

Department of Sociology

Instructor:	Dr. Elizabeth Withers
Office:	Cramer Hall 217C
Availability:	Zoom or phone office hours by appointment
Email:	elizabew@pdx.edu
Course Title:	Alcohol & Other Drugs
CRN:	63161
Credits:	4
Course Meeting Schedule:	Asynchronous Online

Course Description

This course is designed as a *sociological* investigation of drug use in America. As such, our focus will be on the *social* patterning of drug use and the related experiences of regulation, treatment, and general consequences/benefits of use. Topics covered include the different categories of drugs and their basic pharmacology, criminalization of drug use and the war on drugs, media portrayals of drugs and the people who use drugs, as well as social efforts to reform drug laws in terms of legalization, decriminalization, and harm reduction programs. This is neither a “just say no” nor a “how to” course. Rather, the aim here is to explore drug use in all of its complexity with a critical analysis of the prevalence of misinformation regarding drugs and drug use, as well as the function and repercussions of such misinformation.

Content Warning: Much of the content of this course deals with upsetting topics. From the effects of drug use, to the state sanctioned racial violence of the war on drugs, there are a lot of potentially triggering and/or retriggering topics.

Course Format and Expectations

First and foremost, no racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism or any other hate speech/intimidation will be tolerated.

This is a fully online course. Unlike courses that have been designed for remote learning during covid, this course is fully asynchronous and is designed to be accessible to students with varying schedules. In other words, we will not be meeting virtually, rather each week you will complete one module at your own pace and in accordance with your own personal weekly schedule.

The weekly modules will include some combination of reading, videos, recorded lectures, group discussions, written reflections or learning activities and the occasional quiz.

Required Texts

Hart, Carl L. 2021. *Drug use for Grown-Ups: Chasing Liberty in the Land of Fear*. New York: Penguin Press.

This book is also on reserve in the library.

Technology:

This course requires students to regularly access the course site on Canvas. Course announcements, materials, discussions, assignments, and quizzes will all be posted/administered via the course site. It is vital that students have the technology and connection needed to check the site on a daily basis. Furthermore, this course requires that students have both the internet access and digital literacy skills needed to navigate/search the web, use email, attach and upload documents, and download and save files.

Course Requirements

I have tried to design this course to be both rigorous and achievable. According to PSU's Academic Planning page students should expect to spend around 3-4 hours studying for every credit taken each week. As a 4 credit course that means you should expect to work around 12-16 hours per week. When planning for this course I have taken these time frames into account and believe you should each be able to complete the weekly reading and assignments reasonably within that time. That said, if you find that you are struggling to complete the reading and assignments within 16 hours each week please feel free to reach out and we can discuss a plan of action.

Online Learning activities (25%)

Each weekly module will include some kind of online learning activity. These will vary in form but may include written reflections, partner activities, games, video responses, quizzes etc. These assignments will be pass/fail.

Group Discussion participation (35%)

Each week there will be a discussion question posted to your discussion group forum. You will be asked to respond to the prompt as well as two other classmate's posts. [More detail regarding the requirements for the discussion question participation can be found here.](#)

Artifact Project (20%)

For this assignment you will be asked to develop a project that produces an "artifact". One theme that comes up repeatedly in this course is how drugs and the people who use them are portrayed by others, often in dangerously misleading ways. The purpose of this "artifact" should be to combat, expose, or explore some form of misinformation regarding drugs and/or people who use drugs. For example, you may decide to provide information, analysis, insight, food for thought, commentary or satirical content about a drug-related issue or topic. The actual artifact itself may take on any form you like and I encourage you to be creative! Some ideas include an op-ed, case study, multimedia presentation, infographic, zine, podcast, video, blog post, or some other format that you come up with. This assignment may be completed individually, with a partner, or in a small group. You will be presenting your artifact to the class during week 7. More detailed information about the assignment will be provided on canvas as well as instructions for working with others and finding partners to work with.

Position Paper (20%)

Your final will be in the form of a position paper on the topic of your choice around drug use in the U.S. The goal of this paper is to argue for a political policy outcome by drawing on the findings of peer-reviewed research that support your position. In doing so, you should address the social, economic, and health outcomes that your policy reform would affect. Additionally, you will need to include a discussion of any major counter arguments to the position for which you are advocating.

Make-up Policies

These are unprecedented times and we are each faced with unique challenges and barriers. As such, I will accept all late work for full credit with the exception of the final paper. I simply ask that you use this allowance only when needed.

Flexibility Statement

I reserve the right to modify course content and/or substitute assignments and learning activities in response to institutional or class situations.

