

Course Outline

Course Title:	Conspiracy Theories: They're Everywhere!		
Course Number:	GNED121	Approval Date:	2024/8/29
Course Hours:	45 hours	Academic Year:	2024
Academic School:	School of General Arts & Sciences		

Faculty:	Dennis Vanderspek - dennis.vanderspek@flemingcollege.ca
Program Co-ordinator or Equivalent:	Lisa Stefaniak - lisa.stefaniak@flemingcollege.ca
Dean (or Chair):	Emily Root - Emily.Root@flemingcollege.ca

Course Description

Conspiracy theories have exploded in popularity in recent years as the world we live in becomes more strange and alarming. Are UFO's real? Are drug companies withholding vital cancer treatments? Can you really trust the government? Is your phone spying on you? This blended course will consider a wide variety of conspiracy theories from critical, psychological, political, and historical perspectives (or will it?).

Prerequisites: None.

Corequisites: None.

Course Delivery Type

Hybrid Asynchronously.

Some course hours are delivered online asynchronously without specified meeting times and some hours will be delivered in person. In-person delivery locations and times are specified on the academic timetable. Asynchronous course hours may be completed at any time.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the basic features of conspiracy theories, including differentiating between conspiracy theories and other types of claims.

2. Apply the methods and attitudes of critical thinking to summarize and critique at least one historical or contemporary conspiracy theory.
3. Interpret documentary evidence from a variety of sources in light of political, psychological, and sociological explanations of conspiracy theories.

Costs for learning resources can be found on the Campus Store website, using the links below, or by visiting the Campus Store location at your campus.

- Sutherland: <https://www.bkstr.com/sfleming-sutherlandstore/home>
- Frost: <https://www.bkstr.com/sfleming-froststore/home>

Assessment Summary

Assessment Task	Percentage
Assignments	45%
Presentations	15%
Tests	40%

Student Success: Policies and Procedures

Mutually, faculty and learners will support and adhere to college Academic Regulations, and Student Rights and Responsibilities. The following policies and guidelines have been developed to support the learning process.

Please click on the link for information about:

- [Academic Integrity \(2-201A\)](#)
(<https://department.flemingcollege.ca/hr/attachment/7750/download>)
- [Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities \(3-341\)](#)
(<https://department.flemingcollege.ca/hr/attachment/5619/download>)
- [Grading and Academic Standing \(2-201C\)](#)
(<https://department.flemingcollege.ca/hr/attachment/7752/download>)
- [Guidelines for Professional Practice: Students and Faculty](#)
(<https://flemingcollege.ca/PDF/guidelines-for-professional-practice-students-faculty.pdf>)
- [Student Rights and Responsibilities \(5-506\)](#)
(<https://department.flemingcollege.ca/hr/attachment/269/download>)

If you will need academic accommodations (for example if you have a learning disability, mental health condition such as anxiety or depression or if you had an IEP in high school), please contact the [Accessible Education Services \(AES\)](#) department (<https://department.flemingcollege.ca/aes/>) to meet with a counsellor.

Alternate accessible formats of learning resources and materials will be provided, on request.

Program Standards

The **Ministry of Colleges and Universities** oversees the development and the review of standards for programs of instruction. The **Ministry of Labour Training and Skills Development** oversees the development and the review of standards for programs of instruction for Apprenticeship training in the province of Ontario. Each college is required to ensure that its programs and program delivery are consistent with these standards, and must assist students to achieve these essential outcomes.

This course contributes to Program Standards as defined by the [Ministry of Colleges and Universities](#) (MCU). Program standards apply to all similar programs of instruction offered by colleges across the province. Each program standard for a postsecondary program includes the following elements:

- **Vocational standards** (the vocationally specific learning outcomes which apply to the program of instruction in question);
- **Essential employability skills** (the essential employability skills learning outcomes which apply to all programs of instruction); and
- **General education requirement** (the requirement for general education in postsecondary programs of instruction that contribute to the development of citizens who are conscious of the diversity, complexity and richness of the human experience; and, the society in which they live and work).

