

SOCY 3304: Drug Use and Policy in the US
Tues/Thurs 11-12:15
Spring 2020

Prof Naomi Braine
3612 James Hall
Office Hours: Monday 2-4pm; Thursday 2-4pm
Email: nbraine@brooklyn.cuny.edu

Readings: readings will be available online

Land Acknowledgement:

We must acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional and unceded territory of the Lenape. We, the Brooklyn College community, acknowledge that academic institutions, indeed the nation-state itself, was founded upon and continues to enact exclusions and erasures of Indigenous Peoples. This acknowledgement demonstrates a commitment to beginning the process of working to dismantle ongoing practices and legacies of settler colonialism, and to recognize the hundreds of Indigenous Nations who continue to resist, live, and uphold their sacred relations across their lands. We also pay our respect to Indigenous elders past, present, and future and to those who have stewarded this land throughout the generations

Course Overview

Human societies display remarkable creativity and persistence in the range of mind altering substances used historically and cross culturally, although drug use occupies very different social locations in different cultures and historical eras. In the modern era, the regulation of mind and mood altering substances has become enmeshed with larger systems of social control, including public health, criminal justice, immigration and economic globalization. While drug addiction is typically portrayed as an individual problem, both drug use and drug policy are fundamentally social processes, and cannot be separated from larger social and economic systems.

This course will examine the development of drug policy in the US, from the first drug control laws passed in the early 20th century through contemporary debates over mass incarceration, migration, and public health. We will explore the historical development drug regulation in the US, its relationship to larger social and economic processes, and the evolution of drug control policies at the intersection of multiple institutional systems (medicine, criminal justice, immigration, etc). Drug policy has long been global, and we will consider drug policy and enforcement in the context of globalization, primarily in Latin America.

Objectives/Goals

In this course, students will

1. Gain an understanding of social and political processes shaping U.S. drug policy domestically and in Latin American countries
2. Critically analyze the relationship between prejudice, social inequality, economic processes, and different models for regulating drug use

3. Think about how drug policy functions within and supports systems of social and economic inequality, including race, class, gender, and neo-colonial relationships between states
4. Critically engage with the dominant theoretical approaches to understanding drug policy, and produce an independent analysis of a particular policy issue.

Assignments and Grading

Student learning will be assessed in multiple ways, and assignments will reflect both mastery of class material and ability to use conceptual frameworks learned in class through independent student projects. Students will be expected to

1. Attend class and participate in class discussions
2. Post 10 annotations in response to class readings
3. Write a short essay
4. Complete a take-home midterm
5. Write a 10-12 page final paper, analyzing an issue in a particular policy area.

Revised course breakdown for online course:

Attendance and participation	25%
10 annotations on weekly readings	15%
Short essay	10%
Midterm	20%
Final Paper (10-12 pages)	30%

Online: attendance = participation.

In the online only course structure, “attendance” will not exist independent of participation, although participation will involve posting comments/questions and responding to your peers through the Slack application rather than in a “live” context.

In order to get ‘attendance’ credit for a class session, students will need to do the following:

1) read the assigned readings; 2) watch online video lecture segment and/or interact with other material posted by the professor, 3) post 1 original question or comment in Slack in response to the readings and/or lecture, and 4) respond to a comment or question posted by a peer in Slack for the same day’s material.

This means that each student will have to post twice in response to each class session’s material in order to receive attendance credit.

A Note on Plagiarism- I am a teacher, not a police officer. However, in fairness to the vast majority of students who work hard and struggle with the material, those rare students who cheat will receive an F for the course. If I have any reason to suspect plagiarism, then I will check the material in question and if I find copied material then I will file a report with the Committee on Academic Integrity. Students are responsible for knowing and following the College’s policy on Academic Integrity. (<http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/serindex.htm>)

Late Work- Points will be deducted for all work submitted after the due date, unless a **prior arrangement has been made or a doctor’s note provided.** If there are very special circumstances such as illness/injury, death in the family, etc., please contact me as soon as possible so we can make arrangements regarding when work will need to be completed.

Revised schedule for online course

Mar 12 academic recess

Mar 17 academic recess

Mar 19 resume class, read Paley “State Power and the Enforcement of Prohibition”

Mar 24 Lajous “The Constitutional Costs of the ‘War on Drugs’”

Drug Markets and Urban Economies

Mar 26 Curtis “Crack, Cocaine, and Heroin: Drug Eras in Williamsburg, Brooklyn 1960-2000”

Mar 31 Lisa Maher “A Reserve Army: Women and the Drug Market.”

Apr 2 – 7 MIDTERM Due

Apr 7 Conversion Day, no class

Apr 8 -16 Spring Break

Drug Control and Global Capitalism

Apr 21 Bourgois “Insecurity, the war on drugs and crimes of the state...”

Apr 23 Paley “Drug War Capitalism” chapt 1 of *Drug War Capitalism*

Final paper topics due

Apr 28 Orozco Mendoza “Punitive Dispossession..”

Becerra “Addressing the Costs of Prohibition...”

Apr 30 Paley “Mexico, Paramilitarization and the Drug War”

May 5 Paley “Drug War Capitalism in Honduras”

Alternatives to Prohibition

May 7 Grisaffi “Social Control in Bolivia...”

May 12 Rolles “From Drug War to Policy Reform...”

Seddon “Drug policy and global regulatory capitalism...”

May 14 Stancliff et al “Harm Reduction: Front Line Public Health”

Davidson et al “Using drugs in un/safe spaces...”

Final paper due by 5pm on day scheduled for final exam