



CONSPIRACY

A Graduate Conference in American Studies

How do we think of *conspiracy* on its own terms? What we often shorthand as simply “conspiracy” often accompanies seismic cultural, political, and economic upheavals. Many have noted its instrumental role in practices of exclusion and inclusion, but also in fracturing opportunities for solidarity, cooperation, and allyship. While we are indebted to extant research on conspiracy theories, particularly those of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, with this conference we hope to engage in a more expansive consideration of conspiracy, taking into account its many valences beyond the narrow representations which dominate contemporary narratives. How might we return to thinking about conspiracy as an act of unified resistance, as the process of building solidarities, as a way to “breathe together”?

From slave revolts in the 18th through 19th centuries to counter-surveillance movements and articulations of sovereign citizenship in the contemporary moment, conspiracy in the social imagination connotes the potential for resistance and revolution in apposition with and opposition to figurations of paranoia. How do conspiracies operate as modes through which individuals and communities might demand accountability outside of legal frameworks? How is conspiracy fused with and fissured away from superstition? How do conspiracies offer commentary on dire circumstances and insight on how people build worlds and reconstruct systems through – and in spite of – limited information? What would a conspiracy of the undercommons look like? If the world is too big to know, how do we form our ways of knowing?

The Program in American Studies at Princeton University proposes an interdisciplinary conference interrogating the multiple valences of conspiracy in the United States and its imperial reach. We invite graduate students working in the humanities and social sciences, artists, political prisoners, organizers and intellectuals (broadly conceived) to submit papers on topics including – but not limited to – conspiracy and:

- | | |
|--|---|
| → surveillance & suspicion | → epidemics |
| → solidarities | → natural disasters |
| → fugitivity, resistance & defiance | → toxicity & environmental exposure |
| → (counter) knowledge formation & production | → the carceral state |
| → the undercommons | → counterpublics |
| → citizen science | → speculative futures |
| → slavery & abolition | → gender & sexuality |
| → law & legal processes | → medicine & experimentation |
| → literature, music & media (including rap, hip-hop, Afrofuturism) | → capitalism, neoliberalism & economic inequality |
| → evidence | → superstition & (para-)religious practices |
| → disability | → race, ethnicity & nationality |
| | → sovereignty |

Please submit an abstract of no more than 300 words, a short biographical description, and your contact information by **December 20th, 2018**. Proposals should be submitted at ams.princeton.edu/conspiracy/cfp.

Any questions should be sent to conference organizers Kessie Alexandre, Kimberly Bain, and Janet Kong-Chow at amsgraduateconference@gmail.com.

Please circulate widely.

Conference date:

April 12th, 2019