Collectively, these elements outline the essential skills and knowledge that a student must reliably demonstrate in order to graduate from the program. For further information on the standards for your program, follow the MCU link (www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/audiences/colleges/progstan/).

Detail Plan

Term:	2025 Spring
Faculty:	Dennis Vanderspek - dennis.vanderspek@flemingcollege.ca LeeAnn Fenlon - LeeAnn.Fenlon@flemingcollege.ca
Program Co-ordinator or Equivalent:	Lisa Stefaniak - lisa.stefaniak@flemingcollege.ca
Dean (or Chair):	Emily Root - Emily.Root@flemingcollege.ca

Learning Plan

Wks/Hrs Units	Topics, Resources, Learning, Activities	Learning Outcomes	Assessment
1	Module One What is a conspiracy theory? Why study them, and how?	1, 2, 3	Guided Seminars (throughout; 15%) (Timing, topics, and group membership determined in Week Two)
2	Conspiracy Theories in 2024: Framing the Conversation Occam's Razor and Identity-protecting reasoning (IPR)	1, 2, 3	Mystery Assignment (2%);
3	Module Two: The Enemy Outside Roswell, Area 51, UFOs and the 2015/2021 U.S. Navy footage; Orientation to independent research project	1, 2, 3	
4	Historical Versions of The Enemy Outside: Masons, Catholics, the Illuminati, and the New World Order	1, 2, 3	Quiz One (5%)
5	Module Three: The Enemy Within The Cold War, Communists, and Zombies	1, 2, 3	
6	The Qanon Phenomenon and the Age of Social Media	1, 2, 3	Quiz Two (5%)
7	Mid-term test	1,2,3	Mid-term test (20%)
8	Break Week		
9	Module Four: The Great Climate Change Hoax Science and paradigm shifts; Climategate; Managing uncertainty; Scientific theories and (a little) epistemology		
10	Climate Change continued		Quiz Three (5%)
11	Module Five: Conspiracy Inc. Qanon; Pizzagate, Gamergate, and assorted other -gates		
12	The Social Contract and the Ottawa Freedom Convoy of 2022	1, 2, 3	Independent Research Project Proposal (5%)
13	Module Six: The Enemy Above The Age of Surveillance; 9/11; Edward Snowden; the NSA, CIA, CSIS, and theories of domestic spying	1, 2, 3	Quiz Four (5%)

Wks/Hrs Units	Topics, Resources, Learning, Activities	Learning Outcomes	Assessment
14	The Age of Surveillance: Your Cell Phone Has Your Number	1, 2, 3	
15	Exam (during seminar)	1, 2, 3	Exam (23%) Independent Research Project (15%)

Assessment Requirements

Assessment Task	Date/Weeks	Course Learning Outcome	Percentage
Mystery Assignment	1	1,2,3	2%
In-class Quizzes (4 x 5% = 20%)	Weeks 4, 6, 10, 13	1, 2, 3	20%
Guided Seminar. Guided seminars are team-based opportunities to teach the class a relevant concept, issue, theory, or application.	Scheduled throughout (timing determined in Week Two)	1, 2, 3	15%
Mid-term test	7	1,2,3	20%
Independent Research Project Proposal	11	1,2,3	5%
Independent Research Project	14	1, 2, 3	15%
Exam	15	1, 2, 3	23%

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Statement

NO ASSESSMENTS. Generative AI tools (like ChatGPT) may only be used to assist exploratory learning and cannot directly contribute to any assessment as part of this course.

It is the responsibility of students to maintain a history of records and supporting documentation to demonstrate their efforts in all academic submissions, even if submission of these is not part of the final academic deliverable.

Exemption Contact

Information about the Transfer Credit process can be accessed through your myCampus Portal under the Registrar's Office and Resources Tabs or by contacting transfercredit@flamingcollege.ca.

