



Syllabus
Fall 2014 Web –Based Course
U. S. Drugs and Society
SOC 350

Professor: Dr. Filip Wiecko

Office: SS 231

Email: filip_wiecko@tamu-commerce.edu

Phone: (903) 468-5493

Office Hours: Since this is an online course I will make myself available to you by appointment and you can email me at any time and I will get back to you within 24 hours on business days.

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Text:

Drugs, Society, and Criminal Justice (2nd Edition) by Charles F. Levinthal
ISBN-13: 978-0135138069.

Note: The new edition of this book is available and you may choose to purchase it. If you do purchase the second edition you will also be fine.

Course Description:

Our focus is the social reality of drug use, and drug users, within contemporary society. This focus includes a historical analysis of the social construction of drug use, drug users, abuse, and addiction. We will be investigating the complex relationships between individual and group behavior, and social structure. Central concepts such as social learning, labeling, power, and inequality; as well as socio-cultural definitions of drugs, behavior, and the people who use drugs will be the tools of our analysis. Special attention will be given to the complex legal history surrounding drug use, the link between drugs and crime, the impact of the medicalization of human behavior, and varying perspectives on "doing something about drugs."

Course Objectives:

The basic objective of this course is to provide a comprehensive survey of the development of sociological theories and analyses of drug use, focusing on images of drug use and the drug user as social constructs rather than as an intrinsically pathological behavior or identity. An additional objective of this course is to survey the current information and research on selected categories of drugs and the socially constructed reality that surrounds their use in contemporary society in order to understand a) the socio-cultural based definitions of drugs and b) the individual, group, and social structural dimensions of drug using behavior. This will include an analysis of the implications of these definitions and relationships for social policy and social control (legislation, prevention and treatment). These issues will be analyzed

within the shifting legal and medical definitions that permeate the discussion of drug use in modern society.

Specifically, I expect you to:

1. Articulate the variety of social, individual, and bio-chemical factors that impact definitions of drugs, as well as how these factors influence a drug's effect.
2. Understand the process of the social construction of drug use as a social problem.
3. Develop a familiarity with the various biological, psychological, and sociological theories that seek to explain drug using behavior; including an analysis of their basic assumptions, limitations, and implications for social policy.
4. Be familiar with trends, patterns, and types of drug use in society.
5. Display knowledge of the various drugs, both legal and illegal, used in American society, as well as the social reality that surrounds their use.
6. Develop an analysis of the relationship between drugs, crime and socio-cultural definitions of drug using behavior.
7. Develop an analysis of the various social responses to drug use, displaying an understanding of the emergence of these responses being linked to particular cultural and social structural shifts.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Expectations

There are two online exams in this course and you will be given two days to complete each one. Each exam is worth **30 points**. There are also **8 discussion posts** you will respond to during the semester I will start a thread for a specific topic and **you are required to comment on that post at least once and also respond to another student's post at least four times**. I will start a thread the first week of class and you will have the week to participate. A new thread will start about every week and I will notify you when it is posted. **Important: These posts must be thoughtful and written in a grammatically correct manner**. I do not set a length requirement for posts, but if it exceeds 500 words it is probably too long. Similarly, if your post is made up of a sentence or two, it is doubtful you have put much thought into it. Statements such as "I agree with her" are not a valuable contribution to a discussion. **Each discussion post is worth 5 points. I will let you know when new posts start.**

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

- Internet access/connection – high speed recommended (not dial-up)
- Word Processor (i.e. MS Word or Word Perfect)

Additionally, the following hardware and software are necessary to use eCollege:

Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means our courses work best if you are using a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0, or 8.0).

Your courses will also work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari 2.0 or better. Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser (3.0) on both Windows and Mac operating systems.

It is strongly recommended that you perform a "Browser Test" prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login in to eCollege, click on the 'myCourses' tab, and then select the "Browser Test" link under Support Services.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

eCollege Access and Log in Information:

This course will be facilitated using eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to: <https://leo.tamu-commerce.edu/login.aspx>.

You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamu-commerce.edu.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement:

In this course we will use eCollege to facilitate communication between you and myself. I will do my best to respond to emails within one business day and I will grade your assignments within two weeks of the due date. My office hours are listed at the top of the syllabus and I will make all reasonable efforts to be available to you. Simply put, my door is always open but, please make an appointment or show up during the scheduled office hours.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Make-up Policy

Any make-up opportunities are allowed *only at the discretion of the instructor* and immediate notification from the student is imperative. Obviously, missed attendance cannot be made up at a later date. Late papers will lose **one letter grade for each day they are late**. Plan accordingly. **Note:** University policy does allow excused absences in certain situations such as: school sponsored events, jury duty, and military service (consult the university catalog for all rules and procedures). All of these excuses require proper documentation. Family emergencies, illnesses, births, deaths, incarceration or other events and calamities are **NOT** excused absences and decisions regarding such absences are left to my discretion.

Academic Integrity and Dishonesty

I take plagiarism and other forms of cheating very seriously. *All the work you do in this course is to be your own*. I encourage you to study with friends, but be sure that everything you turn in is your own, original work. Regarding references, anytime you use someone else's work and do not accompany it with a proper citation to the author, you have committed plagiarism regardless of whether or not you intended to do so. It is also inappropriate to use your own work for multiple classes and any such actions will be treated just like plagiarism. Do not copy anything off the internet, out of books/articles, from friends, or from any other source or person. This includes direct cutting-and-pasting, summarizing or quoting without citing, and changing the original wording just enough so that you think you can pass it off as your own. **If I find that you have engaged in plagiarism, you will receive an F in the entire course and I reserve the right to take further disciplinary action(s) at the university level. Do Not Do It!**

Students with Disabilities:

ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Statement on Student Behavior

As stated in the student handbook: “All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.”
(See Student Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct, for more information)

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Schedule:

This schedule is **tentative** and I reserve the right to modify it, with notice, as needed during the semester. We will cover approximately one chapter every week in the order they appear in your text. All alterations to the schedule will be announced and it is your responsibility to be aware of these changes. Important dates are listed below:

August 25, 2014	First day of class—Syllabus and course introduction
October 27, 2014	First Exam
November 24, 2014	Second Exam

Note: Discussion posts will be due throughout the semester and I will assign these topics one week prior to the due date.