

DEPARTMENT:	School of Political Studies
TERM	FALL 2022
PROFESSOR:	Daniel Stockemer
RESEARCH TITLE:	Conspiracy theories across the globe
NUMBER OF STUDENTS:	Up to 4
LANGUAGE:	English
ASSIGNMENTS CAN BE SUBMITTED IN FRENCH	NO

RESEARCH DESCRIPTION:

Defined as a belief in a secret and sinister plot carried out by those who are distrusted (see Oliver and Wood 2014), conspiracy theories are omnipresent in the US. Whether they believe in QAnon, entertain the deep suspicion that George Bush orchestrated 9/11, accept as true that climate change is a hoax, or trust in the view that Barack Obama was not born in the United States a sizable minority of the US population believes in one or several of these theories (Weigmann 2018, Douglas et al. 2019). Yet, beyond the US, scholarship about conspiracy theories is more limited. In this research, we want to map the most prevalent conspiracy theories in Western and non-Western countries. We also want to tap into the typical believer in conspiracy theories. In the US, the typical conspiracy theory believer is an individual with low education and self esteem, populist attitudes and a right-wing ideology. Does this profile travel to other countries? Through original survey research in Canada, Germany, Turkey, Australia, and Lebanon, we want to test this proposition? The students involved in this research project, will engage in summarizing the academic literature on conspiracy theories, identify the most prevalent conspiracy theories in the countries listed above and help drafting an original survey.

KEY LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

- Synthesizing the academic literature
- Learn how to pose a research question
- Learn how to formulate a hypothesis
- Drafting a survey
- Analyzing a survey
- Learn about an important topic in the social sciences