

Drugs, Crime, and Society

CLJ 429

Spring Semester, 2007

Syllabus

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Office Hours:	T, Th 1:30-2:30pm & appt.	M, W 12:00-1:00pm & appt.
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Class Location: Willard 371
Class Meets: T, Th 9:45-11:00

Thou hast the keys of Paradise, oh, just, subtle, and mighty opium.
~Thomas De Quincey, author

A junkie is someone who uses their body to tell society that something is wrong.
~Stella Adler, actress

I've never had problems with drugs. I've had problems with the police.
~Keith Richards, rock star

COURSE OVERVIEW

Why do people take drugs? Why and how does society attempt to control drug use and distribution? What are the relationships between drugs and crime? Exploring questions such as these will be central concerns in CLJ 429. The focus of this course will be examining explanations of drug use and the social construction of drug policies. We will begin by asking the question "What are drugs?" From there, we will discuss theories of drug abuse and the methods used to study patterns of drug use. We will also take an in-depth look at the histories, pharmacologies, and patterns associated with the most popular drugs in modern society. In the second half of the semester, we will focus on the social control of drugs and the connections between drugs and crime. At the heart of this discussion will be the causes and consequences of modern U.S. drug policies. We will conclude with a look at alternative drug policies and a look at what the future may hold for drug use in America.

Throughout the semester, you will be asked to think critically about material and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. To foster critical thinking skills, you will have ample opportunities to discuss topics in class, analyze arguments in written assignments and in-class exercises, and apply ideas to real world situations through course projects and presentations.

OBJECTIVES

The goals emphasized in this course are:

- Understanding drug types and patterns of use
- Understanding, applying, and evaluating theories of drug use and drug policies
- Effectively communicating ideas in written and oral formats
- Connecting sociological ideas with real-world phenomena

REQUIRED TEXTS

Goode, Erich. 2005. *Drugs in American Society*. 6th Edition. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Reinerman, Craig and Harry G. Levine (eds). 1997. *Crack in America: Demon Drugs and Social Justice*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

COURSE WEBPAGE

Additional readings and course information can be found at the course website:

http://www.personal.psu.edu/dak27/clj429_homepage.htm

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Reading and Class Participation: The success of this course depends on your prior preparation and active participation in classroom discussions. The format of the class will vary day-by-day, and will include lectures, discussions, practical exercises, review sessions, and a mixture of these activities. For classroom time to be productive, it is essential that you read the required materials and come to class willing to participate. A portion of your final grade will reflect your in-class participation. Short in-class quizzes will also make up a portion of your class participation grade.

Two In-Class Examinations: The Midterm and Final exams will be equally weighted and non-cumulative. The exams will primarily consist of short answer and essay questions. The exams are scheduled on **March 8th** and during finals week, **May 7-11th**. **We are not planning make-up exams**; please plan accordingly.

Course Projects: There are two written projects for this course, and each project has an oral presentation component. The first project requires students to write a description of an aspect (e.g. pharmacology, history, trends, etc.) of a particular type of drug (3-5 pages, typed, and double spaced). After writing this summary, students will work in small groups to present a 15 minute overview of their drug to the rest of the class. The second course project is a longer counterpoint paper summarizing and critiquing an important debate about drugs in society. This paper will be 7-10 pages, typed, and double spaced and include at least five peer-reviewed references. Topics will be chosen from a list provided in class. In the final week of the course, students will argue one side of their chosen debate in mock senate hearings. Details for both projects will be provided in separate handouts.

GRADING

Assignments and Points Breakdown		Grading Scale	
		Total Points	Grade
Midterm	100 points	330-350	A
		315-329	A-
Course Projects		300-314	B+
Drug Descriptive Paper and Presentation	25 points	285-299	B
Counterpoint Paper Outline and Bibliography	15 points	270-284	B-
Counterpoint Paper	60 points	255-269	C+
Mock Senate Hearing Debate	25 points	230-254	C
		190-229	D
Final Exam	100 points	<190	F
Class Participation/Quizzes	25 points		
Total	350 points		

Students with special needs: Pennsylvania State University is committed to providing equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please let me know as soon as possible.

Turning in Assignments and Late Policy: All written assignments should be turned in as hardcopies either in-class or in my mailbox (211 Oswald) by 5pm on the day the assignment is due. Although we will take assignments handed in late, they will be penalized. Each assignment will have 10% of its points deducted per day that it is late. For assignments due toward the end of the course, turning them in late may result in your final grade not being completed in time.

Policy for Contesting Grades: If you feel that a mistake was made in a test or paper grade, please submit a written request for re-evaluation that lists (1) your name and the assignment, (2) the question or task that was marked incorrect, and (3) your justification for a grade change. I will review the request and make a judgment about the final grade.

