

Drugs and Politics
Political Science 377
Tuesday & Thursday 3:30-4:50
Tech Institute Lecture Room 2
2145 Sheridan Road

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Course description

This course examines the links between illegal drugs and politics, from the politics of local communities to international public policy. The production, distribution, and consumption of illicit drugs affect politics in a myriad of ways by shaping individual behavior, local and national institutions, cultural practices, markets, and international relations. The aim of the course is to examine these links—theoretically and empirically—with a focus on North, Central, and South America. We will critically analyze public policy on “the drugs problem”, especially the U.S.-led “war on drugs”.

The course is divided in three broad sections. The first provides an overview of the drugs problem; we will define the term “drug”, identify types of drugs, and briefly look at the history of drug consumption in the U.S. as well as the history of drug production and transportation, mostly in Central and South America. The second part of the course looks at specific links between drugs and politics, mostly in Latin America and the U.S.: the patterns of violence and alternative theories to explain them; the role of drug trafficking groups as rulers in local communities; and the determinants of individual participation in the drug market. The third section looks at policy: we start with the debate on the war on drugs, and then turn to a discussion of alternative policies.

Requirements

Prepared attendance to class is required. Read all assigned materials, think about them, and come to class ready to discuss them. Lectures will provide additional theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence that will be essential to your understanding of the topics. Discussion sections will not repeat the lectures; they will allow for a deeper discussion of the materials.

There will be unannounced quizzes in class asking about either the assigned readings or the materials covered during class.

A midterm will be administered in class on Thursday, February 6th. The midterm will consist of a short essay and identification questions.

Each student will write a final paper (15-20 pages). We will give you more details about the paper in class and will give a handout with specific guidelines. You should upload to Blackboard a brief paper proposal (maximum 500 words) with a clear statement of the main question you will address in the paper and a proposed outline. This proposal is due on February 20th. The final paper is due on Monday, March 17th. You should bring it to your TA's office by 5:00 p.m., and upload it to Blackboard as well.

If you miss a quiz or the midterm, you should have a valid excuse in order to be able to take a make up test (a medical reason or a serious personal issue). No late final papers will be accepted.

Research Study Participation Requirement:

Students enrolled in this course are required to complete a research assignment that can include up to 4 hours of research study participation. These studies require that students set up an appointment to complete participation at a laboratory on campus (or via an on-line survey). Students will learn how studies are conducted and will receive a synopsis at the conclusion of the quarter describing the study's goal, result, and relevance to the class. Students who prefer not to participate in research as subject may opt for an alternative that entails reading any one chapter about political science research and writing a five-page reaction paper. The typical chapter is about 20 pages and thus reading it and writing a five page paper should take approximately four hours. During the first week of the quarter, students will receive an e-mail asking them whether they prefer study participation or the alternative assignment. The e-mail will also include details on how to complete either requirement. Failure to complete the requirement during the quarter will result in an incomplete. Failure to complete the requirement during the following quarter will result in a failing grade for the class. Note that if you are enrolled in multiple classes that require participation, you only need to satisfy the requirement one time. Also, if you already completed the requirement in another course in a previous quarter, you are excused from the requirement. We will give additional details on this requirement in class on Thursday, January 9th. If you have questions about this requirement, please email Mara Suttman-Lea at ChristySuttmann2016@u.northwestern.edu.

Grades

Attendance and participation	15%
Quizzes	15%
Mid-term	30%
Final paper (Proposal: 5%. Final paper: 35%)	40%

Readings

All readings are available online on Blackboard.

Outline of the Course

Part I. Mapping the drugs problem

1. Thursday, January 9. Drugs and politics: what do we need to know?

Watch online the documentary “Breaking the Taboo” (58 minutes) available at <http://www.hulu.com/watch/499964>. Come to class with a list of questions you would like to answer in order to be able to evaluate alternative drug policies.

Note: this documentary was available online at http://www.breakingthetaboo.info/view_documentary.htm but it was recently removed. We were not able to find a license to make it available to you. It is available at hulu.com, which implies that it will be interrupted by some (short) commercial content, but it will allow students to view the film on their computers.

2. Tuesday, January 14. Illicit drugs: the main facts

- Hyland, Steven, 2011. “The Shifting Terrain of Latin American Drug Trafficking.” *Origins*, Vol. 4, issue 12: pp. 1-10.
- Radden, Patrick, 2012. “Cocaine Incorporated.” *The New York Times*, June 15th pp. 1-16.

3. Thursday, January 16. Drug production: which countries produce illegal drugs?

- Thoumi, Francisco, 2005. “The Colombian Competitive Advantage in Illegal Drugs: The Role of Policies and Institutional Changes.” *Journal of Drug Issues*, Vol. 35, No. 7, pp. 7-25.

Part II. Drugs and Politics

4. Tuesday, January 21. Drugs and violence: why do some illegal markets turn violent?

- Reuter, P. (2009). “Systemic violence in drug markets.” *Crime, law and social change* 52(3), (pp. 275-284).
- Van Dun, Mirella, 2013. “It’s Never a Sure Deal”: Drug Trafficking, Violence, and Coping Strategies in a Peruvian Cocaine Enclave (2003-2007).” *Journal of Drug Issues*, XX(X) 1 –17.

