

Carleton University
Department of Sociology & Anthropology
SOCI 3220B
Critical Drug Studies
Winter 2026

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Office Hours: By appointment
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Method of Delivery: In-person course
Lecture Times: Thursdays 8:35 a.m. to 11:25 a.m.
Brightspace course page link: <https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/367654>

Teaching Assistant: TBA
Email: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES:

This course will introduce students to the socio-cultural study of psychoactive drugs by critically exploring some of the main debates and issues in the field of drug studies, with a particular focus on psychedelic substances. Generally speaking, drug use has predominantly been studied within a framework that views it as a problematic and deviant activity. Within this framework users are reduced, on the one hand to being enslaved addicts largely lacking agency, due to their dependence on narcotic drugs. On the other, they are framed as dangerous criminals, delinquents, and hedonists that threaten the social and moral order and cause many of the social problems that contemporary society suffers from. Critical Drug Studies not only mounts a critique against the prohibitionist drug war paradigm but also develops an array of conceptual tools and theoretical frameworks that allow for a more sophisticated and evidence-based analysis of drug use, both licit and illicit. In addition to outlining a post-colonial critique of the prohibitionist paradigm, the course will focus on three main areas: 1) the medicalization of psychoactive drugs; 2) the religious uses of drugs; and 3) the colonial geopolitics of psychedelic plants and molecules. Some of the topics to be covered include: the cultural history of psychedelic healing, the appropriation and commodification of indigenous medicinal plants, the pharmaceuticalization of psychedelics, the globalization of ayahuasca, drug tourism, the political economy of psychoactive drugs, indigenous plant knowledge, and evolutionary perspectives on psychoactive substances, among others.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Enhance academic reading and writing skills, as well as skills in expressing ideas in other mediums, such as oral presentations.
2. Develop the ability to critically engage with a range of concepts and theories, such as pharmaceuticalization, drug discourses, psychotomimetic, the theory of set and setting, cognitive liberty, among many others.

3. Learn to connect and analyze issues in drug studies from a sociological perspective using the theoretical tools introduced in class.

PREREQUISITES:

One of the following: SOCI 1001 and SOCI 1002, or SOCI 1003 [1.0], or ANTH 1001, or ANTH 1002, AND third year standing.

CLASS POLICIES, EXPECTATIONS, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STATEMENT

You are expected to attend class regularly and be prepared to participate and talk during class. **This means having read the required readings before** the class begins. This point cannot be stressed enough: **you must read the required material!** If you do not read the required readings, you will not do well in the course. You are also expected to **actively participate and contribute to group discussions** both in meetings and the online forum. You are also expected to complete all assignments on time.

Throughout the course you will be expected to speak and share your ideas with the class and in small groups. We learn better when we share our perspectives and interpretations on the course material. In addition, since the course revolves around controversial aspects of drug use revolving around class, race, gender, and colonialism, you are encouraged to openly express any disagreements with the authors you will read, as well as with your fellow classmates, with the Professor and Teaching Assistants. The ultimate aim of this is to understand each other but it does not imply striving towards finding agreement. Our class will be racially, religiously, politically, culturally, generationally, and economically diverse. We will be of different gender identifications and sexual orientations and our lived experiences and reactions to the course material will reflect this diversity. So even though we will practice being critical, you are expected to conduct yourself in such a way that shows the utmost respect to others who may – or may not – share your views. Derogatory comments and hateful behaviour towards others (and their views) will not be tolerated.

In this course the use of artificial intelligence (AI) programs, such as ChatGPT, for the purposes of handing in course work that is to be graded is strictly forbidden. This means that you should not be using AI programs to generate answers, essays, presentations, or any element of the course that will be graded by the professor or the teaching assistants.

Acknowledgement of Territory

We pay respect to the Algonquin people, who are the traditional guardians of this land. We acknowledge their long-standing relationship with this territory, which remains unceded. We pay respect to all Indigenous peoples in this region, from all nations across Canada, who call Ottawa home. We acknowledge the traditional knowledge keepers, both young and old. And we honour their courageous leaders: past, present, and future.

