

ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROBLEMS (SYA 6933-01)
Fall 2007

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This special topics seminar presents a review and analysis of sociological approaches to the study of alcohol and drug problems. The course objectives are (1) to provide you with a solid foundation in major theoretical perspectives on recreational and deviant drinking and drug use, (2) to introduce you to important empirical methods in the study of alcohol and drug problems, (3) to familiarize you with significant lines of research on alcohol- and drug-related issues, and (4) to strengthen your critical awareness and sociological understanding of contemporary debates over alcohol and drug policy.

The required books for the course are as follows:

Peter Conrad, *The Medicalization of Society*, Johns Hopkins, 2007, ISBN: 978-0-8018-8585-3;
Erich Goode, *Drugs in American Society* (6th Ed.), McGraw-Hill, 2008, ISBN: 978-0-07-340149-2;
James D. Orcutt and David R. Rudy (Eds.), *Drugs, Alcohol, and Social Problems*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2003, ISBN: 0-7425-2845-6.

I will also put additional readings on the Blackboard website for SYA 6933 in the Course Library and the Online Review. You can gain access to the website at <http://campus.fsu.edu/> with your FSU user ID and password. Be sure to check Blackboard frequently for announcements or new assignments. PowerPoint presentations from the seminar will be posted and available for viewing later in the course at <http://radiofreebellamy.org>, a password protected external website. Please let me know immediately if you have any problems obtaining the books or using the websites.

The course grades, which will use the +/- format, will be based on the frequency distribution of total points on all course requirements. I do not use arbitrary cut-points (such as 94% = A, 90% = A-, etc.), but I take the actual performance of the class into account in determining the range of scores for letter grades. Thus, your grade will be based on the total number of points you earn out of 100 possible in the following areas:

- (1) Four written exercises (10 points each): 40 points
- (2) Class presentation: 30 points
- (3) Open-ended exam: 20 points
- (4) Class participation: 10 points

The four written exercises will consist of study questions dealing with assigned readings and other material posted on the Blackboard course site. These exercises, which will be scored on a ten-point scale, will ask you to write a brief (2-4 pages) paper about sociological themes, critical issues or research questions that run through several readings. You will have two or three weeks to complete these exercises. Your responses to these exercises should be double-spaced and uploaded in Word format on Blackboard by 11:00 p.m. on the due date.

The class presentation, which will be worth 30 points, will involve “objectivist” and “constructionist” analyses of particular alcohol or drug problems (see the Online Review, Unit 1). You should use PowerPoint to prepare your presentation. I will assist any students who are unfamiliar with this software. Starting with the seventh week in the semester, we will devote a portion of the seminar to presentations by teams of co-presenters (Co-Pr). One Co-Pr will take an objectivist standpoint toward the problem, whereas the other Co-Pr will provide a constructionist view of the problem (let me know if you prefer an alternative division of labor). Each Co-Pr should plan a 10-15 minute presentation and should work collaboratively with the other Co-Pr. The presentations will be evaluated according to these criteria: (1) quality of evidence and documentation; (2) organization, coherence, and sociological relevance; and (3) style points or “audience appeal.”

I am proposing the following topics for the presentations, but I would be willing to substitute alternatives if they are relevant to the aims of the course. Please give some thought to the topic and perspective you would prefer. During the first week of class, we will need to identify an objectivist Co-Pr and a constructionist Co-Pr for each of these topics:

- Presentation 1: Binge drinking among high school and college students
- Presentation 2: The continuing war against marijuana use
- Presentation 3: The methamphetamine epidemic in the U.S.
- Presentation 4: New addictions: OxyContin and other synthetic narcotics
- Presentation 5: Heroin—the problem that won’t go away
- Presentation 6: Ritalin, school kids, and the medicalization of misbehavior
- Presentation 7: Pharmaceutical management of mood: a growth industry

Another 20 points will be based on a ten-question “open-ended” exam that I will give at the end of the November 28 class meeting. Open-ended questions are similar to short-essay questions—I will show you some examples of this type of question during our first class meeting. Each question will be worth two points and will ask you to write a few sentences about major conclusions, findings, critical arguments, or theoretical implications of material assigned in the texts and online readings.

