

Drugs, Politics & Culture

Course Description

Examines the relationship between drugs, politics, and society in cross-cultural perspective; use of mind-altering and habit-forming substances by "traditional societies"; the development of a global trade in sugar, opium, and cocaine with the rise of capitalism; and the use and abuse of alcohol, LSD, and Prozac in the US. Finishes by looking at the war on drugs, shifting attitudes to tobacco, and by evaluating America's drug laws.

Class Work

- Do the readings every week.
- Post at least one thoughtful message (with argument on the message boards) each week (20%, B for posting once, A for twice, must post).
- One week, lead off posting and respond (10%)
- Respond to reading questions, be prepared to discuss (20%)
- One week, lead section discussion (10%)
- Write two papers (7-10 pages), well argued with analysis of evidence (20% each)

Books

Courtwright, David T. *Forces of Habit: Drugs and the Making of the Modern World*. Harvard, 2001.

Schlosser, Eric. *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*. Harper Collins, 2002.

Calendar

Class 1: Introduction

Welcome to Drugs, Politics & Culture,

If you are not taking the class or know someone who is but didn't get this message, please inform me and we can correct this.

Books (available at amazon, other local bookstores):

Fast Food Nation (reading)

Read at least: Intro, Ch.5, Ch.6 (136-144), Ch.10 (240-249), Epilogue (262-270)

Forces of Habit (reading)

Read Ch.1.

The first week readings for the next class are:

Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History

The social life of things (Recommended)

Within four days after this session, please email me a short essay on why you are taking the class, and what questions you would ideally like to think through with the class.

Class 2: Food

Fast Food Nation (chapters)

Mintz "Sweetness and Power"

Courtwright: *Forces of Habit* (ch.1)

(rec) Appadurai "Social Life of Things"

For Section:

Please do the reading. Then pick one significant argument that one of the authors is making. State the argument. Then state how the argument is made, what evidence is used? Do you find the argument persuasive? If not, what would it take to convince you? In any case, come up with at least two other sorts of evidence that could be used to support the argument. Pay particular attention to assumptions that are built into the

argument and into the evidence. We will discuss what is meant by "assumptions" in class, but for now just go for it. This needn't take more than a paragraph, but you will discuss it and hand it in in section.

For Lecture:

You don't have to hand it in, but do spend some time thinking about what a healthy diet is. Do you follow one, why or why not? How do you know what a healthy diet is? That is, how exactly did you learn that there is such a thing as a healthy diet? when and where? What do you know about how such things are decided, by whom?

Extra Credit:

Schlosser, p241, discusses "America's obesity epidemic", "280,000 Americans die every year". Can you discover how this was determined? Was it an estimate? Was there a study? Email this to me if you figure it out or even have a good lead.

Class 3: Commercials

Global Regulation (Drugs)
Courtwright: *Forces of Habit* (ch.3)
Video: Commercials
Class: Video analysis (2 chapters)
Ogilvy on Advertising (1 chapter)
Lakoff on Gulf War

For next class, we will be reading for class:

Metaphor and War
18 Miracles of Research
Electronic Media Criticism

All of these will help you think and write about advertising and other forms of PR. You will be expected to use the concepts in class as we look at more commercials, and when you write your papers later in the semester.

For section:

Drugs - Global Regulation
Courtwright: *Forces of Habit* (ch.3)

Read these two texts and see how carefully you can describe the differences in the ways that they are written. Both are of course written in the 3rd person, objectively. How would describe the differences in their voice? In the structures of their arguments? In how they use evidence, and references? What metaphors do they use (refer to Lakoff's essay

on Metaphors and War above)?

Write at least 2 paragraphs and bring to section.

Be prepared to talk about the chapters as well

Class 4: Prozac

Listening to Prozac (book)
Hacking "Making up Persons"
Guest Lecture: Liz Hoge
Video: Bellevue
Video: Lauren Slater - Depression

For next class, please read:

Peter Kramer *Listening to Prozac*
Intro, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, and Afterward
Recommended: the rest

Ian Hacking, *Making up people*

For section, write a couple of paragraphs on whether Hacking's argument helps to explain Kramer or not and why. In other words, discuss whether Hacking's way of looking at personhood maps onto Kramer's.

