Drugs, Crime, and Society
CLJ 429

Spring Semester, 2007
Syllabus

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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


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**

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<th>Assignments and Points Breakdown</th>
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**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](http://www.psu.edu/dept/oue/aappm/G-9.html). If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism, please visit [http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/cyberplag/cyberplagstudent.html](http://tlt.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.
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