
DRUGS AND CRIME

Florida State University
CCJ 4938 • Fall 2021

Course Instructor: Dr. Sonja Siennick

Contact Information: 405 Criminology and Criminal Justice Building, ssiennick@fsu.edu

Teaching Assistant: Anneliese Kress

Contact Information: ank18e@my.fsu.edu

Course Description

It is clear that the use and abuse of psychoactive drugs are major public health and criminal justice concerns, but the best social and criminal justice responses are far less clear. Which drugs should be illegal? Which systems and agencies should play the biggest role in addressing drug-related problems? And who should they target, and how? This course addresses the complex associations between drugs, crime, and the criminal justice system.

Although scholars of drugs and crime are unified by their topic of study, they work from a wide variety of theoretical perspectives and have differing views on various policy issues. My highest priority is to help you gain knowledge that will help you express your own informed opinions on these important issues. Many of the questions we will address remain controversial and do not have a single ‘right’ answer. Throughout the course, I encourage you both to express your point of view (in an educated and respectful manner, of course) and to remain open to others’ perspectives.

Upon successfully completing this course, you will know the following:

- The major psychoactive drugs
- The main explanations of drug use and abuse
- Major issues related to the U.S. war on drugs
- Policing strategies related to the war on drugs
- How courts respond to drug offenders
- Alternatives to incarceration for drug offenders
- Treatments provided to drug offenders
- Major issues related to the legalization and decriminalization of drugs

Course Materials

Required textbook. Belenko, S., & Spohn, C. 2014. *Drugs, Crime, and Justice*. Sage.

This course is part of the Follett Access program, which **automatically provides you with an electronic copy of the textbook**. This program provides a notable discount off of the usual price of the ebook, but the tradeoff is this: If you do not wish to purchase the ebook through this

program, you must **opt out by 9/3**. If you wish to opt out, or if you accidentally opted out and wish to opt back in, please visit the Follett Access Opt-Out Portal at <https://ACCESSPortal.follett.com:443/OptIn/0208>. Please contact the Follett Access staff at FSUFollettAccess@gmail.com for more information or assistance.

Most weeks will feature a new course module, which may contain slides, readings, video or audio clips, and websites to visit. All of the materials you will need (besides the textbook) will be listed in that week's module. I recommend that you first complete the readings, and then view the slides and any multimedia components embedded in them.

You will need access to a computer that can stream audio and video. You will also need internet access. I will make every effort to post the readings (besides the book) on Canvas, but some electronic readings may need to be accessed through FSU's library.

Course Requirements

Due dates and times are in Eastern Time. See also the frequently asked questions that I've included just before the course calendar.

First Day Attendance. By the end of the third day of classes, please comment on the first day attendance discussion board post so that we can count you as present. This assignment is mandatory (so that we don't drop you) but ungraded.

Papers. You will write four papers, each approximately 4-5 pages in length. These papers are your chance to tackle the course material in greater depth. Don't just repeat the course material; instead, show us that you can apply that material to new situations. Please use all relevant assigned sources (including linked material when applicable). These papers should be formal essays and should include citations in APA format. A cover page, running head, and other elements of APA style are not necessary. If you use outside sources, please also include a reference list. Grades will be based on:

- **Insight:** Is this a well-thought-out paper that demonstrates your understanding? (4 points)
- **Evidence:** Does the paper incorporate the course material (slides, book, etc.)? (5 points)
- **Mechanics:** Submit carefully proofread papers of the appropriate length and with appropriate formatting. Papers that deviate significantly from the length and style guidelines will lose some credit. Note that if you are losing points for coming up too short, you may also be losing points for not explaining your answers enough or for missing parts of the question. (1 point)

Exams. You will take four multiple choice exams. These exams will be based on the assigned readings from the textbook. The exams are open book and are not timed, but they must be completed and submitted by their due dates and times.

Course Grades

Papers: 4 @ 10 points	40 points
Exams: 4 @ 15 points	60 points
Total	100 points (%)

Grading scale

94%-100%	A	80%-83%	B-	70%-73%	C-
90%-93%	A-	77%-79%	C+	60%-69%	D
87%-89%	B+	74%-76%	C	Below 60%	F
84%-86%	B				

I round according to conventional mathematical rules. To protect your privacy I cannot discuss specific course grades over email; please make arrangements to Zoom with us.

Course Communication

How We will Contact You

You can check Canvas for course announcements and changes. Please adjust your Canvas settings to ensure that you receive course announcements via email.

How You Should Contact Us

Please email us with any questions about the course material, requirements, or policies. Monday through Friday, we will respond to your email within 24 hours. We will try to respond promptly to emails sent on weekends, but may not be able to respond until Monday.

Course Policies

Missing and late work. With one exception (noted below), missing or late assignments and exams will receive 0s unless you are unable to complete or submit the item due to an excused absence (per the University attendance policy below). When you email me about your excused absence, please include documentation (e.g., a doctor's note, a jury duty summons). Forgetting about the assignment/exam, needing to work late, being unable to get to a computer, and having an undocumented illness will not qualify as excused absences, so please plan accordingly and do not procrastinate.

The University attendance policy is as follows: Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

You are allowed ONE undocumented absence in this course. This equates to a free extension on a single course requirement. Please contact me to arrange a new due date for the assignment or exam that you missed.

