INQUIRY 1SS3
INQUIRY IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
Conspiracy Theories and Myths of Distrust
Section C01
Winter 2017
Thursdays @ 11:30 am – 2:20 pm (LRW 1056)

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	Office Hours: Monday at 11:30 - 12:30 pm

What is Inquiry?

Inquiry is the process of developing skills to arrive at understandings of a problem, an issue, or a phenomenon, through the process of asking good questions, searching out good evidence, and arriving at well reasoned conclusions. The process of critical inquiry promotes self-directed learning, helping you to develop the skills necessary to acquire and reflect on new knowledge and understanding, and that will be invaluable in your other university courses and your academic, personal, and professional lives.

Inquiry courses are designed to teach students how to learn and how to share academic knowledge. The courses are skill-driven, rather than content-driven, with a *focus on the skills required to perform effectively in university*. These personal, transferable skills and approaches to learning will be useful in other university courses, and beyond. Students will engage in a process to begin to learn how to formulate good academic questions, gather and interpret scholarly evidence, draw reasoned conclusions, and communicate these conclusions, using as content, topics central to research in the Social Sciences (e.g., social identity, globalization, health, and gender).

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course you will have developed transferrable skills in:

- developing a researchable question and refining it;
- demonstrating the ability to obtain relevant information to answer this question;
- critically evaluating the validity and relevance of academic research;
- communicating a reasoned response to the researchable questions;
- working in groups; and
- critically reflecting on your learning process.

Key Course Assignment:

In this section of inquiry, the lessons and activities will guide you through the process of designing an university-level **individual research essay of 10-12 pages in length**. Thinking about a project of that size can be an intimidating and stressful prospect for first-year students, but the course is designed to provide step-by-step 'scaffolding'. Smaller assignments will provide opportunities for growth, trial and error, and formative feedback so that the major assignment is not an uncertain, last-minute rush. The project design process is intended to be transferrable to your future essay design work in upper-year courses.

Theme: "Conspiracy Theories and Cover Ups"

While the focus of this course is on the ***process of inquiry***, the theme "Conspiracy Theories and Myths of Distrust" will provide the content that we will use to develop analytical and critical thinking skills.

We will begin to identify how and why "conspiracies" and "cover-ups" should be investigated through academic research. As we progress, you will have the opportunity to further explore the relationship between secrecy and suspicion, and between fact and fiction.

These issues can be studied in many ways. On the one hand, conspiracy theories can be studied as a form of popular cultural mythology, providing explanations for complex events and outcomes. Studying conspiracism as social narrative can give insight into class relations, race relations, and the role of the military, academia, religion and politics in society. On the other hand, contemporary history has seen many cases where powerful elites or organized groups really have operated in secret in ways that have betrayed the public trust. Studying cases where plans and plots have been expose can provide us with fascinating insights into the relationship between secrecy, transparency, and accountability in contemporary life. The three broad thematic threads that will help identify and develop relevant topics will be **suspicion**, **secrecy**, and **collaboration**.

The theme of conspiracies and cover-ups and the design of this course provide ample flexibility to enable you to engage your own ideas and interests with the topic, while demonstrating the skills of inquiry.

Required Textbooks:

*The following two textbooks are **required** for students in our particular section of the Inquiry class, as they are important for preparing and submitting assignments:*

> ➢ Haig, J., MacMillan, V., Raikes, G. (2013), *Cites & Sources, An APA Documentation Guide*, (3rd ed.), Toronto: Nelson.
> ➢ Northey, M. & Tepperman, L. (2009) *Making Sense. A Student's Guide to Research and Writing. Social Sciences.* 5th Ed. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.

Suggested Readings:

The following suggested readings are optional. They may be helpful for assisting with research and writing in this class and/or throughout your university career. They are available in the bookstore for Inquiry students in all sections:

> ➢ Hubbuch, S., (2005) *Writing Research Papers Across the Curriculum. 5th Ed*. Boston: Thomson Wadsworth.

Other Course Materials:

Additional material (news stories, videos, websites, etc.), available at no cost, may be posted online throughout the course. Engaging with these materials will be necessary in order to actively participate in the course. Any assigned articles can be found through the McMaster library website, or through links in the content section of Avenue To Learn.

Online and Electronic Course Components:

Avenue to Learn: In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn ("Avenue") for the online components of the course. Students should be aware that when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation, may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Digital Submissions: The written assignments in this course will be submitted via the digital Drop-Box function on Avenue to Learn, found under the Assessments tab. Many file types are compatible with the submission system, including Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, PostScript, Adobe Acrobat (.pdf), or Rich Text (.rtf) files. If your word processing program uses a file type not listed here, please contact the instructor to check compatibility.

Written Assignments: All written assignments are to be typed and double-spaced. Please include a title page with your name, student number and email address, the topic title of the assignment and the date submitted. Printed copies of assignments submitted through Avenue will not be necessary unless explicitly requested.

Submitting Assignments Electronically: Individual assignments submitted electronically must somehow include your last name in the filename, e.g. "Ahmad – Assignment 5.docx" or "Smith_Assignment_5_Article_Assessments.pdf"

Submissions: All written work is **due at 12:01 a.m. on the date stated** via Avenue, unless other arrangements have been made in advance with the instructor. A late penalty of 3% will apply after the due time on the due date. Further penalties will accumulate beginning the next day (6%) and increase by 3% per day following (including weekends). *Assignments will be marked and returned in the order in which they were submitted.*

Faculty Of Social Sciences E-Mail Communication Policy: It is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including to TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Avenue Mail: Please use your McMaster e-mail account to contact the instructor. There is a technical difference between the Mail feature in Avenue to Learn and the McMaster e-mail services, including UnivMail, the mail service used by most instructors. Messages sent from Avenue to e-mail, for example, can often cause unhelpful delays and errors.

In-Class and Interpersonal Components

Class Participation and Engagement: Class participation and engagement is an important component of this course (and of active learning). Therefore, it is expected that all students will be 'active' participants in this course. This means attending all classes, being actively involved in class activities and thoughtful discussion, and completing all assignments.

In our section, attendance will be worth 5% and participation will be worth 10% for a total of 15% of the course mark.

Your participation grade will be significantly influenced by your active involvement in class, and the quality of that involvement. Lack of participation, or 'negative participation', will also significantly influence your participation grade (but in a negative way)! And just so you are aware of the types of activities or behaviours that will be considered 'negative' class participation, they include the following: missing classes, talking to classmates about things that are not a contribution to the class discussion, general nonparticipation in or disruption of class/class activities, sleeping during class, coming to class late or leaving early, and distracted use of any of the following electronic devices: cell phones, mp3 players, iPods, iPads, and other electronic devices. Computers may be used in class but ONLY for note taking purposes. Evidence of using the computer for anything other than note taking will be considered negative class participation.

The success of this course depends on you. The students who are most successful in this course fulfill these expectations, and engage in all aspects of the course.

Group Assignments: For all group assignments, ALL students in the group must be contributing members for that assignment. The expectation is that each student will be an active and respectful member of their group, and contribute to the assignment - in a fair and equitable way. Group work is sometimes challenging, but it can also be rewarding in a number of ways, including providing you with opportunities to develop valuable 'working-as-a-team' skills that will serve you well in this and other courses, as well as more broadly in your academic, professional, and personal life.

Conflicting Course Schedules: When scheduling your courses, be sure to avoid overlap or conflict that might compromise your attendance and participation in other classes. You should not sacrifice time in this class to complete assignments for another class. If an instructor in another class schedules a test, activity, or other course component during our course timeslot, please contact the instructor for this course (or, preferably, contact both instructors at once). Explain the conflict and request that your instructors arrange a constructive solution to the scheduling conflict.

<u>**Academic Integrity**</u>

University Policy on Academic Dishonesty: You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the University.

Avoiding Academic Dishonesty: It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the McMaster Academic Integrity Policy, located at http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity. The following illustrates only a few forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Submitting work that is not your own.
2. Submitting your own material for which other credit has already been obtained in another course.
3. Using another writer's sentences, phrasing, or writing structure without properly indicating your debt by using quotation marks.
4. Neglecting to properly cite the source of your ideas.
5. Improper collaboration in non-group work.
6. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.
7. Requesting accommodation or exceptions in bad faith or under false pretenses.

Quotation Marks: Anytime you borrow the wording or phrasing of a research source in your writing, you must indicate properly acknowledge your re-use by putting the borrowed wording or phrasing in quotation marks (i.e. "these"). It is <u>not</u> enough to add a citation, because a citation gives credit for the idea, but without quotation marks it is implied that the wording and phrasing are of your own creation and authorship. You may put full quoted sentences in quotation marks, but you may also quote only half a sentence and merge it with your own half sentence to make a *blended quotation.* If you are trying to paraphrase but can't find a better way to express a particular phrase, you can also put just a few borrowed words in quotation marks and do a *fragment quotation.* You can quote several sentences in a row, too, but if you do, you should look up the formatting guidelines for *block quotations.* Note: whenever you borrow wording, you should both use quotation marks and provide a citation giving the author credit.

Originality Checking: In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Digital work submitted via *Avenue to Learn* will be automatically submitted to Turnitin.com so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty, and so that the paper can be marked digitally using the service's digital feedback system. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com have the right to arrange, with the instructor, an alternate submission method that bypasses Turnitin. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to: www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

Access Copyright Regulations: McMaster University holds a licensing agreement with Access Copyright, the Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency. Information on current regulations for copying for education purposes can be found at the following website: http://www.copyright.mcmaster.ca/

Reporting Missed Academic Work

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): The MSAF is an on-line self-reporting tool for undergrad students to report missed academic work. The MSAF gives you the ability to request consideration for missed work (worth less than 25% of the final grade) due to illness or injury lasting 3 days or less. You must visit McMaster's online MOSAIC system to locate the MSAF to report your absence. This form should be filled out as soon as possible after your absence. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately (within 48 hours of submitting the MSAF) in person or by email regarding the nature of the relief that may be possible for the missed work. Whether consideration is given for missed work, and the type of consideration provide, is the decision of the instructor.

Limitations: You may submit only 1 MSAF per term without supporting documentation. An MSAF cannot be used for any final examination.

Longer or Successive Absences: For absences longer than 3 days, for reasons other than illness or injury, or for missed work worth 25% or more of the course grade, you must visit the Faculty of Social Sciences office to request an MSAF exception link. You will be required to provide appropriate supporting documentation to the Faculty office before an exception link with be approved. You may also be required to meet with an academic advisor.

Privacy: You must NOT submit any medical or other relevant documentation to your instructor. Your instructor may NOT ask you for such documentation. You are not required to share the details of your medical or personal situation with any instructor. And the instructor may not ask for any such medical or personal information.

Responsibilities: The purpose of the MSAF is to provide students who miss academic work because of illness or injury with the ability to still fulfill the requirements of the course. However, the MSAF is NOT intended as a time or workload management tool, or as a holiday organizer. As a student you are responsible for using the MSAF tool as it was intended, and to not misuse or abuse it for other reasons. You can also help to prevent any unexpected medical situations from jeopardizing the on time completion of your academic work by starting assignments and studying as early as possible.

Follow-Up E-Mail: In order to arrange for MSAF accommodation, you must e-mail the instructor as soon as possible after submitting your MSAF form. Your message to the instructor should include the following information:

1. If the missed work was an assignment, explain the work that you had completed before your absence and any work you have completed following your absence.
2. Propose a new deadline to submit the assignment, or, for tests, identify blocks of time when you are available to complete the assignment outside of class time.

