

**HLTH 40 - Drugs, Health, and Society****Catalog Description****Transfer Status:** CSU/UC**Unit(s):** 3.00**Lecture:** 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)**Total:** 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

Course Description: This course offers a comprehensive examination of the epidemiological and toxicological dimensions of substance use and abuse, with a particular emphasis on its implications for public health. Students will engage with foundational and advanced concepts related to substance dependence, including the classification and pharmacodynamics of both licit and illicit drugs. The curriculum delves into the neurobiological and physiological mechanisms by which various substances affect the human brain and body. The course investigates the sociopolitical and economic determinants that influence drug production, distribution, and consumption. Students will analyze national data on substance use trends—including tobacco, alcohol, prescription medications, and other psychoactive agents—while exploring the multifactorial risk profiles associated with addiction. The course also surveys contemporary recovery paradigms and evaluates the efficacy of local and national support systems and resources. (C-ID PH 103).

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Critically distinguish among drug use, misuse, and abuse by examining their defining characteristics, behavioral implications, and relevance to public health. Students will develop analytical skills to interpret patterns of substance-related behavior and assess their impact on individuals and communities.
2. Analyze and generate a historical understanding of the local, state, and country's strategic stance on drug laws, the critical gaps and deficiencies in regulation, and oversight of drug supply chains, and arguments on both sides of selected issues of legalization.
3. Identify and evaluate the legal classifications of various drug types, emphasizing regulatory frameworks and societal impacts.
4. Dissect local, state, and national incidence, prevalence, and trending data for drug, tobacco, and alcohol use, to determine the targeted challenges and ability to identify deficiencies in research methods.
5. Critically analyze strategies and policies implemented by other countries and communities for prevention and harm reduction, treatment programs and alternatives and be able to offer solutions to impact local, state, and national issues.
6. Identify the factors associated with the use of specific substances of abuse, including populations at most risk based on age, sex, education, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and age at first initiation.
7. Articulate the neurological and physiological consequences of substance use and abuse, distinguishing between short- and long-term effects. Students will critically assess how these impacts influence individual functioning and broader public health outcomes.
8. Evaluate the historical role of media in shaping societal attitudes towards substance use and assess its impact on public health discourse and intervention strategies.

Course Content**Topic Titles / Suggested Time Topic****Lecture**

<u>Topics</u>	<u>Lec Hrs</u>
Societal dimensions of substance dependence: toxicology, addiction theories, crime, and violence	4.00
Examine CNS depressants' physiological effects, mechanisms of action, and cultural contexts of use of alcohol, opioids, sedatives, and marijuana	5.00
Investigate CNS stimulants' (nicotine, amphetamines, methamphetamines, cocaine) physiological effects, mechanisms, and cultural patterns of use across diverse substances	5.00
Assess performance-enhancing drugs' physiological effects, mechanisms, historical context, and cultural patterns of use	5.00
Evaluate OTC, prescription, and herbal drugs within FDA regulatory and public health frameworks	4.00
Examine substance abuse prevention and treatment strategies through public health frameworks, behavioral intervention, dual diagnosis, evidence-based treatment strategies, and recovery models	6.00
Critically examine media portrayals of drug use and addiction, analyzing their influence on public perception, stigma, and policy development	4.00
Analyze hallucinogens' physiological effects, mechanisms of action, and cultural significance across various psychoactive substances	4.00
Analyze the specific societal population risks:	6.00
a. Age	
b. Gender	

Topics

Lec Hrs

c. Race and Ethnicity	
d. LGBTQ+	
e. Education	
f. Socioeconomic status	
Investigate Governmental Laws, Social Policies, Enforcement and Regulations	6.00
a. Social Policies/Law	
1. Treatment versus incarceration	
2. Homelessness	
3. Scheduling of Drugs	
4. Enforcement	
b. Laws and Government regulations	
1. Legal versus illegal distribution	
c. Economics	
1. Cost of war on drugs	
2. Sales and profits	
3. Cost of Law enforcement	
d. Marketing	
1. Pharmaceutical Industry	
2. False advertising	
e. Prevention	
Public Health foundations of substance use, and social and economic factors related to substance abuse	2.00
Total Hours: 51.00	

Methods of Instruction

- A. Class Activities
- B. Group Discussions
- C. Guest Speakers
- D. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- E. Lecture
- F. Problem-Solving Sessions

Methods of Evaluation

- A. Exams/Tests
- B. Projects
- C. Journal
- D. Written Assignments
- E. Essays and research papers
- F. Class Discussion

Examples of Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Review the 2023 "National Survey On Drug Use and Health" (<https://nsduhweb.rti.org>) with a focus on the methodology, key findings, and public health implications. Prepare to engage in a critical, evidence-based class discussion addressing national trends, demographic disparities, and policy relevance.
2. Read "Know the Risk of Using Drugs" (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (<https://www.samhsa.gov>)). Identify and articulate three key insights that reflect the article's public health implications. Be prepared to present and critically discuss these takeaways in class, considering the relevance to prevention strategies, health education, and community impact.

Writing Assignments

1. Compose a comprehensive, well-researched essay of at least 1500 words that critically examines the diverse effects of drug use on society. Your analysis should address the following core questions: 1) In what ways does drug abuse influence societal structures, public health, and community well-being? 2) Can substance abuse contribute to increased rates of crime, violence, injury, and mortality? 3) What are the broader implications for families, educational institutions, workplaces, and healthcare systems? You are encouraged to incorporate scholarly resources, statistical data, and real-world examples to support your arguments. Additionally, reflect on your own personal perspective regarding the societal consequences of drug abuse, with consideration of the ethical, legal, and social dimensions.
2. Compose a 300-word reflective analysis exploring the societal consequences of drug abuse among young people. Incorporate insights from relevant research and personal observations or experiences to critically examine the psychological, social, and developmental impacts of substance misuse within this demographic.

Out-of-Class Assignments

1. View the video link in the module, "Pain Killer", the story of Purdue Pharma and how it made billions spawning the country's opioid epidemic and prepare for an in-depth discussion on its societal impact and ethical implications.
2. Watch the documentary, "The Pharmacist" and critically examine how a drug-related shooting revealed the broader societal impact of substance abuse on community health, safety, and justice. Alternative options to complete this assignment will be identified in the instructions.

Recommended Materials of Instruction

Hanson, G., et al. (2025). *Drugs and Society. Jones and Bartlett Learning, 15th.* 9781284288568.

Hart, C. & Ksir, C. (2022). *Drugs, Society, and Human Behavior. McGraw Hill, 18th.* 9781264170258.

Zero Cost Textbook

Bazan, C., et al. (2022) *Drug Use and Misuse: A Community Health Perspective.* (OER). University of Illinois Library – Urbana, <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/drug-use-and-misuse-a-community-health-perspective>

Minimum Qualifications

Kinesiology (Masters Required)

Health (Masters Required)

Physical Education (Masters Required)

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