



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

'Conspiracy Theories in Times of Crisis in Europe - 54650

Last update 04-09-2022

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: European Studies

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Karin Bischof

Coordinator Email: Karin.bischof@univie.ac.at

Coordinator Office Hours: By prior arrangement

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Karin Bischof

Course/Module description:

'Conspiracy theories' have spread widely during various crises of the recent past in Europe, such as flight crisis, climate crisis, Covid crisis and also the War in Ukraine. In the course, we highlight, on the one hand, specific crisis narratives (e.g., the great replacement, climate change conspiracies, QAnon, Covid related conspiracies etc.) and their underlying ideological patterns. On the other hand, we focus on the impact of conspiracy theories – and the digital media cultures they are embedded in – on politics and society.

Course/Module aims:

The aim of the course is to analyse current themes and patterns of conspiracy myths in times of multiple crisis and view them against the backdrop of selected theoretical approaches. The course will provide insights into ideological, socio psychological, media related and socio economical patterns of 'conspiracy theories' and relate it to phenomena of democratic change.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

The students will be able to identify and analyse manifestations and contexts of selected 'conspiracy theories' as well as selected national and transnational expressions on a European scale and beyond.

Attendance requirements(%):

80%

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: The teaching is organized as an overview of currently wide spread conspiracy narratives and selected empirical and theoretical approaches. An introductory session will provide the students with background knowledge, and each session will deal with selected relevant thematic aspects. Some of the thematic aspects will be dealt with in (small group) presentations of students.

Course/Module Content:

Session 1: Introduction

Session 2: Part I Specific 'conspiracy theories' – the great replacement

Session 3: Part I Specific 'conspiracy theories' – Qanon

Session 4: Part I Specific 'conspiracy theories' – Covid related CT

Session 5: Part I Climate conspiracy

Session 6: film

Session 7: Part II Theoretical approaches – attack on democracy

Session 8: Part II Theoretical approaches – Authoritarianism

Session 9: Part II Theoretical approaches - Interseccionalidad

Session 10: Part III In depth examples

Session 11: Part III In depth examples

Session 12: In depth examples

Session 13: Final reflections

Required Reading:

Badham, Van (2021). QAnon and On: a Short and Shocking History of Internet Conspiracy Cults / Richmond, Victoria: Hardie Grant Books.

Butter, Michael/Peter Knight (2020). Routledge Handbook of Conspiracy Theories, London-New York: Routledge.

Davis, Mark (2021). The online anti-public sphere, in: European Journal of Cultural Studies, Vol. 24(1) 143-159.

Døving, Cora Alexa/Terje Emberland (2021). Bringing the enemy closer to home: 'conspiracy talk' and the Norwegian far right, Patterns of Prejudice, Vol. 55(4,) 375-390, DOI: 10.1080/0031322X.2021.1909933

Ekman, Mattias (2022). The great replacement: Strategic mainstreaming of far-right conspiracy claims, in: Convergence: The International Journal of Research in New Media Technologies, Vol. 0(0), 1-17.

Hill-Collins, Patricia (2019). Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory, Durham: Duke University Press (pp 21-53)

Prophets of deceit a study of the techniques of the American agitator / Löwenthal, Leo. - New York, NY Harper 1949. (chapter 3)

Peter Plenta (2020). Conspiracy theories as a political instrument: utilization of anti-Soros narratives in Central Europe, Contemporary Politics, Vol. 26(5), 512-530, DOI: 10.1080/13569775.2020.1781332

Polynczuk-Alenius, Kinga (2021). The menace of Jewish anti-Polonism during the 2015 'refugee crisis': antisemitic conspiratorial thinking on the Christian far right in

Poland, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 55:3, 237-264, DOI: 10.1080/0031322X.2021.1968585

Rosenblum, Nancy L./Muirhead, Russell (2019). *A Lot of People Are Saying: The New Conspiracism and the Assault on Democracy*. Princeton University Press. (chapter 2)

Simonsen, Kjetil Braud (2020). *Antisemitism and Conspiracism*, in: Michael Butter/Peter Knight (2020). *Routledge Handbook of Conspiracy Theories*, London-New York: Roudledge, 357-370.

Thiem, Annika (2020). *Conspiracy Theories and Gender and Sexuality*, in: 292-303.

Zhang, Xinyi/ Mark Davis (2022). *Transnationalising reactionary conservative activism: A multimodal critical discourse analysis of far-right narratives online*, in: *COMMUNICATION RESEARCH AND PRACTICE*, Vol. 8 (2), 121-135.

Zia-Ebrahimi, Reza (2018). *When the Elders of Zion relocated to Eurabia: conspiratorial racialization in antisemitism and Islamophobia*, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 52(4), 314-337, DOI: 10.1080/0031322X.2018.1493876

Additional Reading Material:

To be announced

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 40 %

Presentation 30 %

Participation in Tutorials 0 %

Project work 0 %

Assignments 30 %

Reports 0 %

Research project 0 %

Quizzes 0 %

Other 0 %

Additional information: