.redstate.com/>

<http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica>