

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER  
Department of Sociology

SOCY 2034: Drugs in U.S. Society  
Fall 2014  
Class Syllabus

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*“The world of global drug production, shipping distribution, sales, and consumption is too complex to be understood in any single us-and-them story.” ~John Gibler*

*“Drugs do not cause today’s alarming crime rates, but drug prohibition does.” ~James C. Paine*

*“Once brave politicians and others explain the war on drugs’ true cost, the American people will scream for a cease-fire. ‘Bring the troops home,’ people will urge. Treat drugs as a health problem, not as a matter for the criminal justice system.” ~Larry Elder*

*“Any fool can make a rule, and any fool will mind it.” ~Henry David Thoreau*

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**Instructor: Alex Thompson**

**Office:** Ketchum 8 (located in the basement)  
**Email:** alex.thompson-1@colorado.edu (allow 24 hours for a response)  
**Phone:** (507) 514-3423 (between 9am & 9pm *for emergencies only*)  
**Office Hours:** Mondays & Wednesdays 10:00am-12:00pm (and by appointment)  
**Course Webpage:** (D2L): <https://learn.colorado.edu/>  
**Class Time:** Monday, Wednesday, & Friday 9:00am-9:50am BESC 185

Feel free to contact me at any point during the semester. However, please **DO NOT** email me with questions regarding your grades. University policy prohibits talking about grades over email. If I receive an email from you asking me to explain or change a grade, I **WILL NOT** reply. If you would like to discuss your grades, please make an appointment or visit me during my office hours.

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**Required Texts**

- Adler, Patricia A., Peter Adler, and Patrick K. O’Brien. 2012. *Drugs and the American Dream: An Anthology*. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Son, Inc.
  - Additional readings will be posted on D2L. You are responsible for obtaining them.
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is an introduction to the sociology of drugs in our society. This course is not a “just say no” course, but neither is it a “how to” course. We will be discussing the social constructionist perspective as it pertains to legal and illegal drugs in the United States. We will explore the social, cultural, political, and economic processes

that shape our understanding of and policies toward drugs. We will also consider how believed truths and realities about drugs are often socially created, how social order and the control of drugs has been constructed and maintained, how culture and history influence perceptions of drugs, and how societal norms, values, and ideas concerning drugs are created and perpetuated.

The world of drugs is complicated and complex. The ingestion of chemicals for purposes of altering consciousness has been practiced in virtually all human cultures throughout history. Sometimes this has resulted in problems but sometimes not, depending on how a society defines and deals with drug use and citizen welfare.

It is my goal, as the instructor, to foster a comfortable learning environment where all members of the class can share their thoughts, ideas, and opinions. While the sociological study of drugs may elicit strong thoughts or offense from some, I ask that we all respect each other's opinions and feelings when discussing issues presented throughout the course. It is entirely appropriate to disagree with ideas but it is **not** appropriate to personally attack those with whom you disagree. A respectful classroom environment will facilitate more lively discussions and in turn result in a richer learning experience for all of us. If you have an issue with me or another colleague, you will meet with me and we will discuss it privately. It is my responsibility to ensure that the environment in this class is conducive to learning. Therefore, immature and ignorant attitudes will not be tolerated.

### **Learning Goals**

- Examine the current and historical cultural patterns of drug use in U.S. society. The emphasis will be on providing a theoretical understanding of the initiation, use, and misuse of psychoactive substances.
  - Investigate the social problem aspect of drugs in society. How are drugs defined as social problems and made salient in the public imagination? How does society choose which drugs to treat as social problems?
  - Study the laws and public policies intended to solve the social problem of drugs. What are the intended versus the real life effects of current laws and policies intended to curb drug use among the population?
  - Review the many treatment and prevention approaches currently used in society. What are the treatment and prevention strategies used today? How does the definition of this social problem affect our approach to it? What kinds of programs are successful and why?
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## **COURSE POLICIES & REQUIREMENTS**

### **Classroom Decorum**

We have a great deal of material to work through each class and thus we will generally need *all* available class time each day. You can expect me to begin and end class on time each day. I expect you to be prepared to start class on time, remain for the entire class, and to not pack your bags until our fifty minutes together have expired. If you have a conflict that requires you to arrive late or leave early, please inform me beforehand. All cell phones must be silenced and put away before class starts. Ringing or vibrating cell phones (or other electronics), texting, or other non-class activities are distracting to your fellow students and to me and will not be tolerated.

