

**PSC 494**  
**Conspiratorial Thought and Theories**  
**MSSU, Summer 2014**  
**ONLINE**

## **1 Class Information**

- ⇒ **Professor:** Nicholas P. Nicoletti, Ph.D.
- ⇒ **Office:** 211 Webster Hall, Center for Law and Politics
- ⇒ **Email:** nicoletti-n@mssu.edu
- ⇒ **Class Time:** 100% Internet-Based
- ⇒ **Room:** Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS)
- ⇒ **Office Hours:** Live Office Hours by email, Wednesdays 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

## **2 Course Description**

A significant portion of the American population hold false or unsupported beliefs about politics and these beliefs are often very difficult to change, even in the face of disconfirming information. In many cases, conspiracy theories are centered around a small clandestine group of wealthy and powerful elites that behave as puppet masters, making political decisions for the entire country, while allowing for a democratic façade. This course will explore the factors that make people vulnerable to political misinformation and conspiracy theories. The course will also cover the role of conspiracy theories in American society. The class will analyze specific conspiracy theories, including those surrounding the tragic events on 9/11. Finally, the course will analyze how political elites use the tendency to believe in these theories to reinforce and alter public opinion.

## **3 Objectives**

1. Students will demonstrate written communication skills by writing several substantiated discussion board posts per week on the assigned readings.
2. Students will develop skills in utilizing historical and contemporary political science sources and techniques to gain a better understanding of conspiratorial thought and misinformation.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to work in groups by completing a final group presentation on an assigned political conspiracy theory.

## 4 What You MUST Have Access to and KNOW How to Do

Below is a list of basic requirements and prerequisites that you must have access to or know how to use in order to take this course:

- Access to a Personal Computer (PC/MAC) WITH *high speed Internet access*.
- A backup plan (i.e. another computer) in case your primary machine fails.
- A basic understanding of your computer.
- The ability to use the Microsoft Office Suite (2003, 2007, 2010, 2012), specifically *Microsoft Word and PowerPoint*.
- The ability to read Adobe PDF documents.
- The ability to use the Blackboard Learning Management Software (LMS) and a MSSU email address.
- A *thorough, clear, and rigorous* understanding of how to use the MSSU online library research tools (i.e. Library Databases, Online Journals, etc.).
- You will need access to the books immediately. The books are available in the bookstore and online using a marketplace such as Amazon.com. Make sure you have the books before the *the class begins*.
- Keep a readily available copy of this syllabus at all times. *Please do not send me an email with a question that is already answered in this document.*
- A *DESIRE* to learn!

**NOTE:** Technological difficulties will *NEVER* be accepted as a reason for why you turned in an assignment (i.e. discussion board, final project, etc.) late. Moreover, I am not a technical support agent; *do not* contact me if you have technical problems with Blackboard or your computer. However, you may contact the MSSU Computing Help Desk at blackboardhelp@mssu.edu or (417) 625-9885. Hopefully these issues will not be a problem for any of us.

## 5 Course Expectations

First, this is an **online summer** course. Naturally, we will have to cover the same amount of material in this 8-week class as we would in a normal 16-week semester. ***THIS CLASS IS INTENSE WITH READING!*** This means that you will be required to read a considerable amount of material each week; approximately 60-100 plus pages.

Multiple students often have the same question regarding course material or administrative issues. All relevant information about the course should be contained in this syllabus. Thus, students should always consult the syllabus first when they have a general/administrative question. In the event that the answer to your question is not in the syllabus, I have setup a Discussion Forum, called "General Course Questions Discussion Board" in Blackboard. Using this forum, students can anonymously (if desired) post a question about administrative issues or course material. Utilizing this mechanism allows all students to gain access to the answers to frequently asked questions. Hence, always

check the General Questions discussion forum for the answer to your question (after you have consulted the syllabus). If the answer to your question is not in the discussion forum, create a new post and I will answer your question. You may also subscribe to the forum. A subscription will send you emails when a question has been asked or answered. I encourage all students to subscribe to the forum so that they can keep track of ongoing questions regarding the class. Of course, students are free to email me anytime or during my live office hours with any questions; I understand that some questions/issues must be resolved outside of the discussion forum.

