

***Under the Influence: Drugs, Deviance, and Culture***  
***BHP 205***  
***Section: N***

**Instructors:**

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**Course Description**

In her book *Writing on Drugs* (1999), Sadie Plant declares, “Whether they are organic or synthetic, old or new, stimulating, narcotic, or hallucinogenic, all drugs have some psychoactive effect: they all shift perceptions, affect moods, change behaviors, and alter states of mind. And all of them have exerted an influence that extends far beyond their users” (3). In this course, we will explore the powerful influence these varied substances have had on our institutions and on our culture. Drawing from the disciplines of Sociology and English, we ask how drug policies and practices within institutions and social systems intersect with representations of drugs and drug use in literature and other media. We will explore questions such as the following:

- How is addiction to intoxicants constructed within medical, sociological, and cultural discourses? How do these discourses define the border between acceptable consumption of intoxicants and addiction?
- How do identity categories--gender, sexuality, race, class--shape conceptions of the consumption of and addiction to intoxicants in institutional and cultural contexts?
- How do these conceptions of the consumption of and addiction to intoxicants within institutional and cultural contexts, in turn, shape conceptions of normality and deviance?
- How are conceptions of drug use and addiction realized through metaphor and narrative structure in literary works, and how, in turn do these literary conceptions shape medical and sociological discourses of drug use and addiction?

## Student Learning Outcomes

<b>Course Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>University Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Sample Assignments</b>
Synthesize literary representations of drug use and addiction with sociological concepts of drug use and addiction	Critical Thinking Social and Ethical Responsibility Connected Learning	Compose a 4-5-page paper connecting a literary representation of drug use or addiction with a sociological concept
Analyze and synthesize literary representations of drug use and addiction	Critical Thinking Written Communication	Compose a 4-5-page paper explaining how literary concepts (metaphor, characterization, narrative structure) forward a representation of drug use and addiction
Analyze concepts of deviance as related to drug use and addiction	Critical Thinking Social and Ethical Responsibility	Compose a 4-5-page paper analyzing concepts of deviance as related to drug use and addiction
Synthesize the relationship between representations of race, gender, sexuality, class, and global location with representations of drug use and addiction	Critical Thinking Social and Ethical Responsibility Global and Multicultural Perspectives	Compose a 4-5 page paper analyzing drug use and addiction in a text taking into consideration representations of gender, sexuality, race, and/or class.
Create original work forwarding a new conception of drug use and addiction	Critical Thinking Social and Ethical Responsibility	Develop a print, audio, or video PSA that forwards an idea about drug use and/or addiction

### Assignments

#### *Grade Breakdown*

Journal Portfolios: 30% (15% midterm and 15% final)

Drugs and Culture Playlist Contribution: 5%

Unit Reflection 1: 15%  
Unit Reflection 2: 15%  
Reconstructed PSA: 20%  
Final Reflection: 15%

### *Journal Portfolio*

Almost every class period, you will be given time to write about the assigned reading or screening. This writing will help propel our discussion as it helps you gather your thoughts and ideas. At the midterm and in the tenth week of the course, we will collect seven of these in-class writings that you select as especially important or insightful. You will also compose a 1-2-page cover letter explaining why you have chosen these seven writings and what they collectively show about your experience in the class and/or what we have been exploring in class.

### *Drugs and Culture Playlist Contribution*

Over the course of the semester, we will develop a class playlist of song tracks that contribute to our explorations of drugs, deviance, and culture. You will select one class period in which to introduce and play your chosen track before we begin the class discussion. You will also compose a paragraph explaining why you chose the song and how it connects to our course explorations on a shared document.

### *Unit Reflections*

We will provide prompts for each four of the course units, and you will receive credit for responding to two of the four units. At least one response must be received for the first two units to help assess your progress at the midterm. For your response, you can submit a 4-5-page paper or a 5-minute audio or video response in which you respond to a specific prompt with evidence from our course readings and screenings.

### *Reconstructed PSA*

For your final project, you can work alone, in pairs, or in a group of three to develop a public service announcement (PSA) in print, audio, or video format that mimics anti-drug PSAs while forwarding a more complex thesis about the impact of drugs on our institutions and culture.

## *Final Reflection*

This 5-6-page final reflection will accompany your reconstructed PSA as an explanation of what the PSA shows and how it draws from course material and outside sources as relevant. If you are working as part of a group, you can also reflect on the group discussions and your role in the process. Every group member will submit their own reflection.

