

## **SOC4350 W25 Drugs and Society**

“Drugs and Society” is an advanced undergraduate course designed to introduce students to the relationship between drugs and society. Participants will explore the relationships between drugs and society, culture, policy using social science tools and perspectives.

The word “drug” is currently commonly used to refer to any substance that has a notable effect on perception and/or biology. It is thought to originate from Old French "drogue", possibly deriving from "droge (vate)" from Middle Dutch meaning "dry (barrels)", referring to medicinal plants preserved as dry matter in barrels. The word has significant and different connotations depending on the social position of the user, purpose, social context, legality, effects etc. Connotations range from negative to positive and, generally, parallel social acceptability depending on the users, means of procurement and social context, legality, etc. In Canada, medically prescribed pharmaceuticals, alcohol and cannabis are legal but have both positive and negative connotations and effects. We will consider the processes by which these connotations develop.

Topics include,

- associations between drug use and gender, age, race, ethnicity, class, etc.,
- production, distribution, use
- the global drug trade,
- regulatory and public health responses.
- Performance enhancement (especially in sports)
- the social functions benefits and costs
- personal and public health burdens and benefits
- social constructions of drug use,
- theories of drug use and societal effects and consequences using statistical evidence and applying theoretical explanations.

Participants will engage with historical perspectives, contemporary debates and apply sociological theories.