

Course Code/Title
SOCI 3220B

Instructor	Ariel Fuenzalida
Term	Winter
Course Delivery	In-person
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

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 this “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. So, 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 neuropolitics of psychedelic plants. Some of the topics to be covered include: the cultural history of psychedelic healing, the appropriation and commodification of indigenous medicinal plants, the psychedelic renaissance, the globalization of ayahuasca, drug tourism, the political economy of psychoactive drugs, indigenous plant knowledge, and evolutionary perspectives on psychoactive substances, among others.

EVALUATION

General Discussion Forum Participation 10%
Class Participation 10%
Two Quizzes 20%
Group Project 20%
Final Essay 40%

TEXT No textbook required. Readings will be provided