I will also allocate 10 points for participation/attendance in the seminar. Everyone will start with 10 points, and I’ll deduct a point for each session you miss (without a valid excuse) or for continued non-participation in seminar discussions. Hopefully, most of you will end the course with your full 10 points intact.

Students with a disability or some other special reason for modification of course procedures should contact me within the first week of the course. You should be familiar with the Academic Honor Code published in the *FSU Bulletin* and the *Student Handbook*. You can review the Honor Code, information about disability services, and other important College of Social Sciences policies on Blackboard or at <http://e-soc.net>. Violations of the Honor Code will be grounds for a failing grade as well as any additional university action that might be warranted.

Above all, I hope you enjoy the course! I have been conducting research on alcohol and drug problems since my doctoral dissertation, and I believe that this area continues to offer some wonderful opportunities for the development of sociological theory and for socially relevant empirical inquiry.

CALENDAR AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

- Aug. 29 Perspectives on Alcohol and Drug Problems: Goode, Ch.1; Online Review, Unit 1
- Sept. 5 Sociological Theories of Drug-Related Deviance: Goode, Ch. 3; Online Review, Unit 2; EXERCISE #1 ASSIGNED
- Sept. 12 Social Psychology of Alcohol and Drug Effects: Goode, Ch. 2; O&R, Ch. 12 (Kantor and Straus); Becker, "History, Culture and Subjective Experience" (Course Library); Online Review, Unit 3
- Sept. 19 Epidemiology of Alcohol and Drug Use: Goode, Ch. 6-7; O&R, Chaps. 7 (Wallace and Bachman) and Ch. 9 (Barr et al.); Online Review, Unit 4; EXERCISE #1 DUE; EXERCISE #2 ASSIGNED
- Sept. 26 Social Construction of Alcohol and Drug Problems: Goode, Ch. 4-5; O&R, Chaps. 3 (Orcutt and Turner) and 5 (Beckett); Best, *Images of Issues* (2nd Ed.), Ch. 1 & 15 (Course Library); Online Review, Unit 5
- Oct. 3 Alcohol and Deviant Drinking: Goode, Ch. 8, pp. 205-16; O&R, Chaps. 2 (Schneider) and 8 (Herd); Online Review, Unit 6;
- Oct. 10 Marijuana and Tobacco: Goode, Ch. 8, pp. 216-222, Ch. 9, pp. 237-259; O&R, Ch. 10 (Zimmerman and Weider); Orcutt, "Differential Association and Marijuana Use" (Course Library); Online Review, Unit 7; EXERCISE #2 DUE; EXERCISE #3 ASSIGNED; PRESENTATION 1
- Oct. 17 Stimulants and Hallucinogens: Goode, Ch. 9, pp. 259-275, Ch. 10; Online Review, Unit 8; PRESENTATIONS 2 & 3
- Oct. 24 Heroin and Other Narcotics: Goode, Ch. 11; Online Review, Unit 9; EXERCISE #3 DUE; EXERCISE #4 ASSIGNED; PRESENTATIONS 4 & 5
- Oct. 31 Psychotherapeutic Drugs: Goode, Ch. 8, pp. 222-233; Online Review, Unit 10; PRESENTATIONS 6 & 7
- Nov. 7 Medicalization of Alcohol and Drug Problems: Conrad, Chaps. 1-5; Online Review, Unit 11;
- Nov. 14 Drug Industries, Legal and Illegal: Conrad, Chaps. 6-8; Goode, Ch. 13; O&R, Ch. 11 (Adler and Adler); Online Review, Unit 12; EXERCISE #4 DUE;
- Nov. 21 Thanksgiving Break: No Class
- Nov. 28 Social Organization of Treatment and Prevention: Goode, Ch. 14; O&R, Chaps. 1 (Gusfield), 6 (Wysong et al.) and 14 (Bourgois et al.); Online Review, Unit 13; EXAMINATION (10 QUESTIONS)
- Dec. 5 Social Control of Alcohol and Drugs: Goode, Ch. 15; MacCoun and Reuter, "Cocaine, Marijuana, and Heroin" (Course Library); Online Review, Unit 14