Final Writing Project

Writing project due date: Monday, April 27

Length and format: No more than 1,500 words, 12 point font, double-spaced

This semester, we will spend a lot of time discussing individual methodologies, their strengths, and their weaknesses. Hopefully, through these discussions you will come to appreciate that methodological limitations have practical implications, not just for individual studies, but for the scientific enterprise more broadly. Namely, it is rare that any phenomenon can be fully understood through a single methodological approach. Our understanding of how some part of the world works is necessarily tentative until multiple research programs converge on the same answers to scientific questions, a process called triangulation.

For your major writing project this semester you will choose a research question relevant to science and technology journalism that has been addressed using at least three different methodologies. You should, of course, use primary journal articles and, ideally, the approaches represented in your sources should be a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods. Your task will be to compare and contrast these methods:

* Summarizing each article’s methodological approach
* Explaining why each method was appropriate to the research question
* Discussing the limitations of each method
* Explaining what each method added to our understanding of the phenomenon that could not be addressed with the other methods used

You are free to choose any format you like for this essay, written for whatever audience you feel is appropriate. If you choose a technical format, then obviously your sources should be appropriately cited using whichever citation style you prefer. If you choose a more journalistic style, then appropriate attributions are fine.