5. Thursday, January 23. Drugs and violence: Mexico, Colombia & Brazil

- Durán-Martínez, Angélica, 2014. “To kill and tell? State power, criminal competition, and drug violence.” Paper under review (pp. 1-35).
- Mehta, Suketu, 2013. “In the Violent Favelas of Brazil.” *New York Review of Books*, August 15. Pp. 1-11.

6. Tuesday, January 28. Drug traffickers and extra-legal governance I

- Gambetta, Diego, 1993. *The Sicilian Mafia*. Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-71).
- “Dancing with the Devil”, documentary on drug traffickers in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Screened in class.

7. Thursday, January 30. Drug traffickers and extra-legal governance II

- Kostelnik, James and David Skarbek, 2012. “The governance institutions of a drug trafficking organization” *Public Choice* 156: 95–103.

8. Tuesday, February 4. Drug traffickers and extra-legal governance III

- Arjona, Ana, 2008. "One National War, Multiple Local Orders: An Inquiry Into the Unit of Analysis of War and Post-War Interventions". In M. Bergsmo and P. Kalmanovitz (Eds), *Law in Peace Negotiations*. Oslo: Torkel Opsahl Academic Publisher.
- Anderson, Jon Lee, 2009. "A reporter at large. Gangland: Who controls the streets of Rio de Janeiro?" *The New Yorker*, October 5, pp. 47-57.

9. Thursday, February 6.

Midterm

10. Tuesday, February 11. Who participates in the drug market?

- Centers, Nathan and Mark Weist, 1998. "Inner City Youth and Drug Dealing: A Review of the Problem." *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (pp. 395-411).
- King, Ryan and Marc Mauer, 2002. "Distorted Priorities: Drug Offenders in State Prisons." *The Sentencing Project Report* (pp. 1-17).

11. Thursday, February 13. Drugs and armed conflict

- Felbab-Brown, Vanda, 2005. "The Coca Connection: Conflict and Drugs in Colombia and Peru." *Journal of Conflict Studies*, 25:104-128.
- Reno, Will, 2009. "Illicit markets, violence, warlords, and governance: West African cases." *Crime, Law and Social Change* 52:313-322.

12. Tuesday, February 18. Drugs, gangs, and violence

- Wolf, Sonja, 2011. "The street gangs of El Salvador." In In Bruneau, Dammert and Skinner (Eds.), *Maras: Gang violence and security in Central America*, University of Texas Press (pp. 43-70).
- Bjerregaard, Beth, 2010. "Gang Membership and Drug Involvement: Untangling the Complex relationship." *Crime & Delinquency* 56: 3 (pp. 3-25).

Part III. Drug Policy

13. Thursday, February 20. Introduction to the debate on drug policy

Proposal for final paper due today. You should upload your proposal to Blackboard by midnight.

- Schwartz, Mattahias, 2014. "A mission gone wrong. Why are we still fighting the drug war?" *The New Yorker*, January 6.
- "The House I live In." Documentary on the impact of the war on drugs on US society (screened in class).

14. Tuesday, February 25. The war on drugs I: Consequences in the U.S.

- Bobo, Lawrence and Victor Thompson, 2006. "Unfair by Design: The War on Drugs, Race, and the Legitimacy of the Criminal Justice System." *Social Research* Vol 73: No 2 (pp. 445-472).

15. Thursday, February 27. The war on drugs II: International consequences

- "Report of the Global Commission on Drug Policy 2011" (pp. 1-19)
- "The War on Drugs and HIV/AIDS: How the Criminalization of Drug Use Fuels the Global Pandemic." Global Commission on Drug Policy Report 2012.

16. Tuesday, March 4. Arguments for and against the War on Drugs

- Read the following short articles in Huggins, Laura (Ed.), 1999, *Drug war deadlock. The policy battle continues*. Hoover Institution Press:
 - Szasz, Thomas, "The American Ambivalence: Liberty vs. Utopia." (pp. 51-60).
 - Friedman, Milton, "There is no justice in the war on drugs" (pp. 77-80).
 - Bennett, William, "Don't surrender: the drug war worked once. It can again." (pp. 81-84).
 - Friedman, Milton, "An open letter to William Bennett" (pp. 85-87).
- Naim, Moises. 2009. "Wasted: The American prohibition on thinking smart in the drug war." *Foreign Policy* 172 (May-June) (pp. 168-171).
- Bonner, Robert, 2012. "The Cartel Crackdown: Winning the Drug War and Rebuilding Mexico in the Process." *Foreign Affairs* 91.3 (May/Jun) (pp. 12-16).

17. Thursday, March 6. Alternatives

Legalization:

- The Economist, 2001. "The case for legalization: Time for a Puff of Sanity". June 26.
- Wilson, James, 1999. "Against the Legalization of Drugs" In Huggins, op. cit. (pp. 131-150)

Decriminalization:

- Staley, Sam, "The decriminalization alternative" In Huggins, op. cit. (pp. 157-178)
- Kleiman, Mark and Beau Kilmer, 2009. "The dynamics of deterrence." *PNAS*, vol. 16, No. 34, pp. 14230-14235.

Tuesday, March 11. Reading period. NO CLASS.

Thursday, March 13. Reading period. NO CLASS.

Monday, March 17th. FINAL PAPER DUE TODAY. You should turn in your paper by 5:00 p.m. at your TA's office, and also upload an electronic copy to Blackboard today.