Class 5: Clinical Trials

Cohen *Over Dose* (chapter)
Healy, *Creation of Psychopharm* (chapter)
(rec) Lakoff, "Placebo trials"
Video: PTSD trials
Guest Lecture: Nate Greenslit
Class: Village Voice on Guilt-free-pills
Class: "Politicize, not medicalize"
Write on drugs for moods

For class & online:

Hively - The Mathematics of Making Up Your Mind
Lancet article - Ecstasy and the Brain

Please read these two articles which concern clinical trials. Which of the two clot-busting drugs do you think should be used and why? Are you persuaded by the evidence

presented about ecstasy and the brain -- why or why not -- what exactly is the lesson of the article? Each person should post online at least once about at least one of these articles. There are discussion forums for each section for each article on server.

If you are designated as online facilitator this week (if you signed up), you must post a considered response within four days on at least one topic. Everyone else must post at least once within six days. A good response takes up and develops or critiques previous postings. No name calling.

For section:

Creation of Psychopharmacology, ch 8.
Over Dose, at least ch 1 and 9 (2 & 14 are recommended)

Each of these sections concerns clinical trials, their history and political economy, and how they affect us. Find at least one thesis made by each author that you find very persuasive. Discuss how it is argued for, the evidence used, and at least one good counter-argument. Then state a solid response to the counter-argument.

Class 6: Testing & Variability

Hamilton
Steroids *New Yorker*
Women in Clinical Trials (Rachel)
Caffeine Handbook (chapter)
Science multi-causal issue
Class: Estrogen Articles

Write on whether you would recommend them to your mother or other women that you know

For online and class:

Read the three articles (Grove, Stipp, Alexander) on Prostate Cancer

These were all published together in Fortune magazine. Andrew Grove (CEO Intel) conducts an investigation and personal meta-analysis of prostate cancer options for himself. Alexander comes to a different conclusion. Stipp analyzes the politics of cancer research. Discuss online to what extent Grove is a model for how we should all conduct research -- why/why not. What sorts of factors he might have missed -- especially in relation to Alexander. Regarding Stipp, how do you think research money should be divided?

For Class:

Read Hamilton "Sex and Gender as Critical Variables in Psychotropic Drug Research"

Read Willett - Lifestyle and Genomics Research

Read Chapter 12 & 13 of World of Caffeine (Chapter 11 is recommended)

Look at: <http://www.ais.org.au/nutrition/SuppFSCaff.htm>

Write a paragraph citing arguments from these texts about an ideal experiment you would like to see conducted on either caffeine or an antidepressant.

Class 7: Kids & Ritalin

Pills a go-go (sections)

Diller "Running on Ritalin"

Video: ADHD

Class: "Running on Ritalin"

Write on

For class: a short article by Diller, "Running on Ritalin"

For section: series of short articles from Pills a go-go

Below is a series of discussion questions written by Charisse Massay. These are a great start for the online discussion. In addition to the article, please look online for (1) websites about children & pharmaceuticals, (2) discussion groups about ADHD pharmaceuticals (you can use google groups or look at different bulletin boards).

Post your responses to the questions below online (include web-links if appropriate).

Bring to section a paragraph or two describing the kinds of online interaction you found in the discussion groups. What surprised you? How do you make sense of it?

Discussion topic: Running on Ritalin

According to one doctor in the Diller article, 10% of children are afflicted with some variant of ADD, which translates to one in every six boys between the ages of five, and twelve should be treated for ADD. If this is the truth, then shouldn't the global consumption statistics be similar in other developed countries? According to multiple sources, America consumes 85% of the world's Ritalin, which denies the idea that the affliction is merely biological.

Diller states many social causes of this ADD epidemic such as increased demands on our

children, parental inabilities to deal with hyperactive children and an increased medicated community, which does not seem to have issues with administering psychotropic drugs to our children.

What other social factors do you feel contribute to the Ritalin epidemic? Diller addresses three major parts of this transition but offers minimal social opinions for each section. Please discuss other ideas within these subjects (and more...):

Race: The primary use by white suburban middle class, what keeps inner city youth from using Ritalin?