### 5.0.1 Course Introduction

All course documents and assignments are located as separate content areas in the series of left-hand Blackboard menus. Within the “Ice Breaker Forum and Syllabus Quiz” content area in Blackboard there are two assignments which must be completed within the first week of class. The first is a quiz on the syllabus/course information which is worth 2% (2 points) of your final grade. The second is a discussion board which will server as an *Ice Breaker* for the class, it is also worth 2% (2 points) of your final grade. These are very easy assignments and serve as an easy 4 points! There is also some brief reading for the first week that you will use for the second week’s discussion forum.

### 5.0.2 Discussion Boards

A large portion of this class is based on weekly **discussion boards**.<sup>1</sup> For each each week’s readings students are required to make two *thoughtful* and *substantiated* forum posts.

Notice my language. I use the words “thoughtful” and “substantiated”. First, your posts must be original, relevant, and appropriate to the material for the week. Second, and most importantly, your posts must be accompanied by a *citation* which substantiates your comment. This means that you **MUST** tell me where in the course readings your post was inspired by **AND** if your are making some type of argument you must cite the source of the argument (i.e. New York Times, Scholarly Journal, Documentary, Book, etc.). Posts that are not substantiated by a citation (from the course material or otherwise) will receive almost no points. This means that any post you make has to be substantiated and cited, even if it is simply the course material.

However, good posts will make reference to outside sources. Posts should be between 250 and 300 words. Your first post should answer my initial question and make an original contribution to the discussion. Your second post must respond to one of your classmates’ original posts (disagree or agree, as long as your response is substantiated). **Your first post must be completed by Wednesday at 5:00 pm. Your second post must be completed by Sunday at 5:00 pm.** Late posts will not be accepted.

The discussion boards are in the *post first* format. This means that you will *not* be able to view other students’ posts until you make your own initial post. Some students in the

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<sup>1</sup>I use the terms Discussion Board and Discussion Forum interchangeably.

past classes have claimed that they dislike this format because they can formulate a better answer to the question after reading what others have to say. While this may be a valid point for some individuals, the fact remains that reading what other people have to say will influence your initial thoughts on the subject and lead to many posts which are very similar in content. The *post first* format forces you to think critically about the question without being influenced by others in the class. Moreover, good students will research the question using outside sources before making their first post, which will allow for a deeper understanding of the material without reading other students' posts. After your initial post, all other posts will be revealed; it is at this point that you can read and comment on other students' posts.

I expect that all students will be considerate and follow standard classroom norms when making their posts. Rude responses will **NOT** be tolerated, receiving zero points, and will be deleted swiftly. Moreover, all discussion posts must contain complete sentences, proper grammar, and be free of "mobile phone Texting/Online Instant Messaging/Internet slang". For example, digital slang such as "BTW" (by the way), "IAWTP" (I agree with this post), or "AIUI" (as I understand it) will not be tolerated. Please use full sentences, full words, capitalize the word I, etc. Posts that utilize this type of language or style will receive almost no points. The Discussion Forums will be worth 56% of your final grade. There are 7 graded discussion boards and each is individually worth **8 points**, or 4 points per post. See the "*Discussion Board Rubric*" found under Rubrics and Peer Review Form in Blackboard for more detailed grading information.