Conflicting Make-Up Schedules: When scheduling make-up timeslots for this class, be sure not to compromise your attendance and participation in other classes. Similarly, you should not sacrifice time in this class to complete assignments for other courses.

Accommodation Time Limits: In some rare cases, accommodations involving late assignment submission may be necessary due to a student's special circumstances. However, please note that in order for final marks to be submitted on time, the last day to submit late work will be one week after the last day of classes. Accommodations may continue beyond that point, in coordination with the instructor, but the student's course result will temporarily be registered as 'incomplete' until the outstanding work is resolved.

Academic Accommodations:

Student Accessibility Services (SAS):
Students who require academic accommodations must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652, or by email at sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities.

Responsibilities as a Student Registered at SAS: SAS assists with academic and disability-related resources for students with a variety of learning needs. If you require academic accommodation through SAS, be sure that you arrange your accommodations with SAS as early as possible, and ensure that the instructor receives a copy of your accommodation letter as early as possible in the term.

Students registered with SAS are responsible for:
- meeting their SAS Program Coordinator prior to, or at the start of each academic term (September, January and summer sessions);
- providing their SAS Program Coordinator with relevant and professional medical or psychological documentation;
- notifying their SAS Program Coordinator if courses are dropped or added, or if accommodations require a change;
- meeting with individual course instructors to discuss their specific accommodation needs in relation to the course; and
- providing the instructor with their accommodation letter as early as possible.

For more information, visit the SAS website: http://csd.mcmaster.ca/sswd/faqs.html

Accommodating Peers: Students may be asked to assist in making our learning environment accessible for all students. For example, in-class presenters may be asked to submit, in advance, a text summary of the presentation's visual components to ensure the inclusion of students for whom those visuals would not otherwise be accessible.

Confirm Your Section Registration (1SS3 C0?): At McMaster, some courses have the same course code but multiple sections (C01, C02, C03, etc.) with different meeting times and instructors. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are attending the correct section of Inquiry 1SS3. Each section of Inquiry has a specific theme chosen by the instructor so you cannot attend a section in which you are not registered. If you do continue to attend a section of the course in which you are not registered, you will not be permitted to register in that section and so may be at risk of failing the course. Consult your personal timetable and the Registrar's course timetable to ensure that you are attending the correct section.

Keeping On Track With Assigned Readings: Students are strongly encouraged to their best to keep up with the weekly readings. While knowledge of the content of the readings will rarely be directly tested or evaluated in the course, the skills and insights that are offered in our readings set a strong foundation for success in university classes and beyond. Keeping on track with the readings will also make your job easier as you complete your capstone assignment. The habits, insights, and strategies suggested in our readings will also be enormously helpful in the step-by-step process of building a sophisticated, polished, and successful research paper.

Administrative Notes

Policy for Returning Assignments/Posting Grades: In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow the return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; all tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student.

And since it is important for student learning and skills development that students receive feedback on their assignments as they progress through the course, you can expect to receive feedback (comments and a grade) on each of your assignments in a timely fashion. This will allow you the opportunity to see how you performed on each assignment and time to discuss any questions you might have with your instructor.

The following possibilities exist for return of graded materials:

1. direct return of materials to students in class;
2. return of materials to students during office hours;
3. students attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope when submitting the assignment for return by mail (for final capstone assignment only); and
4. submit/grade/return papers electronically.

Arrangements will be finalized for the return of assignments from the options listed above by the instructor during the first class.

Grades for assignments may only be posted using the last 5 digits of the student number as the identifying data. Final grades for the course will be posted on MUGSI.

