

Conspiracy Theories Research Assignment

Topic Selection

- Your paper needs to address either the impact of conspiracy theories on democratic governance or the psychology of conspiracy theories.
- While you certainly can rely heavily on the research packet I provided for you in this unit, your paper should include some outside research as well.
- Your topic (and the paper as a whole) should reflect scholarly thinking. Make sure that you are approaching a topic that is broad enough to include multiple perspectives and narrow enough that you can add interesting insight to the research.

Structure of the Paper

- Please refer to the sample IRR I provided in class and the additional ones available on the web site.
- The model paper offers a really useful way to think about the structure of the piece:
 - An Introduction of the topic
 - 2-4 discrete lenses by which we can view the topic
 - A conclusion that evaluates the impact and interplay of those perspectives.
- For this paper, the article from the Journal of Psychology we read in class offers a **very useful model** but be sure not to follow its structure or approaches too closely.

Assignment Requirements

- The individual research report should be no fewer than **1000 words and no more than 1200**. I realize that is a narrow window, but it's what the College Board will require you to do in the spring. The Works Cited page does not count in this number.
- **No more than 10% of the paper should be quoted material**, but you should make extensive use of paraphrasing and citation.
- Your paper should include **8 sources**, 6 of which should be **scholarly**. For our purposes on this assignment, a scholarly work means one published in a journal or by someone with important letters after his/her name. While you can certainly use articles from the mainstream media, I would not make those the focus of your work. Don't forget how great JSTOR and the other databases are for finding information!
- You may use any form of citation (APA, MLA, Chicago), but be sure that you use it consistently throughout the entire paper. There are resources on the web site that should help with this.
- Do not plagiarize! Any words or ideas that come from another source should be cited.
- The paper **must evaluate** multiple lenses/perspectives, but does not need to be an argument. It can simply evaluate the state of the existing research. That being said, the most effective papers seem to head towards making an argument, typically in their conclusion.