Carleton University acknowledges the location of its campus on the traditional, unceded territories of the Algonquin nation. In doing so, Carleton acknowledges it has a responsibility to the Algonquin people and a responsibility to adhere to Algonquin cultural protocols.

ANISHNABE

Ni manàdjiyànànig Màmìwininì Anishinàbeg, ogor kà nàgadawàbandadjig iyo akì eko weshkad. Ako nongom ega wìkàd kì mìgiwewàdj.

Ni manàdjiyànànig kakina Anishinàbeg ondaje kaye ogor kakina eniyagizidjig enigokamigàg Kanadàng eji ondàpinangig endàwàdjìn Odàwàng.

Ninisidawinawànànig kenawendamòdjig kije kikenindamàwin; weshkinìgidjig kaye kejejàdizidjig.

Nigijeweninmànànig ogor kà nìgànì sòngideyedjig; weshkad, nongom; kaye àyànikàdj.

[Listen to the audio file](#)

REQUIRED READINGS:

All required readings will be made available through the online learning system. Students are not required to purchase textbooks or other learning materials for this course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & METHODS OF EVALUATION:

Student assessment will be based on the following components:

General Discussion Forum 10%

Reading Reflections 20%

Quiz 15%

Group Presentation 15%

Final Essay 40%

Weekly

March 5/6, 2026

April 2, 2026

April 8, 2026

General Discussion Forum: There will be an on-going general discussion forum on Brightspace for the duration of the class. Since there is so much to talk about concerning psychoactive drugs you are expected to contribute at least 10 posts of at least 200 words throughout the semester at your own leisure. You are free to start your own discussion threads or add to existing discussion threads that others have posted. Discussion forum participation is worth an overall total of 10%. In other words, for every posts you make you will receive 1% and contributing 10 well-formed posts will earn you the full 10% for discussion forum participation. **The discussion forum will close on April 8 at 11:59 p.m.**

Reading Reflections: During the semester you will write **10 short reflection pieces** (at least 300 words) based on the required readings for the class. The aim of this element is for you **to engage the required readings** and articulate your thoughts on the main issues brought up in the readings. Reading reflections are not summaries of the readings but rather you will be evaluated based on your ability to reflect on the main concepts of the reading and generate your own ideas, connections, or critiques of the reading. You will submit your short reading reflection pieces through Brightspace on a weekly basis. Each reading reflection is due by the end of the day each Friday. The short reflections are worth a total of 20% of the final grade (2% per reflection).

Quiz: There will be one quiz worth 15% of the overall grade. The quiz will consist of multiple-choice questions based on the main material covered in class and readings. It will be made available through Brightspace and is **scheduled for February 26**.

Group Presentation: There will be one group presentation (10 minutes in duration maximum) worth 15% of the overall grade. **Your attendance is required on March 5, 2025.** We will dedicate part of this class to outlining the specific details for the group assignment (guidelines and rubrics will also be posted on Brightspace). During our meeting you will have time to form groups of 4-5 people, begin the assignment, and allocate different sections of the project to each member of the group who will in turn be responsible for that specific section of the presentation. If you cannot be present for our meeting, then you should arrange beforehand to be part of a group. If you do not do this, then you may need to carry out the presentation on your own. **Group presentations will take place in class on April 2, 2026.**

Final Essay: The final assignment is a research paper (10-12 double-spaced pages, excluding title page and bibliography) worth 40% of the overall grade and based on a topic of your choosing related to drug studies. Detailed guidelines for the final essay will be explained in class and will be posted on Brightspace. Essays must be submitted through the Brightspace drop box. Essays are due on **April 8, 2026**. To be fair to those students who submit papers on time, late papers will be penalized at a rate of 3% per day. It is expected that your essay will be readable at a third-year level and hence **you will be penalized 1% for each spelling and grammar mistake** (up to a maximum of 10%).

Citation Style

The Chicago author-date citation style (17th edition) is to be used in the assignments and papers of this course. For more information, please see:

https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html

Additional Information

In accordance with the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar Regulations, the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52
F= Below 50	WDN = Withdrawn from the course	DEF = Deferred	

Academic Regulations, Accommodations, Plagiarism, Etc.

