

Sloan, N. (2022). Beyond based and cringe: An examination of contemporary modes of irony and sincerity in cultural production

<https://doi.org/10.47761/494a02f6.7090a2e8>

This source talks about the how to discern between irony and sincerity online. I think that a part that stood out to me was when it said that irony was the communication norm in some online communities. It suggests that irony in these communities primes the readers to be skeptical of government or authority people speech. Sloan's definition of irony poisoning as "irony-becoming-sincerity" is useful for determining how a user on r/alien might start by ironically sharing a meme about a government cover-up and end up genuinely believing it. This is an academic and recent source, so it should be relevant.

Godwin, E., Davidson, B. I., Hill, T., & Joinson, A. (2024). Internet memes as stabilizers of online community cultures

I think this study gives me a useful methodology that I can directly apply to r/alien. It states that memes are a cultural resource that stabilizes the rhetoric surrounding a topic. This could mean that memes stabilize government distrust overtime. The authors found several types of conspiratorial memes, which are Deception, Delusion, and Superiority, which provides a nice template for my research. I think I can use these to categorize the memes on r/alien, where the government is consistently framed as the agent of "Deception", public as suffering from "Delusion" for believing official narratives, and the subreddit's users as possessing a "Superiority" for knowing the truth. It lets me keep a structured format for categories of memes. It is also a very recent source, and it is relevant to reddit communities that have some forms of government distrust