

Fall Semester 2025 3 credit hours

1. CLT 3930 Conspiracy Theory Ancient and Modern

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115C Dauer Hall (enter at Dauer 125)

352-273-3696

Email via Canvas is preferred. vepagan@ufl.edu is available but not preferred.

2. Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 2:00-3:00 pm, 115C Dauer Hall

3. Course objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

Describe the origin of conspiracy theory as a subject of study

Identify key components of conspiracy theory

Analyze historical events in philosophical terms

4. Weekly schedule

Week	Day	Date	Reading	Assignment
	F	8/22	Intro	
1	M	25	Popper, <i>Open Society</i> Chapter 10	
	W	27		
	F	29		
2	M	9/1	LABOR DAY	
	W	3	Gombrich on publication of Popper	
	F	5	Pigden, “Popper Revisited”	
3	M	8	Hofstadter, “Paranoid Style”	Popper essay
	W	10		
	F	12		
4	M	15	Mediasite: Thucydides	quiz
	W	17	Thucydides Book 6	
	F	19	Mediasite: Livy	quiz
5	M	22	Livy, Bacchanalian Affair	
	W	24		
	F	26		
6	M	29	Keeley	Livy qua Hofstadter
	W	10/1	Clarke	
	F	3	Basham	
7	M	6	Coady	
	W	8	Stokes	
	F	10	Review	
8	M	13	Cicero, Against Catiline 1-2	
	W	15	Cicero, Against Catiline 3-4	
	F	17	HOMECOMING	

9	M	20	Sallust, Catilinarian Conspiracy (Woodman)	
	W	22		
	F	24		Catiline qua Epistemology
10	M	27	Tacitus, Annals: Germanicus (Damon)	
	W	29	Tacitus, Annals: Fire of 64	
	F	31	(Halloween!)	
11	M	11/3	Tacitus, Annals: Pisonian Conspiracy	
	W	5		
	F	7	Mediasite: Conspiracy Narratives	quiz
12	M	10	Butter, <i>Nature of Conspiracy Theories</i> Intro	Tacitus essay
	W	12	Butter Chapter 1	
	F	14	Butter Chapter 2	
13	M	17	Butter Chapter 3	
	W	19	Butter Chapter 4	
	F	21	Butter Chapter 5	
14	M	12/1	Review	
	W	3	“State of Play: Conspiracy Theory”	Review of Butter

5. Method of Evaluation

3 500-word essays (Popper, Livy, Catiline), 15% each 45%

2 500-word essays (Tacitus, Review of Butter), 20% each 40%

3 quizzes in Canvas, 5% each 15%

No form of AI is allowed on any assignments.

A = 100–93%	B = 86-83%	C = 76-73%	D = 66-63%
A- = 92–90%	B- = 82–80%	C- = 72-70%	D- = 62-60%
B+ = 89-87%	C+ = 79-77%	D+ = 69-67%	E < 60%

Grades are rounded to the nearest whole number (e.g., 89.4% = 89% and 89.5% = 90%).

6. Textbooks

Damon, Cynthia, translator. 2013. *Tacitus. Annals*. Penguin. Recommended.

Woodman, A. J., translator. 2008. *Catiline's War, The Jugurthine War, Histories*.

Penguin. Recommended.

Butter, M. 2021. *The Nature of Conspiracy Theories*. Polity Press. Required.

7. There are no Materials and Supplies Fees for this course. Materials and Supplies are N/A.

8. This course does not satisfy a general education requirement.

9. Click [here](#) for all academic policies and resources for this class.

CLAS Specific Policies:

1. My office hours are Monday, Wednesday, 2:00-3:00 pm, 115C Dauer Hall.
2. This course uses the Canvas course management system, at a minimum, to post the syllabus and keep track of student grades.
3. This is the [catalog description](#) for CLT 3930:
CLA 3930 Special Topics in Classical Civilization 3 credits
Grading Scheme: Letter Grade
Examines various aspects of Greek and Roman culture based on the ancient sources, literary, and archaeological.
Prerequisite: ENC 1101 or sophomore standing or higher.
4. This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link](#)."
5. My late/make-up policy aligns directly with UF policy. Work missed due to excused absences can be made up without penalty.
6. On the last day of class or during reading days, we will not have a final exam.
7. You are allowed to keep your phone on and silenced to receive notifications from the Emergency Notification System.
8. This course does not fulfill a general education requirement.
9. These are all the class materials that are available in Canvas.
 - Popper, K. R. 1945. "Chapter 10: The Open Society and its Enemies," in *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Reprinted 1947. London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd.: 149-177.
 - Hofstadter, Richard. 1963. "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," in *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays*, First Harvard University Press paperback edition, 1996. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 3-40.
 - Keeley, Brian L. 1999. "Of Conspiracy Theories," *The Journal of Philosophy* 96: 109-126.
 - Basham, Lee. 2001. "Living with the Conspiracy," *The Philosophical Forum* 32: 265-80.
 - Clarke, Steve. 2002. "Conspiracy Theories and Conspiracy Theorizing," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 32: 131-150.
 - Coady, David. 2003. "Conspiracy Theories and Official Stories," in *Conspiracy Theories: The Philosophical Debate*, edited by David Coady, 2006. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited: 115-127.
 - Stokes, Patrick. 2018. "On Some Moral Costs of Conspiracy Theory," in *Taking Conspiracy Theories Seriously*, edited by M R. X. Dentith, 2018. London: Rowman & Littlefield: 189-202.
 - Pigden, Charles. 1995. "Popper Revisited, or What Is Wrong With Conspiracy Theories?," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 25.1: 3-34.
 - Pagán, Victoria. 2025. "State of Play: Conspiracy Theory," *American Journal of Philology* 146.3: 383-395.
10. This syllabus does not contain a Covid policy.
11. Although I have the right to modify aspects of this course, I only do so when it is a benefit to student learning. Other aspects of the class will not be modified during the term, such as the grading scheme, attendance policy, objectives, etc.