Office Hours: We will have weekly office hours that I encourage you to attend if you feel you need additional instruction or have questions on the material. We also check our e-mail regularly and may answer any questions you have in that manner. The key to any problems you may have in this course is early identification and open communication. We are more than willing to help you be successful in achieving your goals for this course.

Student Collaboration: Other students can be an excellent learning resource. We encourage you to get to know your classmates and study together. As you talk with others during the first week, try writing a few names down on the lines below with their phone numbers or e-mail addresses.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Discussion Etiquette: Discussions in this course will often involve controversial topics which you may have strong feelings about. Although we want to encourage you to express your thoughts on these issues, we expect you to be courteous toward others by providing those speaking your undivided attention and not making comments which may be construed as personal attacks. The best way to ensure this occurs is to look at all sides of an argument and understand where others may be coming from. For our part, we will do our utmost to be courteous to everyone in the class and give our full attention to those who are speaking.

Promptness: I expect you to attend class and be on time. If you do not attend regularly, I will be unsympathetic should your grade not be what you expect.

Honesty: There is no excuse for cheating on individual assignments. If it comes to our attention that a student has cheated, we will pursue the matter to its fullest extent. For the university's formal policy regarding academic dishonesty, visit <http://www.psu.edu/dept/oue/aappm/G-9.html>. If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism, please visit <http://tlit.its.psu.edu/suggestions/cyberplag/cyberplagstudent.html>.

Have Fun!: As a final note, we want us all to try our best to have fun in this course. If there are suggestions which you feel may liven up the classroom, or if you have any other concerns about the way the class is proceeding, please let us know.

Class Schedule

Week 1: Drugs from a Sociological Perspective

Readings: Goode Ch. 1, Reinerman and Levine Ch. 4

Jan 16 Introduction to Course/Syllabus, What are drugs?

Jan 18 Defining drug use, abuse, and dependence

Week 2-3: Drug Pharmacology and Theories of Drug Use

Readings: Goode Ch. 2 & 3

Jan 23 Biological Theories, Film: **The Hijacked Brain**

Jan 25 Psychological and Strain Theories

Readings: Becker (on-line), Reinerman and Levine Ch. 5

Jan 30 Social Learning and Control Theories

Feb 1 Conflict and Labeling Theories

Week 4: Measuring the Extent of Drug Use

Readings: Goode Ch. 6 & 7

Feb 6 Drug Research Methods and Data

Feb 8 Historical Trends in Drug Use, Film: **Altered States: A History of Drug Use in America**

Week 5: Licit Drugs: Alcohol, Tobacco, and Psychotherapeutic Drugs

Readings: Goode Ch. 8

Feb 13 Group 1 Student Presentations

Feb 15 Film: **Demon Rum**

Week 6: Marijuana, LSD, and Club Drugs

Readings: Goode Ch. 9, The DEA Position on Marijuana (on-line)

Feb 20 Group 2 Student Presentations, The Gateway Hypothesis

Feb 22 Film: **Hooked: LSD, Ecstasy, and the Raves**

Week 7: Stimulants

Readings: Goode Ch. 10, Reinerman and Levine Ch. 7

Feb 27 Group 3 Student Presentations

Mar 1 Film: **The Meth Epidemic**

Week 8: Heroin and Narcotics

Readings: Goode Ch. 11

Mar 6 Group 4 Student Presentations

*****Midterm March 8*****

Week 9: No Class - Spring Break

Week 10: The Media and Drug Perceptions

Readings: Goode Ch. 5, Reinerman and Levine Ch. 2

Mar 20 Theories of the Media

Mar 22 Drug Scares and Moral Entrepreneurs

Week 11: The Drugs and Crime Nexus

Readings: Goode Ch. 12, Reinerman and Levine Ch. 6, Boles and Miotto (on-line)

Mar 27 Theories of Drugs and Crime

Mar 29 Theories of Drugs and Violence

Week 12: The Drug Industry

Readings: Goode Ch. 13, UN World Drug Report (on-line), Valdez and Sifaneck (on-line)

*******Paper Outlines due April 3rd*******

Apr 3 International Drug Trade

Apr 5 Street Dealing and Gangs

Week 13: Drug Control and Treatment

Readings: Goode Ch. 14, Reinerman and Levine Ch.13, Wilson (on-line)

Apr 10 Law Enforcement and Punitive Prohibition

Apr 12 Drug Treatment and Drug Court

Week 14: Progressive Views

Readings: Goode Ch. 15, Reinerman and Levine Ch. 17, MacCoun and Reuter (on-line)

Apr 17 Legalization and Decriminalization

Apr 19 Harm Reduction

*******Final Papers due April 24th*******

Apr 24 National Comparative Research

Week 15-16: Mock Debates and Course Review

Apr 26 Debates Groups 1 & 2

May 1 Debates Groups 3 & 4

May 3 Course Review