## 5.1 Final Group Project

I have broken the class up into randomly assigned groups of 3 and 4. A substantial portion of the grade (40% of the Final Grade) is based on a group research project. The entire assignment can be found in the final section of the syllabus. Each group will be researching a conspiracy theory of their choice. Each group will create a PowerPoint presentation outlining several sections: (1) Conspiracy Theory Origins, (2) Evidence, (3) Belief in the Conspiracy, and (4) a Conclusion. See the assignment at the end of the syllabus for more detail. **The assignment is due on July 20, 2014 at 5:00 pm.** One person from the group will upload the assignment to BOTH the Assignment drop-box located under the Assignments tab in Blackboard AND as an Attachment to a new thread in Discussion Forum 7. For complete grading information see the **Final Group Project Rubric** under the Rubrics and Peer Evaluation tab in Blackboard. The Final Discussion Forum will be based on student presentations. Generally all students in each group will receive the same grade. However, students that do not carry their weight may receive a lower grade based on peer evaluations.

Students will complete an Individual/Peer assessment form for themselves and every other member of their group. The assessment form can be found under the Rubrics and Peer Review tab on Blackboard. *Each student is required to submit the form by Monday July 21, 2014 at 5:00 pm.* These forms will be taken seriously by the professor when grading each student's contribution to the group project. "Social Loafing" is unacceptable and

each student is required to pull their weight in the group. If necessary (i.e. based on the peer evaluation forms) I will grade individuals differently from the rest of the group; this is unlikely to occur unless there is overwhelming evidence that a group member failed to do a proper amount of work. The evaluation forms are completely anonymous and will not be seen by the other members of each group. The Peer Evaluation Form is a Microsoft Word File and should be downloaded and digitally edited.

I expect a lot from students in my class, so you ought to expect something from me. You can expect me to be attentive to the online environment, checking on student progress daily. You can expect me to always be available during my Live office hours and to answer emails within a 24 hour window during the work week. *If you are struggling with the material do not hesitate to email me!* I take my teaching responsibility seriously and I strive to be the best possible educator I can be. I will often ask for your feedback during the course and I take your input seriously.

## 6 Required Texts

- ◇ Dunbar, David and Brad Reagan. (2006). *Debunking 9/11 Myths: Why Conspiracy Theories Can't Stand up to the Facts*. New York, NY: Hearst Books. ISBN #: 9781588166357.
- ◇ Bratich, Jack Z. 2008. *Conspiracy Panics*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- ◇ Hofstadter, Richard. 1965, 2008. *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- ◇ Olmsted, Kathryn S. 2009. *Real Enemies: Conspiracy Theories and American Democracy, World War I to 9/11*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- ◇ Thompson, Damian. 2008. *Counterknowledge: How we surrendered to conspiracy theories, quack medicine, bogus science, and fake history*. New York, NY: Norton.
- ◇ **The remaining readings are a mixture of scholarly articles and book chapters which will be posted on Blackboard. A "+" indicates that the reading is posted on Blackboard.**
- ◇ I reserve the right to add readings at any time during the semester.
- ◇ The References section of this syllabus provides a list of readings for this class in the American Political Science Association (APSA) citation style.

### 6.0.1 Proper Email Etiquette

**This is the format I expect all emails to be sent in:**

To: nicoletti-n@mssu.edu  
From: Your Email Address Here  
Subject: Always Include a Subject Line

Dear Professor Nicoletti,

Your message should be written here using complete sentences.

Thank you (Or Other Valediction),

Jane/John Doe Student

## 7 Grading

Students can earn a total of 100 points per semester. You will earn a total of 4 points for the Ice Breaker Forum and Syllabus Quiz - these should be easy points. You can earn a total of up to 56 points for the 7 discussion forums - 4 points per post with 2 posts per week. And you can earn a total of up to 40 points for the group project. This means that each point in the class is literally worth one percent of your final grade. In other words, the denominator for your grade will change throughout the semester as points are accumulated. For example, by mid-semester students will have the possibility to earn approximately 50 points in the class. Let's say that you earned 41 total points by mid-semester. To figure out your grade simple divide 41 by 50 ( $\frac{41}{50} = 82$ ). This would mean that you earned a B halfway through the semester. By the end of the semester - when all assignments are turned in - there will be 100 total points that could possibly be earned in the course. Thus, if you earned 75 points out 100 possible points, your grade would be a 75 which is a C.