## **Course Schedule**

### **Unit 1: Introduction to Drugs, Deviance, and Culture**

#### ***Week 1: Introductions***

*Reading:* *Robinson v. California* (1962). Supreme Court of the United States

*Listening:* [Changing the Narrative](#), Narcotica Podcast

#### ***Week 2: Drugs and Deviance***

*Readings:* Young, J. (1974). "Mass, Media, Drugs, and Deviance"

Chen et al (2017). "Determining Normal Deviance: Adolescent Drug Use?" *Deviant Behavior*.

Klaue, K. (1999). Drugs, Addiction, Deviance, Disease as Social Constructs. *Bulletin on Narcotics*.

*Screening:* Jay Z: ["The War on Drugs was an Epic Fail"](#) (*NY Times Opinion*).

#### ***Week 3: Drugs and Deviance***

*Readings:* Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1993). "Epidemics of the Will"

Ray Filar (2020). "You've heard of Ritalin, now what if I told you governments make bodies into crime scenes for no reason at all"

*Screening:* "Hamsterdam," *The Wire*

#### ***Week 4: Identity and Intoxicants***

*Readings:* K.D. Harding et. al. (2021). “An Analysis of Motherhood, Alcohol Use, and #winemom Culture on Instagram.”

Tiger, R. (2017). “Race, class, and the framing of drug epidemics.” *Contexts*.

Kayla Monetta. (2014). “Basic Bitch’s Guide to Coachella.”

Simone Kitchens. (2018). “Microdosing’s Micromoment”

*Due:* Unit 1 Response

## **Unit II: Drugs and Power**

### ***Week 5: Drugs and State Power***

*Readings:* Chambers. (2010). “Conflict Theory and Racial Inequality.”

Bungay et al. (2010). “Women's health and use of crack cocaine in context: structural and 'everyday' violence.”

Forman. (1975). “The Gateway to the War on Drugs: Marijuana.”

*Listening:* [Reimagining Public Health and Racial Justice](#), *Narcotica Podcast*

*Due:* Journal Portfolios

### ***Week 6: Drugs and State Power***

*Readings:* Hunter S. Thompson. (1971). From *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*.

Carlos Zeta Acosta. (1971). From *Revolt of the Cockroach People*.

## **Unit III: Drugs and Medicine**

### ***Week 7: Psychedelics as Therapeutic***

*Readings:* Center for Psychedelic and Consciousness Research Study from John Hopkins.

J.R. George et al. (2019). “The Psychedelic Renaissance and the Limitations of a White-Dominant Medical Framework.”

*Guests:* Dana Van Schilling on Ketamine Therapy

Dr. Marion McNabb on Ibogaine Therapy for PTSD & Addiction

*Due:* Unit 2 Response

### ***Week 8: Opioids and Medicalized Addiction***

*Readings:* Beth Macy. (2018), From *Dopesick: Dealers, Doctors, and the Drug Company that Addicted America*.

John Leland. (2021), "The Heroin-Using Professor Wants Us to Change How We Think about Drugs."

Excerpt from *Bridges*, "Race, pregnancy, and the opioid epidemic"

*Screenings:* "Method and Madness," *The Knick*

## **Unit IV: Drugs, Inspiration, and Creativity**

### ***Week 9: Drugs as Inspiration***

*Readings:* Samuel Taylor Coleridge. (1816). "Kubla Khan."

Claude McKay. (1928). "Snowstorm in Pittsburgh" from *Home to Harlem*.

*Screening:* "Kennedy and Heidi," *The Sopranos*

*Due:* Unit 3 Response

### ***Week 10: Drugs as Inspiration***

*Readings:* Henri Michaux. (1966). From *The Major Ordeals of the Mind and the Countless Minor Ones*.

Octavio Paz. (1990). From *Alternating Current*.

*Screening:* Lil Nas X, "Montero"

*Due:* Journal Portfolios

***Week 11: Drugs as Inspiration***

*Readings:* James Baldwin. (1957). “Sonny’s Blues.”

John Szwed. (2016). From *Billie Holiday: The Musician and the Myth*.

Saidiya Hartman. (2019). From *Wayward Lives and Beautiful Experiments*.

***Week 12: Drugs as Inspiration***

*Readings:* Zadie Smith. (2013). “Joy.”

Hanif Kureishi. (1995). From *Black Album*.

*Screening:* *Trainspotting*

*Due:* Unit 4 Response

***Week 13: Final Project Workshop***

*Readings:* Lianlian et al : “Perceptions of a drug prevention public service announcement campaign among street-involved youth in Vancouver, Canada: a qualitative study.” *Harm Reduction Journal*.

Balanon-Rosen (2019).” From Cringeworthy to Scary: a History of Anti-drug PSAs.” *Marketplace*.

*Screening:* [“Drug PSAs in the 80s.”](#) *Saturday Night Live*

***Week 14: Presentation and Project Preparation***

***Finals Week***

Present PSAs and Submit Written Reflection