University rules regarding registration, withdrawal, appealing marks, and most anything else you might need to know can be found on the university's website, here:

<https://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/>

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (<https://students.carleton.ca/course-outline/>). For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at **613-520-6608** or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your ***Letter of Accommodation*** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*).

*The deadline for contacting the Paul Menton Centre regarding accommodation for February/March examinations is **February 1, 2026** and **March 15, 2026** for April examinations.

For Religious Obligations:

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: www.carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

For Pregnancy:

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: www.carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

For Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: www.carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the

national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else's work as your own and is a serious academic offence. For the details of what constitutes plagiarism, the potential penalties and the procedures refer to the section on Instructional Offences in the Undergraduate Calendar. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the Carleton University Student Academic Integrity Policy (See <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>). The Policy is strictly enforced and is binding on all students. Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. Students who infringe the Policy may be subject to one of several penalties.

Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools (e.g. ChatGPT)

For this course, any use of generative AI tools to produce assessed content is considered a violation of academic integrity standards. As our understanding of the uses of AI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continue to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of AI in any circumstance not described here with the course instructor to ensure it supports the learning goals for the course.

Note: Students can also access resources related to citing Generative AI on the [MacOdrum Library website](#).

What are the Penalties for Plagiarism?

A student found to have plagiarized an assignment may be subject to one of several penalties including but not limited to: a grade of zero, a failure or a reduced grade for the piece of academic work; reduction of final grade in the course; completion of a remediation process; resubmission of academic work; withdrawal from course(s); suspension from a program of study; a letter of reprimand.

What are the Procedures?

All allegations of plagiarism are reported to the faculty of Dean of FASS and Management. Documentation is prepared by instructors and departmental chairs. The Dean writes to the student and the University Ombudsperson about the alleged plagiarism. The Dean reviews the allegation. If it is not resolved at this level then it is referred to a tribunal appointed by the Senate.

Statement on Student Mental Health:

As a student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to

someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. For more information, please consult <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>

Emergency Resources ([on and off campus](#))

- Crisis/Urgent Counselling Support: 613-520-6674 (Mon-Fri, 8:30-4:30)
- Suicide Crisis Helpline: call or text 9-8-8, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- For immediate danger or urgent medical support: call 9-1-1

Carleton Resources

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off Campus Resources

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: call 613-238-3311, text 343-306-5550, or connect online at <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: call 613-722-6914 or toll-free 1-866-996-0991, or connect online at <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Good2Talk: call 1-866-925-5454 or connect online at <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: for online or on-site service
<https://walkincounselling.com>

Important Information:

- Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).
- Students must always retain a hard copy of all work that is submitted.
- Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.
- Carleton University is committed to protecting the privacy of those who study or work here (currently and formerly). To that end, Carleton's Privacy Office seeks to encourage the implementation of the privacy provisions of Ontario's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) within the university.
- In accordance with FIPPA, please ensure all communication with staff/faculty is via your Carleton email account. To get your Carleton Email you will need to activate your [MyCarletonOne account](#) through Carleton Central. Once you have activated your MyCarletonOne account, log into the [MyCarleton Portal](#).

- Please note that you will be able to link your MyCarletonOne account to other non-MyCarletonOne accounts and receive emails from us. However, for us to respond to your emails, we need to see your full name, CU ID, and the email must be written from your valid MyCarletonOne address. Therefore, it would be easier to respond to your inquiries if you would send all email from your connect account. If you do not have or have yet to activate this account, you may wish to do so by visiting <https://students.carleton.ca/>.

WINTER TERM 2026 – Important Dates and Deadlines

Date	Activity
WINTER TERM 2026	
December 29, 2025	Deadline for course outlines to be made available to students registered in full winter and early winter term courses.
January 5, 2026	University reopens.
	Winter term begins. Full winter and early winter classes begin.
January 9, 2026	Last day for registration and course changes (including auditing) in early winter courses.
January 16, 2026	Last day for registration and course changes (including auditing) in full winter and late winter courses.
	Last day to withdraw from early winter courses with a full fee adjustment.
	Graduate students who have not electronically submitted their final thesis copy to Graduate Studies will not be eligible to graduate in winter 2026 and must register for the winter 2026 term.

