

The Sokal affair, also called the Sokal hoax,[1] was a demonstrative scholarly hoax performed by Alan Sokal, a physics professor at New York University and University College London. In 1996, Sokal submitted an article to *Social Text*, an academic journal of postmodern cultural studies. The submission was an experiment to test the journal's intellectual rigor, and specifically to investigate whether "a leading North American journal of cultural studies—whose editorial collective includes such luminaries as Fredric Jameson and Andrew Ross—[would] publish an article liberally salted with nonsense if (a) it sounded good and (b) it flattered the editors' ideological preconceptions

The article, "Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity",[3] was published in the journal's spring/summer 1996 "Science Wars" issue. It proposed that quantum gravity is a social and linguistic construct. At that time, the journal did not practice academic peer review and it did not submit the article for outside expert review by a physicist.[4][5] Three weeks after its publication in May 1996, Sokal revealed in the magazine *Lingua Franca* that the article was a hoax. The hoax caused controversy about the scholarly merit of commentary on the physical sciences by those in the humanities; the influence of postmodern philosophy on social disciplines in general; academic ethics, including whether Sokal was wrong to deceive the editors and readers of *Social Text*; and whether *Social Text* had exercised appropriate intellectual rigor.