### **Attendance**

My policy on attendance is simple: if you want to attend, then attend. However, if you want to learn the material, you must attend class. If you want to succeed in this class, you must attend class. If you must miss a class, please make arrangements to get the notes from another student. I suggest that you exchange phone numbers and/or email addresses with the people seated near you.

I will be taking attendance at the start of each lecture but this is not for grading purposes. You are all adults and are paying *thousands* of dollars a semester for your education. It is up to you how much you want to get out of your investment. I take attendance purely in order to have an accurate record to provide the University with, should the need arise for any reason.

\*The only times I will accept **late assignments** or give **make-up exams** are when you provide me with written documentation of a death in your family, an illness/medical emergency, a court date, a religious conflict, or your participation in a University-supported activity in which you must participate within **one week** of your absence.

## **Readings**

You are required to complete all assigned readings before each class. You **must** be able to demonstrate your familiarity with them in your exams. This is the case regardless of whether or not they are discussed in lecture. The schedule of readings begins on page 6 of this syllabus. Readings not found in the course text can be found on the class D2L page under the “Content” tab.

\*\*\*Reading Quizzes: Every Wednesday I will give you a 5-question, multiple-choice, in-class quiz on the readings listed for that week in the syllabus. These will focus on primary concepts and arguments.

## **Exams**

There will be three exams in this course: two midterms and a final. Dates for exams can be found starting on page 7 of this syllabus. Exams will consist of some combination of multiple choice and essay. The specifics of the exams will be discussed in detail as the course progresses.

### Part I (in-class)

Approximately 30 multiple choice and true/false questions.

### Part II (take-home)

Two take-home essay questions due by the start of the class period on the Friday after they are handed out.

\*Please look at the course schedule (beginning on page six of this syllabus) to ensure that you do not have any scheduling conflicts with the exams. If you do please inform me at least two weeks prior to the exam(s) so that we can make alternate arrangements. If you are sick or have a legitimate last-minute reason to miss an exam, you must email or call me prior to the scheduled time.

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## **GRADING**

I do not grade on a curve. Your final grade is based on the points you have earned throughout the semester. To do well in this class, you will need to work hard and apply sustained effort over the course of the semester. That said, working hard does not guarantee an “A.” A’s are reserved for those students who demonstrate excellence.

If you find that you are not doing as well as you would like in the course, please come talk to me as soon as possible. I will not give additional extra-credit at the end of the semester to boost low grades.

Wednesday Reading Quizzes: 65 Points (23%) (5 points each for 13 quizzes)

Exams: 225 Points (77%)

- Exam 1: 65 Points (22%)
- Exam 2: 75 Points (26%)
- Final Exam: 85 Points (29%)

A	93-100%	(270-290)
A-	90-92%	(261-269)
B+	87-89%	(252-260)
B	83-86%	(241-251)
B-	80-82%	(232-240)
C+	77-79%	(223-231)
C	73-76%	(212-222)
C-	70-72%	(203-211)
D+	67-69%	(194-202)
D	63-66%	(183-193)
D-	60-62%	(174-182)
F	60% and below	(0-173)

\*Extra Credit (35 points possible)

- “3 Minutes for Current Events” (15 points): You may do up to three separate 1-minute oral presentations on a current event relevant to our class before the start of lecture. I will set aside three minutes for three students to present each day starting with week 2. Each presentation is worth up to 5 points.
- Video Reflection (20 points): See D2L for more information, due by 9am on December 12<sup>th</sup>
- *More opportunities may arise throughout the semester (lectures, video screenings, etc.); I will provide you the necessary information should this happen.*

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## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

### Classroom Decorum

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty members have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity, and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and [http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student\\_code](http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code)

## **Academic Misconduct**

It is a shame that the actions of past students have necessitated the addition of this section to the syllabus. By now you may have heard the standard line many times but it bears repeating for this class: **Do NOT plagiarize or cheat.** What you gain from engaging in such an action is the honor of automatically flunking the assignment or test and the excitement of dealing with University disciplinary action. Failure to understand what constitutes plagiarism or cheating is not a valid excuse for engaging in academic misconduct. For helpful information on how to avoid plagiarism, go to: <http://honorcode.colorado.edu/student-information>

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu); 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). For other information on the Honor Code, see <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

## **Accommodations**

- If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter from Disability Services within the first two weeks of class so that we can address your needs. Disability Services determines accommodations based on *documented* disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and <http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices>"
- Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please notify me early in the semester if religious observance will cause you to miss a class, test, or assignment. See full details at: [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac\\_relig.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html)
- If you are involved in University sponsored activities that will result in you missing more than one class, it is your responsibility to contact me within the first week of the semester.