- \* 2 Ice Breaker Posts worth 1 point each for a total of 2 points, Worth 2% of the Final Grade.
- \* Syllabus Acknowledgment Quiz, Worth 2 points or 2% of your Final Grade.
- \* 7 Discussion Board Posts, 2 posts per week, each worth 4 points each (8 points per discussion forum), Worth a Total of 56 points or 56% of your Final Grade.
- \* Final Group Project, Worth 40 points or 40% of your Final Grade.

## 8 Grading Distribution

- ✓ A = 90-100
- ✓ B = 80-89
- ✓ C = 70-79
- ✓ D = 60-69
- ✓ F = 0-59

## 9 Academic Honesty

Cheating and plagiarism (using someone else's work or ideas without proper citation) will not be tolerated. Cheating and/or plagiarism is a serious offense and can have severe

consequences. Plagiarizing on Discussion Boards or the Final Group Project will result in failure of BOTH the assignment AND the course, no exceptions. All work that is not your own must be cited properly using a full citation style. Stand-alone links are not a proper citation. You must use a complete professional citation style. The MSSU policy on Academic Integrity and the plagiarism judicial process is as follows:

Missouri Southern State University is committed to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Academic work is evaluated on the assumption that the work presented is the student's own, unless designated otherwise. Submitting work that is not one's own is unacceptable and is considered a serious violation of University policy. Cheating is a serious offense that invalidates the purpose of a university education. Any student who takes credit for the work of another person, offers or accepts assistance beyond that allowed by an instructor, or uses unauthorized sources for a test or assignment is cheating. Students must be conscious of their responsibilities as scholars, to learn to discern what is included in plagiarism as well as in other breaches of the Student Handbook, and must know and practice the specifications for citations in scholarly work. When dealing with cases of academic dishonesty, the course instructor may choose to use the campus judicial system; this includes filing an incident report with the Dean of Students, who may act on the report by issuing a written warning or by recommending disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion. Penalties for academic dishonesty may include a failing grade on the assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate.

## **10 Similarity Detection Software**

To prevent and detect plagiarism, I may require students to use similarity detection software (e.g. SafeAssign) in this course. Textual similarity software compares submitted student text to a database of millions of previously published documents, including those on the public internet, a proprietary collection of published articles, as well as every student paper previously submitted to the detection software. When similarities between student text and an existing document are found, the software identifies those similarities for the instructor and/or student to review. Similarity alone is not evidence of academic misconduct, as such material may be correctly cited. This software may be used as an educational tool to assist students in learning how to properly cite resources, to decrease instances of academic misconduct, and/or to assist in the identification of acts of academic misconduct.

## **11 Controversial Material And Academic Freedom**

The substance of this class deals with conspiracy theories and political life. In the course of discussing these we will be engaging with perspectives and arguments that some stu-

dents may find unfamiliar, controversial, or challenging, especially when we deal with conspiracy versions of events. There have been and continue to be conspiracies in political life (e.g., Watergate), so popular suspicion of secrecy and unaccountable power is neither irrational nor unwarranted. Contrary to the simplistic claims of conspiracy ideology, however, critical analysis shows that conspiracy is not the prime mover of political history. Conspiracy ideology represents a misguided way in which some people try to make sense of the social structures of power that shape our lives. Further, since conspiracy ideology almost always involves scapegoating and often draws on cultural currents of bigotry and racism, some of this material may be repugnant or morally offensive. Taking such material seriously for purposes of critical engagement and analysis in no way implies acceptance of conspiracy ideology or the politics of scapegoating.

My commitment is to be fair in the sense of presenting as best I can the strengths and weaknesses of the perspectives represented in our course material. Students are also free to express potentially controversial viewpoints in discussion forums. However, I expect that discussion will take the form of academic analysis of conspiracy theories, their causes, and consequences. This class is not a forum for the dissemination or propagation of any conspiracy theory as historical fact. Discussion forums are dedicated to academic questions and advocating any particular conspiracy theory will not earn students points in this course.

