Growing Voters and Election 2016

Activity Title: **Produce Mobile Phone Campaign Ads**

College Level

Overview

New to election media in 2016 is the mobile app **VINE** which allows users to create very short videos. Candidates themselves and their supporters have been posting Vine-created 6-second content which has been seen by millions. Students working on their own, or in groups, design their short form ad. Using the mobile app, they produce campaign commercials for each candidate (or focus on a particular issue). Student-created videos ads can be viewed beyond mobile phones - on a number of public websites, college course websites, shared through social media. Feel free to use the GrowingVoters.org Facebook page to share videos. Vine is owned by Twitter which makes it easy to tweet and retweet the videos and to watch them on a computer or projector for class use.

Creating content is a powerful way for students to analyze the role of ads in the election. Student content also forms the basis for class discussion and other critical thinking assignments. Media literacy is at the heart of this exercise as student think about the creation of messages, in this case to influence public opinion and election outcomes.

For tech tools, see GrowingVoters.org list of resources.

Activity:

1. Begin with students watching commercials from other elections. **- The Living Room Candidate contains more than 300 commercials, from every presidential election since 1952** http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/   Go to the Vine app for students to see examples in the 2016 campaign. Click on Trends 📈 and search election or by candidates.

2. Discuss as a class the key features of a political advertisement (current and past). Consider the impact of mobile devices and the very short form video in this election space. Many users report that these fast ads more exciting – what role might that play in voters thinking about candidates or issues?

3. Working in teams, students design a commercial. (It might be necessary to match students by the availability of eligible mobile devices.) Decide who will work on candidates and who will work on campaign issues. (Or on electoral processes, see below.)

4. Gathering materials: Students can download video clips which can be used to construct new commercials, record using their phone video features, or they can put together still photos into a montage. Using an app like Vine this can all be done on their smart phone. Additional elements could be added if students capture their mobile ads and bring them into another platform to add more narration. For example, free online software at onetruemedia.com allows students to quickly storyboard and edit together a short video with text.

At *WeVideo.com* or *Videolicious.com* or *Vimeo.com* videos can be stored online where they are easy to view, show, and share. Check the GrowingVoters.org tool list.

Class Uses:

Once the student content has been created, students can post their work online for class purposes. A discussion format can compare and contrast different approaches and query for different impact.

A written assignment could easily be generated with the same analytical approach. Students could also be asked to share their produced video within their networks to seek feedback on impact. Student feedback on the process of design and production should also yield analytical results.

With students as producers, not just consumers, media literacy critical studies can be mined in this assignment in a number of ways. See for example: http://www.medialit.org/media-literacy-definition-and-more

Sharing Commercials:

When students have completed their political ads, they can post them on the VINE app, share using GrowingVoters.org Facebook page, or share with classmates using their own social media or a course website.