



The University of Western Ontario  
SOCIOLOGY 2222B-001  
Drugs and Society  
Winter 2025

**Delivery Method - in-person**  
**Instructor: Dr. Mila Kolpashnikova**

**Department of Sociology**  
**Email: kkolpash@uwo.ca**

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*This is a DRAFT only. Please see the course site for the final version.*

**Course Description:** This course considers the sociological significance of drugs and drug use in society. The historical, political and cultural underpinnings of drug policies and drug use are examined, while highlighting the social implications of policies that approach drugs and drug use from moral rather than empirical positions.

**Prerequisite(s):** 1.0 from Sociology courses at the 1000 level.

Unless you have either the prerequisites or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in the course, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**Anti-requisite(s):** The former Sociology 3313F/G

## **Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**

Upon the completion of this course, students should:

1. Understand the sociological importance of drugs and drug use
2. Be able to critically examine the models of addiction that dominate public discourse
3. Appreciate the value of a biopsychosocial model of addiction
4. Learn to examine various forms of evidence-based knowledge and critically assess the sources
5. Be able to critically examine what makes policies and public education effective or ineffective
6. Apply evidence-based knowledge to educate the public about drugs and drug use

## **Course Material:**

The following material is **required** and is available in e-versions on OWL Brightspace:

### **January 7 – Syllabus and Course Expectations**

No readings.

### **January 14 – Defining Substance Use**

Alexander, B. (2010). *The globalization of addiction: A study in poverty of the spirit*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 2: “Addiction<sub>1</sub>, Addiction<sub>2</sub>, Addiction<sub>3</sub>, Addiction<sub>4</sub>...” (pp.27-56)

### **January 21 – History of Canada’s Drug Laws**

Bruno, T. L., & Csiernik, R. (2018). *The Drug paradox: An Introduction to the sociology of psychoactive substances in Canada*. Canadian Scholars. Chapter 2. “The History and Politics of Canada’s Drug Laws” (pp. 15-30).

Hall, W. (2018). The future of the international drug control system and national drug prohibitions. *Addiction*, 113(7), 1210-1223.

### **February 4 – Substance Use Theories**

Bruno, T. L., & Csiernik, R. (2018). *The Drug paradox: An Introduction to the sociology of psychoactive substances in Canada*. Canadian Scholars. Chapter 3-4: “Explaining Substance Use I and Explaining Substance Use II” (pp. 31-75)

### **February 11 – Classifying Drugs**

Bruno, T. L., & Csiernik, R. (2018). *The Drug paradox: An Introduction to the sociology of psychoactive substances in Canada*. Canadian Scholars. Chapter 5: “Classifying Drugs: Psychopharmacological Properties and Legal Classifications” (pp. 76-114)

#### **March 4 – “Classical” Sociological Drug Use Theory**

Merton, R. K. (1938). Social structure and anomie. *American sociological review*, 3(5), 672-682.

Lindesmith, A. R. (1938). A sociological theory of drug addiction. *American Journal of Sociology*, 43(4), 593-613.

#### **March 11 – Addiction is a brain disease?**

Leshner, A. I. (1997). Addiction is a brain disease, and it matters. *Science*, 278(5335), 45-47.

Hart, C. L. (2017). Viewing addiction as a brain disease promotes social injustice. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 1(3), 0055.

Lewis, M. (2015). *The biology of desire: Why addiction is not a disease*. PublicAffairs. Chapter 2: “A brain designed for addiction” (pp. 32-38).

#### **March 18— Racial and ethnic dimensions of substance use**

Marshall, S. G. (2015). Canadian drug policy and the reproduction of Indigenous inequities. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 6(1).

Alexander, M. (2020). *The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. The New Press. Chapter 2: “The Lockdown” (pp. 75-120).

#### **March 25 – Poverty and drugs**

Preble, E., & Casey, J. J. (1969). Taking care of business—the heroin user's life on the street. *International journal of the addictions*, 4(1), 1-24.

Bourgois, P. I., & Schonberg, J. (2009). *Righteous dopefiend* (Vol. 21). Univ of California Press. Chapter 5: “Making Money” (pp. 147-182)

#### **April 1 – Final Class-- Drug use-related social movements**

Haenfler, R. (2004). Rethinking subcultural resistance: Core values of the straight edge movement. *Journal of contemporary ethnography*, 33(4), 406-436.

#### **Communication:**

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL Brightspace site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/d2l/login>) on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

## **Method of Evaluation:**

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course.

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>% of the Final Grade</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Due</b>
Midterm Exam 1	30	50 multiple choice questions, 1 hour	January 28, in class
Midterm Exam 2	30	50 multiple choice questions, 1 hour	February 25, in class
Final Exam	40	60 multiple choice questions, 1 hour	TBA

**For the closed-book midterm exams**, you will have 1 hour in class to complete 50 multiple-choice questions, non-cumulative. Electronic devices will not be permitted. This is a paper and pen exam. Please remember to bring your own pencils to the exam.

*Instructors are permitted to designate one assessment per course per term as requiring supporting documentation to receive academic consideration. For this course the Midterm Exam 2 (February 25) has been designated as requiring supporting documentation.*

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam. There will be **only one makeup examination for each scheduled examination**. The makeup examination for the in-class midterm examination will be held during the Department Makeup Exam scheduled on **TBA**. Failure to write the exam on the date of the make-up exam will result in a zero grade for that evaluation.

**For the closed-book final exam**, you will have 1 hour in-person to complete 50 multiple-choice questions, non-cumulative. Electronic devices will not be permitted. This is a paper and pen exam. Please remember to bring your own pencils to the exam.

## **Student Absences:**

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

University policy on academic considerations are described [here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation. Further information about academic considerations, and information about submitting this self-attestation with your academic consideration request may be found here. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.”

Students must familiarize themselves with the [Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#). Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request at the central academic consideration portal. Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term without supporting documentation. Note that

supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically schedule during the last week of the term. Students should also note that the instructor may designate one assessment per course per term that requires supporting documentation. This designated assessment is described elsewhere in this document. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor of this course, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness should use the [Student Medical Certificate](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner.

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam. Course professor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test.

### **Course Schedule and Readings:**

See above in Course Materials.

### **Academic Policies:**

Please review the Department of Sociology “[Important Academic Policies](#)” document [https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic\\_Policies.pdf](https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf) for additional information regarding:

- Scholastic Offences
- Plagiarism
- Copyright
- Course Selection
- Absence from Course Commitments
- Missed Tests and Exams
- Religious Accommodations
- Accessibility Options
- Mental Health
- Gender-Based and Sexual Violence statement