Pressure: America's demand on its youth versus other nations (including media and social pressures)

Cosmetic Pharmacology: American's continuous shifting towards a medicated society wherein personality flaws are addressed by psychotropic drugs. Including American concepts of guilt and blame regarding personal distress.

How would you address a financially struggling family with a child with moderate signs of ADD? In our fast paced and ever faster populating American world, is Ritalin a necessary technology like cell phones and PDAs? If elementary school principals believe that it makes the experience of school easier for certain children, is it wrong to deny these kids the privilege of being a better student? Where do we draw the line between physical vs. mental performance enhancing drugs?

Class 8: PR

Courtwright: *Forces of Habit* (ch.6)

Rampton & Stauber (2 chapters)

"Flouridation" controversy

"Millions for Viagra"

Video: Scare tactics

Class: Cathy Young: "Drug Terrorism" editorial

Readings:

Courtwright: *Forces of Habit* (ch.6)

Server:

1) Trust Us, We're Experts! : how industry manipulates science and gambles with your future

2) Confronting the Experts, 'Flouridation: Breaking the Science Barrier'

3) Millions for Viagra, pennies for diseases of the poor

Online Discussion:

Read the article on fluoride. Someone suggested in one of the sections last week that

everyone should go on Ritalin. Use evidence presented in the readings to discuss whether everyone should have fluoride in the water and how you would convince them they should.

For section:

Write two paragraphs: Read the Viagra article. You are in charge of a pr firm hired to convince drug companies to support the provision of anti-malaria, anti-sleeping sickness, or anti-river blindness drugs to poor countries. Using tactics discussed in Courtwright and/or Rampton and Stauber, how would you convince drug companies to do this? (bear in mind that these companies are profit-making ventures: telling them "it's the right thing to do" won't work).

Class 9 : Addiction

Courtwright: *Forces of Habit* (ch.5)
"Alcoholism as Metaphor"
"Epidemics of the Will"
"Critique of Addiciton"
Harding Heroin addiction
Guest Lecture: Adam Silk

For Class:

I will bring a class the second and final paper assignment.

Please read for class:

"Reefer Madness"

I mentioned in class last time the dilemma that strikes me when thinking about legalization of marijuana: given the history of the tobacco, liquor, and pharmaceutical industries, which would likely capture the pot? And how exactly would you like to see the weed market developing industrially? Or not. Discuss online.

For Section, read:

The Scapegoat Generation : America's War on Adolescents "Doped on Duplicity"

"Becoming a Marihuana User"

Forces of Habit (Read Ch.2)

Discuss in a page the arguments that each makes as to how "youths" come to use marijuana. State clearly the kind of evidence that each uses. Why are they so different? Is one more right than the others?

Class 10: Marijuana & Legality

Scapegoat Generation (chapter)
Courtwright: *Forces of Habit* (ch.9)

Video: Grass
Class: "Reefer Madness"

Write on marijuana legalization -- what form would it take

We will have a guest speaker, Dr. Adam Silk, a psychiatrist who works at MIT Medical and a specialist on addiction.

For class read:

Forces of Habit, Chapter 5

Dealing with Drugs : Consequences of Government Control (two chapters in this pdf)

Read the second chapter: The use and misuse of intoxicants

Is addiction a disease? (However you answer this, explain your terms, e.g. what kind of a disease is it?). How do these authors define addiction? Do they use too many definitions? If so, is there a better definition? Is it important to settle on one definition (a testable one for example)?

For section read:

Stein - Alcoholism as Metaphor in American Culture

The Scapegoat Generation : America's War on Adolescents
(now read second chapter)

Read second chapter in this section, on alcohol.

For section: what do you think is a proper alcohol policy for the US? Include in your answer how to deal with alcoholism. Use evidence from these texts or elsewhere to defend your answer.

Class 11: Cocaine & Delinquents

Foucault, "Delinquents"
"Scale and Use of Cocaine in the US"
Drug Wars

For next class:

For section read the two selections on stellar:

Cocaine : Global Histories

Drug War: Covert Money, Power and Policy

Write a paragraph or two about the way in which a history of drug control should be written -- from what perspective, with what data, toward what end. You should use these two readings to demonstrate your claims (you may use them positively or negatively).