## 12 Special Needs (ADA Statement)

If you are an individual with a disability and require an accommodation for this class, please notify the instructor or Lori Musser, Coordinator of Student Disability Services, at the Student Success Center (417) 659-3725. Students with special needs should bring their requirements to my attention in the first week of classes. I will make every effort to assist students with special needs. Students dealing with stress-related or other medical issues should visit the Willcoxon Health Center, Billingsly Room 242.

## 13 Course Schedule

### 13.1 Week 1: June 2 — 8, 2014

#### 13.1.1 ⇒ Course Introduction, Ice Breakers, and the Paranoid Style

- ★ Complete Ice Breaker Discussion Forum.
- ★ Complete Syllabus Acknowledgment Quiz.
- ★ Acquire Books.
- ★ Read: Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politic*, Forward, Introduction, and The Paranoid Style in American Politics, pp. xi-40.



## 13.2 Week 2: June 9 — 15, 2014

### 13.2.1 ⇒ The Elite Model vs. The Paranoid Style

- ★ C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*, pp. 73-79<sup>†2</sup>
- ★ Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics, The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt-1954*, pp. 41-65.
- ★ Kathryn S. Olmsted, *Real Enemies*, Introduction, Chapter 1: The Consent of the People: Presidential Secrecy and the First World War, pp. 1-43.
- ★ **One person from each group needs to email their choice of conspiracy theory by June 11, 2014.** No two groups can choose the same theory and they will be assigned on a first-come-first-serve basis.
- ★ Complete Discussion Forum 1.

## 13.3 Week 3: June 16 — 22, 2014

### 13.3.1 ⇒ Counterknowledge and Modern Day Misinformation

- ★ Damian Thompson, *Counterknowledge*, Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, Skim Chapter 6 (Don't worry this is a Short Read).
- ★ Kathryn S. Olmsted, *Real Enemies*, Chapter 2: Lying Us Into War? The Second Battle of Pearl Harbor, pp. 45-81.
- ★ Complete Discussion Forum 2.

## 13.4 Week 4: June 23 — 29, 2014

### ⇒ Conspiracy Panics

- ★ Jack Z. Bratich, *Conspiracy Panics*, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 1-78.
- ★ Complete Discussion Forum 3.

## 13.5 Week 5: June 30 — July 6, 2014

### 13.5.1 ⇒ JFK and Nixon

- ★ Kathryn S. Olmsted, *Real Enemies*, Chapters 4 and 5, pp. 111-171.
- ★ Complete Discussion Forum 4.

## 13.6 Week 6: July 7 — 13, 2014

### 13.6.1 ⇒ Elite Cues, Belief in Conspiracy Theories, and Political Knowledge

- ★ Tuner, Joel. (2007) "The Messenger Overwhelming the Message: Ideological Cues and Perceptions of Bias in Television News." *Political Behavior* 29(4): pp. 441-464.<sup>†</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Recall, a <sup>†</sup> indicates that the reading is online via Blackboard as a PDF.

- ★ Gaines, Brian J., James H. Kuklinski, Paul J. Quirk, Buddy Peyton and Jay Verkuilen. 2007. "Same Facts, Different Interpretations: Partisan Motivation and Opinion on Iraq." *The Journal of Politics* 69(4): pp. 957-974.†
- ★ Goertzel, Ted. 1994. "Belief in Conspiracy Theories." *Political Psychology* 15(4): pp. 731-742.†
- ★ Jack Z. Bratich, *Conspiracy Panics*, Introduction, Chapter 3, pp. 79-95.
- ★ Complete Discussion Forum 5.

## 13.7 Week 7: July 14 — 20, 2014

### 13.7.1 ⇒ (Debunking) 9/11 Conspiracy Theories

- ★ David Dunbar and Brad Reagan, *Debunking 9/11 Myths*, Skim Through the Full Book (Don't Worry this is a Short Read), pp. xi-107.
- ★ Kathryn S. Olmsted, *Real Enemies*, Chapter 7, pp. 205-231.
- ★ Complete Discussion Forum 6.

