History 295
Alcohol and Other Drugs in U.S. History

Spring 2015
MW, 11a-noon, O’Brian 112; Fridays O’Brien 112 / Capen 108 / Cooke 248

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the 21st century, Americans are debating whether to legalize marijuana. But how did marijuana get to be illegal in the first place? Who decided that some drugs are so dangerous we should fight a “war” against them, while others are so beneficial that entire industries should be devoted to encouraging their use? Why are American debates over drugs so intense and so complex, and why have they produced such a contradictory legal and cultural landscape? This course answers such questions by exploring the rich history of alcohol and other drugs in America: from the Pilgrims’ beer riots to Prohibition, from cocainized Coca-Cola to crackheads, from Bayer’s Heroin to Purdue Pharma’s OxyContin, from the Marlboro Man to vape lounges, from vipers to hippies to ravers. We will track the changing worlds of drug discovery and commerce; drug use and drug-using subcultures; drug regulation and policing (domestic and global); drug treatment and addiction science; and the shifting, racially-charged cultural politics of drugs.

All students meet together on Mondays and Wednesdays for lecture. Fridays the course is divided into three smaller, seminar-style classes for deeper discussion and analysis of lecture, readings, images, films, etc.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

There are no required texts to purchase for this course. All readings are available through UB Learns.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

I expect you to attend all classes, to complete assignments on time, and to participate in discussions.
1. **Participation (25%)**: You will be assigned a letter grade for your preparation and participation, based on the quality and quantity of your participation in class discussions and on any in-class writing assignments. Unexcused absences after the first 2 will lower your participation grade by 3% per absence.

2. **Midterm exam (30%)**: March 13th, in class; short answers and an essay.

3. **Drug advertisement presentation (15%)**: Present and lead discussion of an alcohol, tobacco, or pharmaceutical advertisement.

4. **Final exam (30%)**: Date/location TBA; short answers and an essay.

**PLAGIARISM & EXTERNAL SOURCES POLICY:**

All students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the University's academic integrity policies, available in the Undergraduate Catalog (http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/integrity.shtml) or the Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual (http://www.grad.buffalo.edu/policies). I use plagiarism detection software to aid in determining the originality of student work—all papers will be handed in digitally through UB Learns as well as in hard copy.

What is plagiarism? Briefly, it is using the work and words of another writer (whether from print sources, from the Web, or from another student) without giving clear credit to her/him. Plagiarism is unacceptable in any course assignment, big or small, and will result in an “F” grade for the entire course. If you have any questions or doubts, ASK.

There are endless sources available for the study of U.S. history, but I expect students to engage with the materials I have selected for this course. In your written work, therefore, do not refer more than briefly to sources other than those assigned for the course unless: (1) you have fully engaged all relevant course materials (including readings, lectures and discussion) and wish to add more to an already complete essay; and (2) you have received prior approval from me to bring in the additional source. This is particularly important for Web sources: **absolutely no use of any Web sites for written work unless you have specifically cleared the Web site with me in advance.**

**ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES:**

UB’s Accessibility Resources Office coordinates services and accommodations to ensure the accessibility and usability of all UB programs, services, and activities by people with disabilities. To receive accommodation for physical and learning disabilities, students are required to register with that office; more information can be found at http://www.student-affairs.buffalo.edu/ods/.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Midterm Exam</th>
<th>Class discussion</th>
<th>Final Exam</th>
<th>Drug ad presentation</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Historical Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>- identify key events, people, and eras in the history of alcohol and drugs in America</td>
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<td>- understand the origins and legacies of anti-drug and anti-alcohol campaigns and criminalization</td>
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<td>- understand the historical development of addiction treatment</td>
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<td>- understand the commercial history of licit and illicit traffic in alcohol and drugs</td>
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<td>- understand how lines between licit and illicit substances have been created and changed over time</td>
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<td><strong>Historical Thinking</strong></td>
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<td>- compare and evaluate the experiences of using alcohol and other drugs in different places, communities, and time periods</td>
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<td>- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different political, cultural, and medical responses to alcohol and drug abuse</td>
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<td>- understand how the history of alcohol and drugs is used to inform current debates and policies</td>
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<td><strong>Historical Skills</strong></td>
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<td>- construct convincing arguments supported by evidence from primary and secondary sources</td>
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<td>- write clear, detailed analyses about historical questions and problems</td>
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<td>- strengthen ability to read closely</td>
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<td>- develop oral communication skills</td>
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UNIT 1: Traditional drug cultures