Course Calendar/Schedule (*subject to change*)

Week One	1/9 - 1/14	Introduction to instructor, course requirements, and fellow students
Week Two	1/15 - 1/21	Introduction to Drug Use & History of Drug Use
Week Three	1/22 - 1/28	Drugs in the Media
Week Four	1/29 - 2/4	Alcohol & Tobacco
Week Five	2/5 - 2/11	Perspectives on Addiction
Week Six	2/12 - 2/18	Perspectives on Addiction Treatment
Week Seven	2/19 - 2/25	Artifact Presentations
Week Eight	2/26 - 3/4	Benefits of Drug Use
Week Nine	3/5 - 3/11	The War on Drugs in the US
Week Ten	3/12 - 3/18	The War on Drugs - abroad
Finals Week	3/19 - 3/25	Final Paper due by Midnight on Wednesday 3/22

PSU Policies and Resources

Academics

PSU Grading System

Undergraduate:

<http://pdx.smartcatalogiq.com/2021-2022/Bulletin/Undergraduate-Studies/Grading-System-for-Undergraduates>

Drop/Withdraw Deadline:

<http://pdx.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2021-2022/Bulletin/Academic-Calendar>

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital part of the educational experience at PSU. Please see the [PSU Student Code of Conduct](#) for the university's policy on academic dishonesty. A confirmed violation of that Code in this course may result in failure of the course.

Incomplete Policy

Students do not have a right to receive or demand an Incomplete grade. The option of assigning an Incomplete grade is at the discretion of the instructor when the following criteria are met.

Eligibility Criteria:

1. Required satisfactory course completion/participation.
2. Reasonable justification for the request.
3. Incomplete grade is not a substitute for a poor grade.
4. Written agreement. (See [Incomplete Contract](#))
5. Resolving the Incomplete.

For the full Incomplete Policy see

<https://www.pdx.edu/registration/grading-system#/?section=incompletegradei>

Student Services

Disability Access Statement

If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, drc@pdx.edu, <https://www.pdx.edu/disability-resource-center/>.

Safe Campus Statement

Portland State University desires to create a safe campus for our students. As part of that mission, PSU requires all students to take the learning module entitled Creating a Safe Campus: Preventing Gender Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Assault. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources on PSU's Enrollment

Management & Student Affairs: Sexual Prevention & Response website at <http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault>

Student Food Security

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact Committee for Improving Student Food Security for support at foodhelp@pdx.edu. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable her to provide any resources that she may possess.

Title IX Reporting

As an instructor, students frequently come to me for assistance in matters that are not related to the course material. Please be aware that PSU's policies require instructors to report any instance of sexual harassment, sexual and relationship violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination to University Officials, who keep the information private. If you would rather share information about these experiences with a PSU staff member who does not have these reporting responsibilities and can keep the information confidential, please contact one of the following campus resources.

- Confidential Advocates: 503.894.7982, or by [scheduling online](#) (for matters regarding sexual harassment and sexual and relationship violence)
- Center for Student Health and Counseling ([SHAC](#)): 1880 SW 6th Ave, 503.725.2800
- [Student Legal Services](#): 1825 SW Broadway, (SMSU) M343, 503.725.4556 For more information, please complete the required student module Understanding Sexual Misconduct and Resources in D2L.

[PSU Sexual Misconduct Response website](#) gives you comprehensive information about how to support and/or report an incident.

Please complete the required student module [Understanding Sexual Misconduct and Resources](#) in Canvas, which provides information about PSU policy and resources.

Cultural Resource Centers

The Cultural Resource Centers (CRCs) create a student-centered inclusive environment that enriches the university experience. We honor diversity, explore social justice issues, celebrate cultural traditions, and foster student identities, success, and leadership. Our centers include the Multicultural Student Center, La Casa Latina Student Center, Native American Student & Community Center, Pan African Commons, Pacific Islander, Asian, Asian American Student Center and the Middle Eastern, North African, South Asian program. We provide student leadership, employment, and volunteer opportunities; student resources such as computer labs, event, lounge and study spaces; and extensive programming. All are welcome!

Technology

We may use technology for virtual meetings and recordings in this course. Our use of such technology is governed by FERPA, the [Acceptable Use Policy](#) and PSU's [Student Code of Conduct](#). A record of all meetings and recordings is kept and stored by PSU, in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy and FERPA. Your instructor will not share recordings of your class activities outside of course participants, which include your fellow students, TAs/GAs/Mentors, and any guest faculty or community-based learning partners that we may engage with. **You may not share recordings outside of this course. Doing so may result in disciplinary action.**