## 13.8 Week 8: July 20 — 24, 2014

### 13.8.1 ⇒ Final Discussion Forum and Group Projects Due

- ★ No Reading.
- ★ **Final Group Project Due July 20, 2014 by 5:00 pm**, Upload to both the Assignment Drop-box (under the Assignments Tab) and to a single Discussion Forum Thread in the Discussion Forum 7.
- ★ Discussion Forum 7 requires each student to make 2 posts commenting on 2 different group projects. All discussion board posts for the group project are due by Wednesday, July 23 at 5:00 pm.
- ★ **Peer Evaluation forms are due by Monday July 21, 2014 at 5:00 pm**. Upload the forms to the Peer Evaluation Drop-Box under the Assignments Tab in Blackboard (see above for a complete explanation).
- ★ Complete Discussion Forum 7.

# 14 Group Project: Understanding Conspiracy Theories

## 14.1 Choose a Conspiracy Theory

Each group will choose a conspiracy theory from the list below. Each group must choose a different theory. One person from each group must email me their potential choice by June 11, 2014. The theories will be assigned on a first-come-first-serve basis.

### 14.1.1 List of Conspiracy Theories

- **AIDS Origins Theories** (i.e. HIV and AIDS was intentionally developed and disseminated by the U.S. Government).
- **The Trilateral Commission and the New World Order** (i.e. the theory that the Trilateral Commission - a real International Economic Organization - is truly a secret group of wealthy individuals that have formed a New World Order and govern most of international relations).
- **The Assassination of John F. Kennedy** (i.e. Government plot, two shooters, etc.).
- **Moon Landing Hoax** (i.e. the Moon landing was not real, but a staged event by NASA).
- **UFO conspiracy Theories** (i.e. evidence of unidentified flying objects and extraterrestrial visitors is being suppressed by various governments around the world, most notably the United States government).
- **Fluoride in the Water Supply** (i.e. the U.S. and other governments are purposely putting fluoride in the water as a means of population control or other nefarious reason).
- **Peal Harbor Wasn't A Surprise Attack** (i.e. Roosevelt knew that Japan was planning the attack and allowed it happen to get the U.S. into WWII).
- **Chemtrails** (i.e. planes' exhaust is actually the government spraying chemical agents on the population, rather than vapor trails known as contrails).
- **Global Warming Conspiracies** (i.e. Global Warming is really a manipulative hoax, propagated in order to secure ideological and financial benefits for those behind it).
- **McCarthyism** (i.e. the conspiracy theories in the 1940s and 1950s claiming that communist agents had infiltrated all parts of the U.S. government).
- **Holocaust Denial** (i.e. Conspiracy Theories that argue that the Holocaust never existed, but rather was a Jewish conspiracy to further the interests of the Zionist movement).
- Above is a list of some of the most popular conspiracy theories. The list is not exhaustive. Groups may choose a theory not on this list, and if approved by the professor, the project can be based on this chosen conspiracy theory.

After choosing a conspiracy theory from the list above (or some alternative theory) each group will research their theory and develop a PowerPoint presentation answering the following questions. Each presentation should be broken up into sections based on the questions below.

### 14.2 What is the Origin of the Conspiracy Theory? (Worth 10 Points)

In this section you need to research the origins of the Conspiracy Theory your group has chosen. What are the primary assertions of the theory? Where did the theory come from and who/what group was the first to uncover the theory? Be sure to fully explain the theory and its origins. In this section you may use whatever sources you find necessary, including conspiracy websites dedicated to the dissemination of information regarding the specific theory.

### **14.3 Evidence? (Worth 10 Points)**

In this section you must present the evidence used to support/oppose the theory. What facts or evidence do the conspiracy theorists present to make their case? What facts or evidence has been used to refute the theory? In this section, you must present both sides. Based on what you have learned in this course, are there any problems with the evidence presented by the Conspiracy Theorists?

