Course Description
How do political scientists approach social phenomena? What sets political scientists apart from other aficionados, observers and writers of politics and society? With these questions in mind, this course takes you step by step to uncover some of the most commonly adopted research methods in social sciences. Applying these methods, we examine several current policy issues, including the politics of identity, immigration policy, and the use of technology in public policy. We investigate how social scientists ask questions, collect evidence, seek answers and endeavor to sanitize potential biases by being attentive to existing scientific methods and rigorous research designs. Throughout the course, we also pay special attention to the ethical standards and social responsibilities that researchers should be aware of as they explore their intellectual curiosity.

Learning Objectives
By the end of this course, you will be able to:
• Summarize the major research methods adopted among most political scientists.
• Distinguish between different social science research methods, which might help you decide which method(s) to apply when encountering a research project.
• Critically evaluate the quality of a social science research.

Required Readings
• All the other required readings will be available on Blackboard.

Learning Activities and How You Will Be Evaluated
1. Class Participation 10%
2. Summary and Reflection Presentation 10%
3. Pop Quizzes 20%
4. Metaliteracy Assignments 30%
5. Final Project 30%
Class Etiquette
• This class welcomes all perspectives and political views ONLY when they are presented in a civic fashion with grounded evidence. Please be respectful of every participant in this class by behaving and speaking in a decent and responsible way. You are expected to utilize electronic devices in a responsible manner, which means you should only use them in ways that facilitate your learning and are able to limit unnecessary distractions for yourself and others. I strongly encourage you to read the study that finds how using electronic devices influences learning negatively: http://www.yorku.ca/ncepeda/laptopFAQ.html. You can also find a summary of this study at: CBC News 08/14/2013 and at: Valerie Strauss 08/20/2013.

Assignment Policy
All assignments should be submitted according to the required format. Emailed or faxed assignments will not be accepted, with the exception of the completed Final Project. Late submissions will not be accepted, except for religious observance (which needs to be cleared with me in the first two weeks of the semester) or documented medical or family emergency (with a doctor note or one from dean).

Special Needs
Students with special needs due to physical, learning, or other disabilities will be accommodated. To request such accommodation, first register with the Disability Resource Center (Campus Center 137 http://www.albany.edu/disability/). DRC will provide you with a letter to me, detailing the provisions requested. Please submit these letters to me during the first two weeks of the semester (in person) and also remind me before each relevant event (e.g. exam and assignment due dates).

Weekly Readings
January 23: Syllabus and Course Overview

January 25: Power – Watergate, DNC Hacking
• Franklin Foer, “The DNC Hack is Watergate, but Worse,” Slate, July 26, 2016.
• Intelligence Report on Russian Hacking (2017). ***read till p.5 and skip the annexes.

• Baglione ch.1 (pp.1-13).

January 30: Ask an Academic Question I
• Baglione selected pages of ch.2 (pp.13-30).

February 1: Ask an Academic Question II
• Baglione selected pages of ch.2 (pp.30-40)

February 3: Intro to Metaliteracy Badging System at LIB B48
• LIB B48 (with Librarian Trudi Jacobson)
February 6: Set the Theme – Immigration Politics

February 8: They Say and I say
• Baglione selected pages of ch.3 (pp.41-50)

February 10: Metaliteracy Quest
• Degree of Separation

February 13: Annotated Bibliography
• Baglione selected pages of ch.3 (pp.61-69)

February 15: Literature Review
• Baglione selected pages of ch.4 (pp.75-88)

February 17: Metaliteracy Quests
• Author’s Voice (Degree of Separation & Giving Credit)

February 20: Theses and Hypotheses
• Baglione selected pages of ch.5 (pp.93-101)

February 22: Applying Theses and Hypotheses
• Baglione selected pages of ch.5 (pp.102-108)

February 24: Metaliteracy Quest
• Prepare & Reflect

February 27: Research Design Overview
• Baglione selected pages of ch.7 (pp.121-125)

March 1: Case Selection
• Baglione selected pages of ch.7 (pp.126-134)

March 3: Metaliteracy Quest
• Develop Content

March 6: Concept and Measurement
• Baglione selected pages of ch.7 (pp.126-139)

March 8: Data and Method
• Baglione selected pages of ch.7 (pp.139-153)

March 10: Final Project Symposium I

March 13, March 15 and March 17
No class (spring break)
March 20: Set the Theme – Identity Politics

March 22: Two Styles of Research, One Logic of Inference
• Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, Designing Social Inquiry, (Princeton University Press, 1994), ch.1 (pp.3-33), ***carefully read through pp.3-13 and skim the rest.

March 24: One Logic of Inference?

March 27: Causal Inferences

March 29: Regression

March 31: Metaliteracy Quest
• Format

April 3: Interview

April 5: Archival Research

April 7: Metaliteracy Quest
• Mode

April 10: Quality of Data
• Charles Wheelan, Naked Statistics, “The Importance of Data: Garbage In, Garbage Out,” ch.7 (pp.110-126) (W.W. Norton 2013).

April 12
No class (Passover)

April 14: Final Project Symposium II
April 17: Set the Theme I – Technology and Politics I – Doomsday Invention
• Raffi Khatchadourian, “The Doomsday Invention: Will Artificial Intelligence Bring Us Utopia or Destruction?” the New Yorker (November 23, 2015), ***selective pages (TBA).

April 19: Set the Theme II – Technology and Politics II – Doomsday Invention
• Raffi Khatchadourian, “The Doomsday Invention: Will Artificial Intelligence Bring Us Utopia or Destruction?” the New Yorker (November 23, 2015), ***selective pages (TBA).

April 21: Metaliteracy Quest
• Messaging

April 24: Writing and Editing
• Baglione, ch.6 (pp.109-119).

April 26: Writing with Humility
• Baglione, selected pages of ch.9 (pp.175-190).

April 28: Metaliteracy Quest
• Send/Receive

May 1: The Purpose of Knowledge I

May 3: The Purpose of Knowledge II

May 5: The Purpose of Methods

May 8: Final Project Presentation I

May 10: Final Project Presentation II

* Final Project Due May 17 (Wednesday) 10pm