

# Academic Research is in Danger of Becoming a Joke

What do [a gay man expressing his voyeuristic fantasies about intercourse with Dominican sex workers](#), Pumpkin Spiced Lattés demonstrating [inherent White Supremacy](#), a doctoral thesis on [ethical implications of ghosts and scary stories on the internet](#), and the need for a [Feminist epistemology of glaciers](#) have in common? They're all the topics of academic papers and theses published in the humanities and social sciences.

To the uninitiated, Academia, in particular the social sciences and humanities, is flourishing with this sort of codswallop. "Answers" to useless research questions, which have no applicable merit, are sometimes published at the burden of the taxpayer dollar. In fact, gaining knowledge for the "sake of gaining knowledge" is often encouraged; the research methods book I was assigned, [The Craft of Research by Booth, Colomb, and Williams](#), states: "Most research projects in the humanities and many in the natural and social sciences have no direct application to daily life. But as the term pure suggests, many researchers value such research (conceptual) more than they do applied (research)." They believe that the pursuit of knowledge "for its own sake" reflects humanity's highest calling.

While this might be an enviable outlook, I, and many others, fail to see how an author's experience of [wearing a skort at a fitness center](#), or writing about how you feel while [drinking a latte and reading The Guardian](#), or a peer-reviewed paper on [breast flashing during a hockey tournament](#) for lesbians count as laudable scholarship. While the natural sciences are more immune from such speculative questioning, the humanities and social sciences are inundated with this sort of ridiculous "quests for knowledge."

Another idea that's emphasized: you only need to find one reader who is interested in reading your project?—?which could mean your idea for an academic paper could be as banal, abstract, and ridiculous as possible but as long as one reader is interested, the project is acceptable. I'd imagine it's easy to find a reader in an academic environment where your professor is heavily invested in concepts such as [reflections of gender and race while watching videos of people trying to dance like Beyoncé](#).

Where these academic tendencies come from, I do not know. My best venture is that they're the bastardized versions of postmodern, critical race, feminist, and gender study theories, put forth by devout theorists thirsty to see power structures where they do not exist, eager to “deconstruct” realities meanwhile creating their own, and striving to create oppression when it's not evident. Obviously, Academia is still mired by the demon of Publish or Perish?—?academics have to churn out papers to be considered relevant but it's easy to see how “pursuing knowledge for the sake of knowledge” is perverted in the humanities and social sciences.

This sort of “academic research” is being uncovered by the Twitter account, “Real Peer Review” (@realpeerreview), which is comprised of an anonymous team of academics? who perhaps feel slighted that their colleagues have resorted to publishing such speculative, obtuse, and preposterous studies.

The account frequently highlights the vapidness these humanities and social science scholars operate in and cuts through their academic speak, making it easy for us laymen to understand what's actually being said is... well, malarkey.

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