### **14.4 Conspiracy Beliefs (Worth 20 Points)**

In this section the group needs to link their conspiracy theory with course material. The objective is to explain why people may believe this theory and/or what the consequences of the theory are for American politics/society. What factors may lead conspiracy followers to believe in this particular theory? Are there elite cue influences? Do the people that believe in this theory believe in any other theories that may be linked? Use as much course material as you can to explain the belief in this conspiracy theory and/or the theory's impact on society. Are there any consequences for American Politics in the aggregate? This section has a very broad objective because we covered a lot of material this semester. You may use as much course material as you deem relevant, but remember the point of this section is to show the professor that you can integrate what we have read to a specific conspiracy theory.

### **14.5 Brief Conclusion (Worth 10 Points)**

Give a brief conclusion of your findings. Did you find any validity to the theory in your research? Why do you think the conspiracy theory was created?

#### **14.5.1 Citations**

All direct quotes, paraphrased text, and ideas must be cited in your paper. As a general rule, if you got an idea from somewhere, you should cite the source. I have given you several examples of the American Political Science Association Citation Style in this syllabus. The References section gives examples of how to cite books and journal articles. You may use in-text citations, footnotes, or endnotes, but your presentation must follow a professional citation style (APSA, APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.) and you must have a references slide at the end of the presentation. Instructions on how to use these styles can be found at the University Library web-site at: [http://library.buffalo.edu/asl/tutorials/citing\\_stylemanual.html](http://library.buffalo.edu/asl/tutorials/citing_stylemanual.html) or here at <http://dept.lamar.edu/polisci/DRURY/drury.html>.

Your presentation should cite approximately 2 different sources from peer-reviewed academic journals and 8 other non-academic sources, for a total of 10 sources. Other sources can include relevant newspaper articles, books, websites, or primary documents. Be sure to fully cite everything from outside sources.

### 14.5.2 Presentation Format

All presentations must follow these strict formatting guidelines. Your grade will be impacted if you do not follow these standards.

- ✓ No more than 10 slides, not including the references slide.
- ✓ Use a theme for your presentation - no blank templates (I like themes).
- ✓ Use more than text (i.e. pictures, tables, or graphs).
- ✓ Minimal grammatical and spelling errors (no internet/texting slang please).
- ✓ The presentation must be segmented into the appropriate sections.

The last bullet is important. I want the presentation to be broken up into each question/section listed above, just like this syllabus is broken-up into sections. In addition, all presentations should be edited for appropriate spelling and grammar. Formatting, grammar, and spelling count toward your grade. Please see the Final Group Project Rubric for a comprehensive grading scheme. The Rubric is located under the Rubrics and Peer Evaluation Tab in Blackboard.

## References

- Bratich, Jack Z. 2008. *Conspiracy Panics*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Dunbar, David and Brad Reagan. 2006. *Debunking 9/11 Myths: Why Conspiracy Theories Can't Stand up to the Facts*. New York, NY: Hearst Books.
- Gaines, Brian J., James H. Kuklinski, Paul J. Quirk, Buddy Peyton and Jay Verkuilen. 2007. "Same Facts, Different Interpretations: Partisan Motivation and Opinion on Iraq." *The Journal of Politics* 69(4):pp. 957-974.
- Goertzel, Ted. 1994. "Belief in Conspiracy Theories." *Political Psychology* 15(4):pp. 731-742.
- Hofstadter, Richard. 1965, 2008. *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Mills, C. Wright. 1956. *The Power Elite*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Olmsted, Kathryn S. 2009. *Real Enemies: Conspiracy Theories and American Democracy, World War I to 9/11*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Thompson, Damian. 2008. *Counterknowledge: How we surrendered to conspiracy theories, quack medicine, bogus science, and fake history*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Turner, Joel. 2007. "The Messenger Overwhelming the Message: Ideological Cues and Perceptions of Bias in Television News." *Political Behavior* 29(4):pp. 441-464.