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes

1SS3 Evaluation: (See *Course Schedule* Below for Chronological List)

Assessment Activity	% of Grade	Date Due (Tues 12:01 a.m. if Digital)
Related to Capstone Assignment:		
Brief Brainstorming List	3%	Week 2 (via Avenue)
Research Question	2%	Week 4 (via Avenue)
Proposal & Annotated Bibliography	15 %	Week 5 (via Avenue & Bring Copy*)
Draft First Paragraph	5 %	Week 11 (via Avenue & Bring Copies*)
Final Assignment	25 %	Week 12 (via Avenue)
Colloquium Contribution	Participation	During Final Class Session
Related to Group Presentation:		
Source Integration Assignment:	10%	Week 8 (via Avenue & Bring Copy*)
Group Presentation:	10%	In-Class, Weeks 9, 10, 11 and 12
Attendance and Engagement	5 % + 10 %	Throughout Term In Class
Test on Library Skills & Academic Integrity	15 %	Week 7 In Class
Completion Activities:		
Library Sessions and Activities		In-Class
Workshops and Worksheets	Factored	In-Class
Presentation Audience Membership	Into	In-Class
Active Group Work (In-Class)	Participation	In-Class, Throughout Term
In-Class Key Tasks	Mark	In-Class, Throughout Term
eDiscussion on 'Avenue to Learn' (A2L)		On-Line, Throughout Term
Self-Reporting Reading (A2L Checklist)		On-Line, Throughout Term

* When 'Bring Copy' is listed beside an assignment, you are asked to bring a copy of your assignment to class after having already submitted it online. This will help you to discuss, share, and, in some cases, edit your work collaboratively. You may choose to either bring a printed paper copy or a digital copy editable on a laptop or tablet.

1SS3 Course Schedule (Instructor: Busser)

Week	Read Before Class	Assignment Due	Class Topic
1 Jan 5		**Participation Begins (5% Attendance 10% Engagement)**	**What is Inquiry? Why This Theme?** Key Task: Submit Alias
2 Jan 12	Northey & Tepperman Ch. 1 Library Modules Pt.1	Brainstorming Report (3%)	Readings Discussion & Presentation Skills Key Task: Develop Slides
3 Jan 19	**One Article (Your Choice)** Northey & Tepperman Ch. 2 Library Modules Pt.2		Article Discussion Avoiding Plagiarism Key Task: Give Mini-Presentation
4 Jan 26	Northey & Tepperman Ch. 3 Library Modules Pt.3	Research Question (2%)	Library Session Refining Research Questions Key Task: Submit Mind Map
5 Feb 2	**One Article (Your Choice)** Northey & Tepperman Ch. 4 Library Modules Pt.4		Essay Assignment Key Task: Writing Skills Worksheet
6 Feb 9	Northey & Tepperman Ch. 5 Library Modules Pt.5	Proposal and Annotated Bibliography Due (15%)	Proposal Reading Workshop Key Task: Contribute to Workshop
7 Feb 16	Northey & Tepperman Ch. 6 Library Modules Pt.6	Library Skills and Academic Integrity Test (15%)	Academic Skills Test (In-Class) Key Task: Presentation Scheduling
Reading Week (Feb 20th – 24th)			
8 Mar 2	**One Article (Your Choice)** Northey & Tepperman Ch. 7	--	Presentation Planning Key Task: Submit Group Work Plan
9 Mar 9	Northey & Tepperman Ch. 8	Individual Source Integration Assignment (10%)	Key Task: Group Workshop 1-on-1 Essay Meetings
10 Mar 16	Northey & Tepperman Ch. 9	Presentations Begin (10%)	Presentations Set 1 Key Task: Presentation Notes
11 Mar 23	Northey & Tepperman Ch. 10	Draft First Paragraph (5%) In-Class Peer Evaluation Exercise	Presentations Set 2 Key Task: Peer Evaluation Exercise
12 Mar 30	Northey & Tepperman Ch. 11	Final Paper (25%) due Friday, March 31st at 8:00 p.m. via A2L	Presentations Set 3 Key Task: Presentation Notes
13 Apr 6	--	Prep for Colloquium Sharing	Key Task: Share Your Findings