

- Agenda** |
- Science denial
1. Administrative
 2. Boundary work in science
 3. Conspiracy theories
 4. Group discussion

Posters due *today* (Dec 5) 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

Poster evaluations due Friday (Dec 8)

- ⋮ 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

Knowledge is socially constructed and situated

Scientific knowledge entrenches social power

Science excludes alternative knowledge systems

Kuhn (1970)
Collins (1975)
⋮

Haraway (1988)
Talbear (2013)
⋮

Benjamin (2019)
Poudrier (2007)
⋮

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

Meta-meta-science

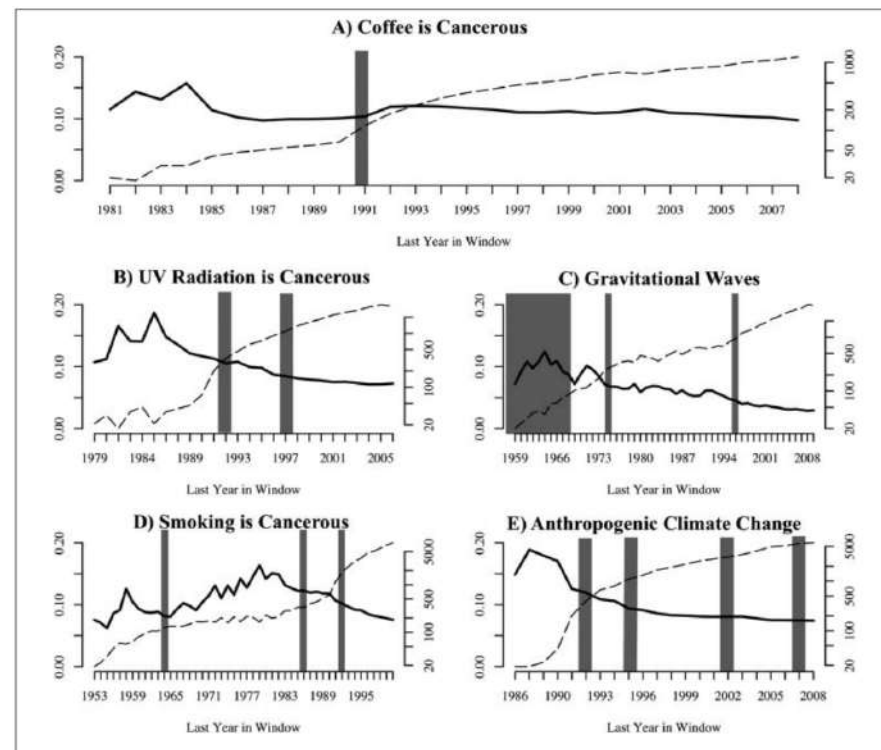
∴ “Conspiracy theorists are thus subjected to a double form of boundary work: they are excluded by academics defending the positivistic ideals of science and by scholars coming from the social studies of science.”

(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!

Image credit



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Photo by Saul Loeb via [Business Insider](#)



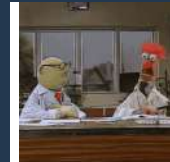
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