Date	Activity
January 23-25, January 30- February 1, 2026	Full fall and late fall term deferred final examinations will be held.
January 31, 2026	Last day to withdraw from full winter courses and the winter portion of fall/winter courses with a full fee adjustment.
February 1, 2026	Last day for academic withdrawal from early winter courses.
	Last day to request Formal Examination Accommodations for Feb/Mar final examinations from the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities. Note that it may not be possible to fulfil accommodation requests received after the specified deadlines.
February 6, 2026	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in early winter undergraduate courses, before the official Feb/Mar final examination period (see examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar).
February 13, 2026	Last day of early winter classes.
	Last day for final take-home examinations to be assigned in early winter courses, with the exception of those conforming to the examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar.
	Last day that can be specified by an instructor as a due date for term work for early winter courses.
	April examination schedule available online.

Date	Activity
February 16, 2026	Statutory holiday. University closed.
	Deadline for course outlines to be made available to students registered in late winter courses.
February 16-20, 2026	Winter break, no classes.
February 21-22, February 28-March 1, 2026	Final examinations in early winter undergraduate courses will be held.
February 23, 2026	Late winter classes begin.
February 27, 2026	Last day for registration and course changes (including auditing) in late winter courses.
March 1, 2026	Last day for receipt of applications for admission to an undergraduate degree program for the fall/winter session from applicants whose documents originate outside Canada or the United States.
	Last day for receipt of applications to Bachelor of Architecture, Bachelor of Industrial Design, Bachelor of Information Technology (Interactive Multimedia and Design), Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Bachelor of Social Work degree programs for the fall/winter session.
	Last day for receipt of applications for admission from candidates who wish to be guaranteed consideration for financial assistance (including Carleton fellowships, scholarships and teaching assistantships) administered by Carleton University. Candidates whose applications are

Date	Activity
	received after the March 1 deadline may be considered for the award of a fellowship, scholarship or teaching assistantship (Graduate students only).
March 6, 2026	Last day to withdraw from late winter term courses with a full fee adjustment.
March 13-15, 2026	Early winter undergraduate deferred final examinations will be held.
March 15, 2026	Last day for academic withdrawal from full winter, late winter, and fall/winter courses.
	Last day to request Formal Examination Accommodations for April full winter, late winter, and fall/winter final examinations from the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities. Note that it may not be possible to fulfil accommodation requests received after the specified deadlines.
March 25, 2026	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in full winter term or fall/winter undergraduate courses, before the official April final examination period (see examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar).
April 1, 2026	Last day for graduate students to submit their supervisor-approved thesis, in examinable form to the department.
	Last day for receipt of applications from potential spring (June) graduates.
	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final

Date	Activity
	grade, in late winter term undergraduate courses, before the official final examination period (see examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar).
April 3, 2026	Statutory holiday. University closed.
April 8, 2026	Winter term ends.
	Classes follow a Friday schedule.
	Last day of full winter, late winter, and fall/winter classes.
	Last day for final take-home examinations to be assigned, with the exception of those conforming to the examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar.
	Last day that can be specified by an instructor as a due date for term work for full winter, late winter, and fall/winter courses.
April 9-10, 2026	No classes or examinations take place.
April 11-23, 2026	Final examinations in full winter, late winter, and fall/winter courses will be held. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
April 23, 2026	All final take-home examinations are due on this day, with the exception of those conforming to the examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar.

Date	Activity
May 1, 2026	Last day for receipt of applications for undergraduate internal degree transfers to allow for registration for the summer session.
May 15-27, 2026	Full winter, late winter term, and fall/winter deferred final examinations will be held.
June 1, 2026	Last day for receipt of applications for admission to an undergraduate program for the fall/winter session except for applications due March 1.
June 15, 2026	Last day for receipt of applications for undergraduate degree program transfers for the fall term.