Prior Learning and Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

PLAR uses tools to help learners reflect on, identify, articulate, and demonstrate past learning which has been acquired through study, work and other life experiences and which is not recognized through formal transfer of credit

mechanisms. PLAR options include authentic assessment activities designed by faculty that may include challenge exams, portfolio presentations, interviews, and written assignments. Learners may also be encouraged and supported to design an individual documentation package that would meet the learning requirements of the course. Any student who wishes to have any prior learning acquired through life and work experience assessed, so as to translate it into a college credit, may initiate the process by applying through the Registrar's office. For more information please click on the following link: <http://flemingcollege.ca/admissions/prior-learning-assessment-and-recognition>

Course Specific Policies and Procedures

It is the responsibility of the student to retain this course outline for future reference. Course outlines may be required to support applications for advanced standing and credit transfer to other educational institutions, portfolio development, PLAR and accreditation with professional associations.

Synchronous sessions may be recorded. As a result, your image, voice, name, personal views and opinions, and course work may be collected under legal authority of section 2 of the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002. This information will be used for the purpose of supporting student learning. Any questions about this collection can be directed to the Privacy and Policy Officer at freedomofinformation@flemingcollege.ca or by mail to 599 Brealey Drive, Peterborough, ON K9J 7B1.

LATE POLICY

You must submit/present all written/oral assignments on their assigned dates unless you make specific arrangements in writing/voice mail/E-mail with your professor at least 24 hours prior to the due date in question. In the case of any emergency, make arrangements (in writing, if necessary) immediately upon your return. Your professor will make special arrangements for valid reasons only. In the case of illness, you may be required to provide a medical note. Other extenuating circumstances will be discussed on an individual basis. A penalty of 10% per day will be applied to an assignment not submitted by the original or extended due date. An assignment more than three days late will receive a grade of zero. Weekends are counted as two days. No assignment will be accepted after the last day of classes without prior arrangement with your professor.

No assignment will be accepted by email without prior arrangement with your professor. There are no extra credit assignments or assignments in addition to those listed on this outline.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic Integrity refers to honoring an ethical and moral code regarding the honest creation of an individual's own work and the acknowledgement of contributions from others to that work.

Academic Integrity Violations and Sanctions

Academic integrity breaches are assessed according to the severity and number of offences. A breach will be assessed based on a system that includes four (4) types of violations and corresponding sanctions as depicted below.

1. TYPE I violations may be deemed to be minor in nature and to have affected a small portion of the work in question

Mandatory sanction: Mandatory completion of an Academic Integrity module.

Optional sanctions: 1. Resubmission of the original assessment piece 2. Submission of a new assessment piece 3. Portion of assessment piece receives a grade of "0" resulting in a reduced overall grade.

2. TYPE II violations are of a more serious or extensive nature than the ones described in Type I or are those which affect a more significant aspect or portion of the work.

Mandatory sanction: A grade of "0" on the assignment and completion of an Academic Integrity Education module.

3. TYPE III violations affect a substantial portion of work done to meet course requirements and/or involve premeditation, or a student has repeated Type I or II violations. Students will not receive refunds for disciplinary actions.

Mandatory sanction: Grade of "0" for the course and completion of an Academic Integrity Education module.

4. TYPE IV violations are reserved for the most serious breaches of academic integrity and/or incidents preceded by repeated violations at all previous levels. Students will not receive refunds for disciplinary actions.

Mandatory sanction: Suspension from the College for a minimum of one semester.

Please refer to the following documents for additional information: 1. College Policy #2-201A Academic Integrity and 2. Administrative Operating Procedure #OP 2-201A Academic Integrity.

PLAGIARISM

In essence, plagiarism is the submission for credit of work taken without due documentation from an existing source. One form of plagiarism involves direct incorporation, without proper credit, of phrases, passages of text, images, or data of any kind from an existing source. A second form involves using data or information without proper credit (even though the incorporated information is paraphrased or otherwise not in direct form). The following are all types of plagiarism:

1. Copying text word-for-word from the Internet without giving proper credit.
2. Incorporating text from the Internet, but inadequately paraphrasing or summarizing (for example, just changing a few words). Note that this is plagiarism *whether or not it is properly cited*. A paraphrase, in particular, must be unrecognizably related to the original source text.
3. Submitting an assignment and claiming it as your own when it was actually written by someone else or copied from someone else.

See the Fleming College Library website for information on documentation:

<http://flemingcollege.ca.libguides.com/apastyle>