Conspiracy theories are quite prominent in current American life. Often the use of “conspiracy theory” is derogatory in nature, allowing a rejection of the proffered theory out of hand. However, I believe conspiracy theories can be useful tools for thinking about the nature of reasoning, argumentation and explanation. Additionally, conspiracy theories provide a model for interdisciplinary and global understanding. A full appreciation of conspiracy theories relies on a cross section of work in political discourse, psychology, sociology, literature, pop culture and philosophy. There has been much academic work in the last few years on conspiracy theories. Within philosophy there is the book *Conspiracy Theories: The Philosophical Debate* (2006) edited by David Coady and recent essays by Cass Sunstein and Juha Raikka in *The Journal of Political Philosophy* (2009). Michael Barkun’s book, *A Culture of Conspiracy* (2003), takes an in-depth sociological approach while Kathryn S. Olmsted provides a very interesting history of the political role of conspiracy theories in 20th century politics in her book *Real Enemies* (2009). This presentation will look at these, and other, recent works of academic and popular literature on conspiracies in order to help better understand the allure and nature of conspiracy theories.