## **Discrimination and Harassment**

The University of Colorado at Boulder policies on Discrimination and Harassment (<http://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination.html>) Sexual Harassment, and Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. For information about the ODH and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment, see <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>

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**By remaining enrolled in this course, you are agreeing to the “terms” outlined in the syllabus. I hold the right to change the syllabus throughout the semester to respond to class concerns or situations. If you find any of this disagreeable, drop this course.**

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

This course schedule provides a tentative framework for the course, a general idea of the required readings and the dates of the three exams. This schedule is subject to change as the course progresses to adapt to our needs. Readings will be added periodically. Readings marked with an asterisk (\*) can be found on the course D2L page. To get the most out of the class, you will be expected to have read the material before class begins.

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### **Week 1: August 25<sup>th</sup>**

Introduction to the Course

Drug Basics & Sociological Perspectives on Drug Use

- *\*Sullum Introduction*
  - *\*Goode Ch. 1-2*
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### **Week 2: September 1<sup>st</sup>**

(September 1<sup>st</sup>: NO CLASS, Labor Day)

History and Theory

- *Adler et al. Ch. 1-4*
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### **Week 3: September 8<sup>th</sup>**

Legal Drugs: Alcohol & Pharmaceutical Drugs

- *\*Goode Ch. 7*
  - *\*Moynihan and Cassels: A Disease for Every Pill*
  - *\*Diller: Running on Ritalin*
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### **Week 4: September 15<sup>th</sup>**

Marijuana

- *\*Goode Ch.8*
- *\*Campbell Ch.3*

Hallucinogens and Club Drugs

- *\*Weil Ch.8*
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### **Week 5: September 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Stimulants: Amphetamines, Methamphetamine, Cocaine, & Crack

- *\*Goode Ch. 9*

Heroin and the Opiates

- *\*Goode Ch. 10*
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### **Week 6: September 29<sup>th</sup>**

Exam 1 (Monday in-class, written portion due at the start of class Friday)

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### **Week 7: October 6<sup>th</sup>**

Social Explanations of Intoxicated Behavior

- *\*MacAndrew & Edgerton: Drunken Comportment*
- *\*Becker: The Social Bases of Drug-Induced Experiences*

Socialization

- *\*Becker: Becoming a Marijuana User*
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### **Week 8: October 13<sup>th</sup>**

Addiction Basics: Sociopharmacology

- *\*Friedman: Sociopharmacology of Drug Use: Initial Thoughts*

Social Correlates of Drug Use

- *Adler et al. Ch.9-17*

Guest Speaker: Kathryn Nowotny (Co-Author of Adler et al. Chapter 10)

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### **Week 9: October 20<sup>th</sup>**

Social Correlates of Drug Use continued...

- *Adler et al. Ch.18-24*
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### **Week 10: October 27<sup>th</sup>**

Drug Scares and Moral Panics

- *Adler et al.: Chapter 5-8*
  - *\*Anslinger and Cooper: Marijuana: Assassin of Youth*
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### **Week 11: November 3rd**

Exam 2 (Monday in-class, written portion due at the start of class Friday)

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### **Week 12: November 10<sup>th</sup>**

Drug Lifestyles

- *Adler et al. Ch.25-31*
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### **Week 13: November 17<sup>th</sup>**

Drug Lifestyles continued...

- *Adler et al. Ch.32-35*
- *\*Inciardi and McElrath Ch.32*

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**November 24<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>: NO CLASSES: Fall Break**

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### **Week 14: December 1<sup>st</sup>**

Societal Response to Drug Use

- OPTIONAL: *\*Mosher and Akins Pp. 202-235 & 238-293*
- *Adler et al. Ch.36-41*

Guest Speaker: Anjali Nandi (Owner & Program Director, Center for Change)

Guest Speaker: Michael Burtis (Veteran Drug Court Researcher)

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### **Week 15: December 8<sup>th</sup>**

Societal Response to Drug Use continued...

- *Adler et al. Ch.42-45*
- *\*Alexander: Ch.5*
- *\*Sullum: Conclusion*

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**Final Exam**: Thursday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, 10:30am-1:00pm

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