

***Audience:* Scholars who want to work in Conspiracy Theory Studies but don't know how to do the work they want to do.**

***Purpose:* To teach them what they need to know in order to do the work they want to do.**

***Key Task:* Design and write an essay that serves this purpose for this audience.**

Project Design Phase

- Choose a field of study
- Conduct initial background research
- Draft an answerable essential question and a series of supporting questions
- Determine what you need to know to answer each question
- Identify the primary and secondary sources that will help you answer your questions
- Identify the databases that will allow you to locate your sources

Research, Analysis, and Rethinking Phase

- Gather an initial set of targeted primary and secondary sources
- Read, take notes, analyze, and synthesize these sources
- Update your annotated bibliography
- Reconceptualize your essential question
- Rewrite your supporting questions
- Try to answer them in a series of claims
- Analyze your research needs again
- Return to design phase for project re-design
- Return to research phase for more targeted research, analysis, and rethinking

Design elements for a "Guide to a Conspiracy Theory Collection" Essay

- Need to deal with readers' initial skepticism about CT as an area of scholarly study.
- Introduction to the societal phenomenon of CT/conspiracy belief/conspiracism.
- Orientation to Conspiracy Theory Studies: main players, areas of consensus, points of debate.
- Elaboration of the theoretical and methodological approaches to CT Studies that have been tried, and an argument about what you think are the best ways to do this work.
- Description and justification of the design of the archive.
- Sample analyses, essential questions, arguments.
- Discussion of what kinds of scholars would/should be interested in CT Studies.
- Discussion of the potential significance of this collection of sources.
- Discussion of significance, importance of doing this work at this time in our society.