*All applicants must submit a statement of academic purpose. Please compose a succinct statement of approximately 1,000 words describing your past academic work and preparation related to your intended field of study, your plans for graduate study at Columbia, and your subsequent career objectives.*

As a student major in political science, my interest in the application of quantitative methods in social sciences developed in the course *Quantitative Research Methods*. For the course final project, I gathered data from the several open datasets and applied the linear regression model to examine the relationship between the two-round electoral system and democratic performance, through which, I realized that quantitative methods could not only handle the large volume of data, but also extract valuable conclusions via refined modeling. The final paper later won the third prize of excellent thesis, and further encouraged me to employ quantitative methods for other researches.

My substantial field interest lies in the authoritarian institutions, with a focus on the origins and operations of political institutions in China. I am particularly interested in the People’s Congress system, the legislative branch of China. During the research assistantship at the Center for Election and People’s Congress System Studies, I was tasked with collecting over 7,000 suggestions submitted by deputies of seven provincial People’s Congresses in China and organizing the text into a dataset. Using web scraping via Python, I completed this laborious work in an automatic fashion, which remains me that knowing the structure of data could largely accelerate the collection process. Therefore, I plan to enhance my data collecting and cleaning skills through the course Modern Data Structure at QMSS program, which would pave the way for my future research in comparative politics.

Subsequently, with the establishment of the new dataset, I was able to uncover important dynamics of an authoritarian legislature, the People’s Congress system in China, from micro-level evidence. Inspired by the concept of “pork-barrel politics”, I initiated a research project to analyze the contents of these suggestions. Defining “pork” as local public goods like infrastructure construction, I tried to distinguish suggestions for “pork” from suggestions concerning broad policy issues. Through linear regression, I found that 41.3 percent of the suggestions can be classified as suggestions for “pork”. It seems that although the parliaments are manipulated by the authoritarian regime they serve, the People’s Congress deputies can still represent their constituencies on a certain degree. Beyond regression based on categorization, I was also interested in the possible policy coalition building behind these suggestions. Will deputies form interest groups? What is the relationship between deputies and local governments? Via Dr. Gregory Eirich’s *Social Network Analysis* at QMSS, I aim to employ social network analysis to illustrate the policy coalition network behind the suggestion. Moreover, I believe text analysis would harvest additional information from the text suggestions. After the training in the course of *Natural Language Processing* at the QMSS program, I intend to revisit the dataset, using the text-based model to gain more insights about the People’s Congress system in China.

Besides digital data analysis, I also participated in a field study in Shanghai Residents' Committee Election in 2018 to investigate Chinese citizens’ political participation. During the election preparation, I interviewed with grass-root officials, and observed the interactions between residents and officials. When I wrote the report for this field study, I noticed that though the observational approach shed light on the encouragement of residents’ participation, it is hard to evaluate the productiveness of the mobilization work. Dr. Donald Green in the Political Science department at Columbia University has conducted a series of field experiments to measure the effectiveness of voter canvassing in New Heaven. Through his course *Experimental Research: Design, Analysis, and Interpretation*, I would be able to apply field experiment to the mobilization of Chinese citizens’ political participation, and further compare results between China and the United States.

After completing the QMSS program, I plan to enter a Ph.D. program in political science. The QMSS program is a crucial step towards my pursuit of the doctorate. The core courses will infuse me with comprehensive understandings of quantitative methodologies in social sciences. And the flexible electives provide me with the space to tailor the master study for my specific research interest. I plan to choose courses about comparative politics to strengthen my substantial filed knowledge. Meanwhile, the master thesis allows me to seek direct supervision under faculties from the Department of Political Science, which would give me experts’ guidance on how to apply scientific research methods to evaluate important political issues. QMSS’s rigorous training in research and analytical skills would equip me to conduct the in-depth examination in comparative politics where I have scratched the surface during my undergraduate study, enhancing my competitiveness in the application of the doctoral program. Ultimately, my goal is to seek an academic position in the field of political science.