

Agenda

Science denial

1. Administrative
2. Boundary work in science
3. Conspiracy theories
4. Group discussion

Posters due *today* (Dec 2) by 11:59pm

- ⋮ Submit as **PDF file** on Teams
- ⋮ Posters will be collected into a 'virtual poster session' online by Friday classtime
- ⋮ ***Please do not include your name or ID number in the posters itself.***
(You'll be given a cat-based identity for the gallery)

Poster rubrics will be distributed tomorrow

- ⋮ You will receive a form with the (cat) names of four classmates to evaluate, along with a rubric

Thursday (Dec 5)

- ⋮ *Optional* class period to complete evaluations
(no lecture or discussion)

Poster evaluations due Friday (Dec 6)

- ⋮ Evaluations will be 'collected' automatically—no need to turn them in

Boundary work in science

Boundary work

- ∴ **Social boundaries** are the sets of practices, beliefs, and customs that separate groups.
- ∴ **Boundary work** is the act of making explicit and delineating social boundaries.
- ∴ E.g. cultural work of describing foods as high- vs low-class.



Boundary work *in science*

- ∴ Boundary work emphasizes distinctions between science and non-science.
- ∴ **Epistemic authority** of science based on claims of rationality, naturalness, disinterestedness, etc.



Conspiracy theories

(Harambam &
Aupers 2015)



Scientists on conspiracy theory:

- ∴ Conspiracy theory is irrational and unscientific
- ∴ Conspiracy theorists disregard evidence, allowing pre-conceived expectations to dominate
- ∴ Closer to religion than science



Conspiracy theorists on “establishment” science:

- ∴ Scientists unable to consider ideas outside of the dominant paradigm
- ∴ Scientific authority rests on institutionalized power structures
- ∴ Science does not uphold its stated ideals

Conspiracy theorists' critiques

(Harambam and Aupers 2015)

Scientists disregard evidence outside of their dominant paradigm

Kuhn (1970)
Collins (1975)
⋮

Knowledge is socially constructed and situated

Haraway (1988)
Tallbear (2013)
⋮

Scientific knowledge entrenches social power

Benjamin (2019)
Poudrier (2007)
⋮

Science excludes alternative knowledge systems

Adams (2002)
Allen (2018)
⋮

CLICKHOLE



Heartbreaking: The Worst Person You Know Just Made A Great Point

FEBRUARY 5, 2018



A heartbreaking story is currently unfolding that's sure to have devastating ramifications for years to come. Just moments ago, without any warning, the worst person you know just made a great point.

This is absolutely crushing news, and it's unclear if recovery will ever be possible.

The tragedy occurred just a few moments ago

Joining a debate about walking a narrow line

Meta-meta-science

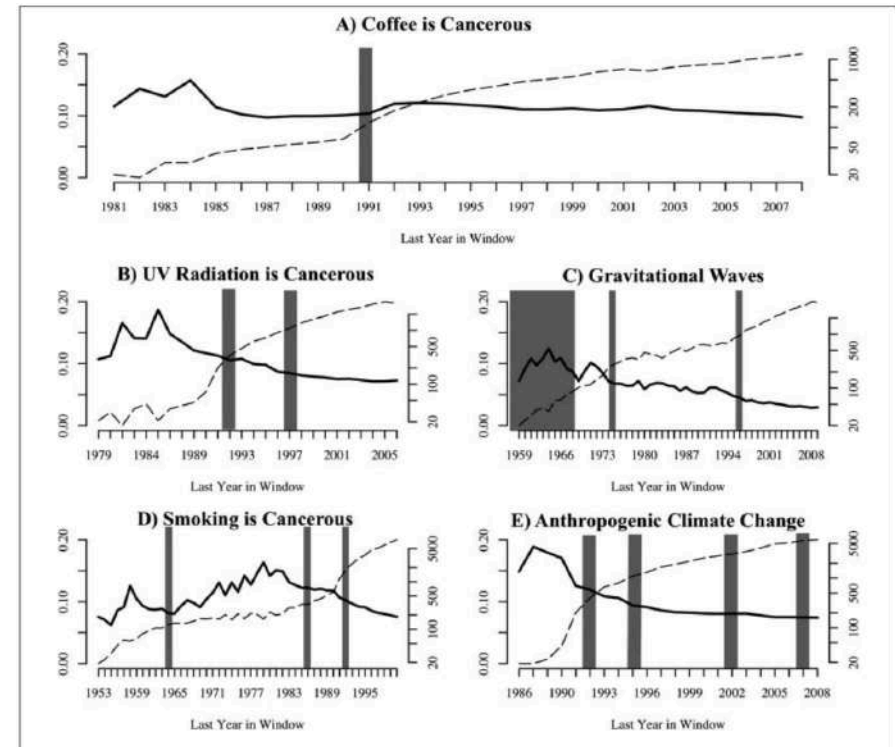
- “Conspiracy theorists are thus subjected to a double form of boundary work: they are excluded by academics defending the positivistic ideals of science and by scholars coming from the social studies of science.”

(Harambam and Aupers 2015, 477)

- Conspiracy theorists as “pop-sociologists”
- Boundary work of distinguishing conspiracy theory from STS

Scientific Legitimacy

- Conspiracy theorists are engaged in discourse on the sources of scientific legitimacy
- Illegitimacy of conspiracy theory not as simple as declaring it “unscientific”



Shwed, Uri, and Peter S. Bearman. 2010. “The Temporal Structure of Scientific Consensus Formation.” *American Sociological Review* 75 (6): 817–40.

Science is messy, complex, often exploitative, and anything but 'pure'

But having the tools to critically analyze the processes of scientific knowledge allows for ***creative reimagining of what science is and who it can be for***

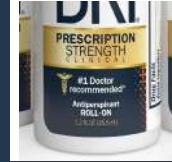


Thank you for
a fantastic
semester!

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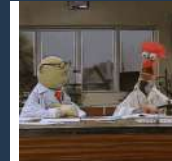
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