Week 1: Foundations
Jan 26: Class intro—what is a drug? What is history?
Jan 28: Drugs and empires
Jan 30: Discussion: Drug categories, drug experiences, drug policy

NO READING

Week 2: Alcohol in early America
Feb 2: The “Good Creature of God”
Feb 4: The Revolutionary (drug) War & the “alcoholic Republic”
Feb 6: Discussion: American alcohol traditions

READING: Increase Mather, “Wo to Drunkards” (1673), p. 1-15
Anonymous, “The trial of Sir Richard Rum” (1724)
Ten Nights in a Bar-Room (start)

Week 3: Temperance Crusades
Feb 9: The discovery of “intemperance”
Feb 11: Battling Demon Rum
Feb 13: Discussion: Men, women, and the politics of alcohol

READING: Ten Nights in a Bar-Room (finish)

Week 4: God’s Own Medicine
Feb 16: Early American drug cultures
Feb 18: Discovering addiction
Feb 20: Discussion: drugs before the drug war

READING: 19th century drug self-experimentation reports
Tymoczko, “The Nitrous Oxide Philosopher”

UNIT 2: Drug wars

Week 5: Prohibition
Feb 23: The industrialization of alcohol
Feb 25: Prohibition
Feb 27: Discussion: The lessons of Prohibition

READING: “Scarface” (movie; 1932)
Blocker, “Was Prohibition a Success?”

Week 6: Launching the first war on narcotics
March 2: The Harrison Anti-Narcotic Act
March 4: Creating the American junkie
March 6: Discussion: Debating criminalization

READING:  *Addicts Who Survived*, selections
            Kolb, “Pleasure and deterioration from narcotic addiction” (1925)
            Williams, “Negro Cocaine ‘Fiends’ Are a New Southern Menace,” *NY Times* (1914)

Week 7: The “classic” era of drug control
March 9: Reefer Madness!
March 11: Life and times of “Narco”
March 13: MIDTERM EXAM

NO ADDITIONAL READINGS

SPRING BREAK!

UNIT 3: The ones that got away

Week 8: Tobacco
March 23: Rise of the little white slaver
March 25: The tobacco “debate”
March 27: Discussion: Health and freedom

READING: Tobacco advertisement websites

Week 9: Repeal! And consequences
March 30: Discovery of the “alcoholic”; start *Lost Weekend*
April 1: continue *The Lost Weekend*
April 3: Discussion: The alcoholism paradigm

READING:  *Rotskoff, Love on the Rocks*, p. 69-86, 139-148

Week 10: Licit drug cultures
April 6: Origins of the pharmaceutical industry
April 8: Triumph of Big Pharma
April 10: Discussion: The licit/illicit divide

READING:  Drug advertisements
            Cooley, “New Nerve Pills and Your Health”
            Galton, “The new pills that make you feel better”
            “No Cure for Jitters!” (1945)

UNIT 4: Drug wars re-thought and re-fought

Week 11: The drug war in America’s globe
April 13: Setting up the supply-side global drug regime
April 15: The drug war and the Cold War
April 17: Discussion: Drugs, drug wars, and empire

READING: “Dope from Red China,” Time Magazine, 1955
Gary Webb, “Crack Plague’s Roots are in Nicaraguan War”
Chalmers, “The Last Rebel” (Webb obituary)

Week 12: Challenging punishment?
April 20: Gone to pot: from hippies to rehab
April 22: Nixon’s drug war
April 24: Discussion: Treatment and punishment

READING: Claire Clark, “Pharmacy is the new hope”

Week 13: Drug war redux
April 27: Crack Wars & mass incarceration
April 29: The fall and rise of Big Pharma
April 30: Discussion: The drug war and modern conservatism

READING: Alexander, New Jim Crow, p. 1-9 and 59-96
Extra credit: watch Scarface (1983) and hand in one-page comparison with original Scarface; OR watch or read any other late 20th century representation of alcohol/drug use and compare with one watched/read earlier in this course

Week 14: Looking for the exit
May 4: Harm reduction: theory and practice
May 6: Meth, molly, vaping, and “Big Marijuana”?
May 8: Discussion: historically informed drug policy

READING: Drug Policy Alliance policy proposal