For class:

Read chapter 10 of Forces of Habit and then use the following links as starting points (three government sites, and two counter-sites at the end).

For discussion online: Each of these sites provides a horrendous amount of facts, publications, statistics, budgeting info, etc. What questions do you want the sites to answer (about harm, enforcement, prisons, scale, etc.)? And how easily can you find that information?

FYI: The Executive Office of the President is made up of White House offices and agencies. These offices help develop and implement the policy and programs of the President.

Office of Homeland Security
Office of National Drug Control Policy
Council of Economic Advisers
Council on Environmental Quality
Domestic Policy Council
National Economic Council
National Security Council
Office of Administration
Office of Faith-Based Community Initiatives
Office of Management and Budget
Office of National AIDS Policy
Office of Science and Technology Policy
Office of the United States Trade Representative
President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board
White House Military Office

Office of National Drug Control Policy

<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov>

In total, funding recommended for FY 2004 is an estimated \$11.7 billion, an increase of \$440.3 million (+3.9 percent) over the President's FY 2003 request of \$11.2 billion

<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/policy/budget.html>

Department of Homeland Security (www.dhs.gov)

DHS Budget in Brief - Fiscal Year 2004

"The President's 2004 Budget provides the necessary resources for the Department to succeed. The budget includes a total of \$36.2 billion, 7.4 percent more than the 2003 level and over 64 percent more than the FY 2002 level for these activities."

Combinations of the two offices.

New Counternarcotics Officer/U.S. Interdiction Coordinator

<http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?theme=43&content=535>

Bio of the Chief Financial Officer of Homeland Security (who used to budget ONDCP)

<http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?theme=11&content=501>

Drug Enforcement Agency

<http://www.dea.gov/>

Counter sites:

<http://www.drugwarfacts.org/>

<http://www.drugwardistortions.org/>

Class 12: Club Drugs

"Chemical Generation"

"America's Altered States"

Courtwright: *Forces of Habit* (ch.10)

Erowid.org

Guest Lecture: Trish Case

Class: Ecstasy articles from *New Scientist*

For Class:

We will be reading and talking about ecstasy and other drugs. We will still be having Professor Patricia Case talking to us in the next class. Because the papers are due shortly before that, and because it is the last week, we will have very minimal reading and assignments that week. This class will set the stage for her lecture and discussion -- we will try to make explicit what we don't know, so we can ask her.

Please read the following essays and short articles which are all on server. Also look at the two clubdrugs sites (the governments and erowid).

Online see if you can discuss how you and "others you trust" actually learn about club

drugs and decide or not to try them. Please DO NOT actually talk about your own use if you have use illegal drugs, because email and even private bulletin boards are not secure from prosecution. And that is not the point of the discussion. Rather, regarding club drugs in particular (and you can extend the term however you want), discuss what resources you (if any) play into creating curiosity, repugnance, or knowledge about drugs. The reason why I say "you and others you trust" is to emphasize that this is not about "how dumb other people are", "how they follow the crowd" and so on. Think about media (novels, movies, magazines, TV, MTV, etc.), school programs (some kids hear about a new drug for the first time when someone tells them how bad it is), friends and family, the net, etc.

For section:

Based on the readings, please write a two-paragraph account of the current state of Ecstasy regulation in the US. You can choose your narrative style, but you must cite the articles as evidence in making your claims.

America Altered States:...

Altered State : The Story of Ecstasy Culture and Acid House

On Ecstasy, Consensus Is Elusive

By Rick Weiss Washington Post Staff Writer, September, 2002; Page A07

Ecstasy on the Brain (David Concar) from New Scientist, April 2002

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/clubdrugs.html>

<http://www.erowid.org>

Class 13: Alcohol & Coffee

Scapegoat Generation (chapter)

"MADD"

World of Coffee (2 chapters)

"Yuppie Coffee"

Class: Becker "Becoming a Marijuana User"

"Binge Drinking"

MIT Policy on Drinking

Discuss drinking & social life