

Soci 340: Drugs and Society (crosslisted with CCJS 350)
Fall 2016

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Prerequisites: Junior Standing, Sociology major/minor

General Education: No

All information is subject to change

Course Description

Introduction to Course

This course will analyze the use, abuse, control, and criminalization of legal and illegal drugs within American society through a sociological perspective, paying particular attention to the intersection of race/gender/socioeconomics. We discuss each drug class to understand its origins, use, and legal trajectory in order to understand drugs themselves and as well as to contextualize both drug use and the subsequent prohibition and criminalization of certain drugs in order to understand the evolution of the "War on Drugs." Over the course of the semester, we will examine: the legal and illegal drug markets; theories of drug addiction and approaches to treatment; how the social construction of drugs as a "problem" influences policy; drug policy and the genesis and evolution of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA); the increase in surveillance and criminalization of certain drugs and mass incarceration of certain populations; and the media's role in the public's perception of drugs.

Course Objectives

The primary objectives of the course are to:

1. Gain a sociological understanding of the history and issues around drugs and drug use
2. Critically analyze the societal impacts and implications of drug policy on criminalization and mass incarceration
3. Develop and enforce critical thinking skills
4. Improve writing, thinking, and discussion skills

Course Assignments

Drug Article Critique: 10%

Reflection Papers (2): 20 %

Discussion Questions/Assignments: 10%

Mid-Term: 25%

Final: 25%

Attendance and Participation: 10%

Course Readings

Course readings will be available through the library, bookstore, or Moodle