

SOCIOLOGY 335

Survey of Drugs and Society

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Course Description & Objective

The use of intoxicants is found in every known society and drug use is as old as it is widespread. Drugs serve medical, religious, recreational and many other functions. This course will attempt to explain the fascination humans have with intoxication. To do so, we will focus on drug use from a cross-cultural and historical perspective and center our attention on drug use within the context of various social institutions. The course is organized into several broad topics. The class begins with a discussion of the nature of sociology and the sociology of drug use. Throughout the course, it will be important to remember we are employing a sociological perspective. The course focus then shifts to the consumption of drugs. Patterns of use in Africa, Asia, North and South America, Europe and Oceania will be discussed and explanations of these patterns will be offered. Then, we will review the historical patterns of drug consumption in the United States. The third topical area deals with institutional controls over drug use. We will discuss the legal control of drugs in the United States. The control over drugs that religious institutions exert and the informal social control that the drug subculture wields will also be analyzed. We will then examine the distribution of drugs. We will consider both legal and illegal distribution systems and note the similarities and differences between these systems. The emphasis of the course then briefly shifts. Instead of analyzing drugs as a dependent variable, we will analyze drugs as an independent variable. That is, what behaviors are caused by drug use? Finally, we will develop a model that explains the process of becoming a drug user by integrating several theories of use. We will also discuss the process of “maturing out.” The course is both empirical and theoretical. We will concern ourselves with the facts of drug use and then attempt to order these facts with testable theories. Overriding course themes illustrate how drugs are a social and political phenomenon, as well as a chemical one.

REQUIREMENTS

Drug Use and Abuse: A Comprehensive Introduction (ISBN 9780495093398).

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The Sociology Department has established three Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that support the Institutional Learning Objectives. This course meets the following Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

SLO 1: Students will be able to evaluate sociological theories and use them to analyze and understand aspects of the social world.

In this course we will analyze the criminalization of certain drugs from the functionalist perspective, and the stigma that remains with decriminalized drugs from the symbolic interactionist perspective, and how the conflict perspective might see the recent legalization in certain States.

- SLO 3: Students will have clear and effective verbal and written communication skills.

In this course you are required to submit weekly written assignments as well as participate in weekly written discussions with your classmates and this will build your communication skills.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Your grade will consist of the following:

10 DQs for 1.5 points each

10 Assignments 30 points

First exam 15 points

Second exam 20 points

Final exam 20 points

Total 100 points

Exams are online, multiple choice/true false, and open-book

Students should regularly check their Hawaii email account for messages.

Course Calendar will be updated two weeks before the start of the term with the full term calendar.

SOME IMPORTANT ITEMS:

- **NO EXTRA CREDIT IS AVAILABLE FOR THIS COURSE UPON REQUEST**
- **NO GRADE NEGOTIATING**

Doing well in this class: In order to do well in this class, it is important that you a) view all the lectures, stay up with the discussion board, and (b) do all required readings

It is critical that you do the readings. Doing the readings will help you to better understand the material focus your discussion postings topics to the relevant areas that we have been covering.