**[NARCOTIC] DRUGS AND GLOBAL SOCIETIES**

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**Academic Unit:** SPP

**Semester/term, year:** Fall2017-18

**Course level (MA, PhD):** MA

**Course Description**

The course examines changes in illicit drug use and markets with a particular focus on the past 10 years. We examine changes in the drug types being produced and consumed – including via a constantly emerging range of so-called ‘novel psychoactive substances’, alongside recent transformations in drug markets enabled by internet technologies – particularly in the form of so-called ‘darknet’ drug markets. We will bring together multiple perspectives (political, sociological, criminological, historical, cultural, psychological and health) to the study of drug use and its construction as a problem at the micro and macro levels. Students will be encouraged to examine and challenge their own assumptions and values and beliefs about drug use, drug users and drug supply actors, in order to enable them to critically evaluate drug prohibition and a range of regulatory alternatives in a fast changing landscape.

The course assessment contains formative and summative elements; the summative component is submission of a 2000 word *blog post* (70%, to be submitted by 13 December) via Turnitin and a *speech* (30%, to be delivered in the last teaching session on 6 December). Full details in the separate moodle section on assessments. The formative element is an ungraded, learning diary that has to be submitted for students to receive their final grade. Students should come prepared to discuss their formal and/or impressionistic understanding of drug use, markets and policy in their home countries.

**Learning Outcomes**

*On completion of this course students will be able to demonstrate*

* A willingness to critically evaluate one’s own values and beliefs around drug use, drug users and drug supply activities
* An awareness of drug myths and stereotypes and understanding of the inherently moral and political assumptions that cast drug use as a social problem
* Detailed understanding of changing patterns and trends in drug use globally
* Detailed understanding of the extent to which recent drug market innovations (e.g. the so-called ‘darknet’) may be transforming traditional global drug supply\
* An understanding of what we can learn about regulatory alternatives to prohibition from recent developments, including injecting rooms, alcohol and tobacco, cannabis, prescription drugs and informal regulation via darknet drug markets
* Identification of regional variations in the changes identified on the course

**Course Requirements**

Delivery of the course will be based on interactive lectures using media resources and outlining key themes, issues, and literatures, followed by class discussion and analysis of concepts, materials and policy debates. Students must prepare for each session ***and from the beginning of term***. This course is delivered in a teaching block during the period between Wednesday 20 September to Wednesday 6 December, but students must have thoroughly prepared ahead of the start of the course.

**Course Schedule**

The course is delivered in a condensed series of 12 sessions that are intended to deliver high learning impact. Delivery will be structured over 6 working days in total. The course will run from Wednesday 20 September to Wednesday 6 December. It is essential that students begin reading at the start of the Fall term and before the classes begin and to prepare for multiple sessions as they would if they were following a professional training course.

Sessions 1 + 2: Drugs, definitions, myths, morality and politics

Sessions 3 + 4: Changing drugs, changing use, changing explanatory frameworks

Sessions 4 + 5: Changing drug markets: the usual suspects and the internet revolution

Sessions 6 + 7: Darknet drug markets: self regulation and the challenge to prohibition

Sessions 9 + 10: Regulatory alternatives: applying learning from recent developments

Sessions 11 + 12: Regional variations, roadblocks and challenges