TurnItIn. This course will use Canvas's TurnItIn anti-plagiarism tool. Assignments receiving high similarity scores will be investigated according to College procedures.

Technology. When you submit an assignment, it is your responsibility to ensure that the submission was successful (try the tips at <https://support.canvas.fsu.edu/kb/article/962-students-tips-for-a-better-canvas-experience/#VerifySubmission>). If you experience internet or Canvas problems while you are submitting something, please email us immediately. If the trouble relates

to a written assignment, please attach your assignment. It is important that you contact us before the due date and time so that we know you did the work on time. You have a one-hour grace period to contact us about technology-related problems. If you do not successfully submit an assignment or exam by the due date and time and we do not hear from you within an hour of that date and time, that assignment or exam will receive a 0.

Academic Honor Policy. The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy>)

Academic Success. Your academic success is a top priority for Florida State University. University resources to help you succeed include tutoring centers, computer labs, counseling and health services, and services for designated groups, such as veterans and students with disabilities. The following information is not exhaustive, so please check with your advisor or the Dean of Students office to learn more.

Americans with Disabilities Act. Florida State University (FSU) values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. FSU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities in a manner that is consistent with academic standards of the course while empowering the student to meet integral requirements of the course.

To receive academic accommodations, a student:

- (1) must register with and provide documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS);
- (2) must provide a letter from OAS to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type; and,
- (3) should communicate with the instructor, as needed, to discuss recommended accommodations. A request for a meeting may be initiated by the student or the instructor.

Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from the Office of Accessibility Services has been provided.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Office of Accessibility Services

874 Traditions Way

108 Student Services Building

Florida State University

Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167

(850) 644-9566 (voice)

(850) 644-8504 (TDD)

oas@fsu.edu

<https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas/>

Confidential Campus Resources. Various centers and programs are available to assist students with navigating stressors that might impact academic success. These include the following:

Victim Advocate Program
University Center A
Rm. 4100
(850) 644-7161
Available 24/7/365
Office Hours: M-F 8-5
<https://dst.fsu.edu/vap>

University Counseling
Center
Askew Student Life
Center, 2nd floor
942 Learning Way
(850) 644-8255
<https://counseling.fsu.edu/>

University Health Services
Health and Wellness
Center
(850) 644-6230
<https://uhs.fsu.edu/>

Syllabus Change Policy. Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are you looking for in these papers? We of course read your papers for their specific content, but in general we check to see whether you've fully answered all of the questions in the prompt; whether your answers are based on the readings, slides, and supplemental materials; whether you've written a facts-based paper rather than an opinion piece; and whether your answers are logically consistent with each other. The best papers are those that could be used to teach the material to someone else. Many "good" papers might lose a little credit if they do not go into enough detail or show enough evidence that their authors completed and understood the readings and other materials. Also, it is okay to draw conclusions that go beyond what was taught in the course, but make sure that those conclusions are logically consistent with the course material.

Will you provide feedback on a draft of my paper? Yes! Please send your draft to the TA by 5pm on the Tuesday before it is due. Note that we do not "pre-grade" papers, but we can tell you whether you are on the right track or are missing anything major.

My assignment is shorter/longer than the length requirements. Is that okay? We are fine with papers that are $\frac{1}{4}$ page too short or long (with normal spacing and margins). But, for the sake of your graders, please don't write a paper that is double the requested length! Also, please don't submit papers that are $\frac{1}{2}$ page or more too short. This last guideline is to protect you; if your assignment is markedly too short, you are probably missing key content.

Why did I lose points on my assignment? If you'd like more detailed feedback on your grade, please contact your grader. The most common reasons that people lose points are not answering the question(s) in full and not incorporating enough course material. More than half of each paper should be devoted to discussions of course materials.

I got stuck at work/my car broke down/my loved one is ill and I missed the assignment deadline. What do I do? You get one free extension in the course. To use it, simply email the professor to let her know that you will be turning your assignment in late. Tell her how much

extra time you need (within reason) so that she can reset the Canvas due date for you. After you use this freebie, to gain extensions on additional assignments, you will need documentation that those absences were excused under the policy described above.

I am having trouble with Canvas and can't submit my assignment! Or, I swear I submitted it but it is not showing up! Help! If it's before the deadline or within the grace period, please email it to us! If you believe that you submitted it but we have no record of that, contact Canvas Support at (850) 644-8004 and tell them that your instructor needs a log of your Canvas activity on the date that you submitted the assignment. Also, make sure that you can provide us with a version of your assignment that was last saved before the assignment deadline. Then contact us to discuss this further.

What is my current grade? Can I still earn a __ in this class? To calculate your current percentage grade, add up the total number of points you have earned so far, and divide that by the total number of possible points so far. To determine how many more points you must earn to achieve a target final grade, look at the grading scale to see how many points you must earn to make that grade, and then subtract your total points earned from that number. If the result is less than the number of points remaining, then yes, you can still earn that grade!

Can I complete an extra credit assignment to boost my grade? Sorry, but there is no extra credit in this course. Your best bets for maximizing your grade are ensuring that you have fully and thoroughly answered the writing prompts, contacting us early to ask any questions that you have about the assignments, and sending us draft papers by the deadline mentioned above.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignment
1	Introduction	Chapter 1	None
2	Specific drugs and terminology	Chapter 2	None
3	Tobacco versus other drugs	None	Paper 1
4	Theories of drug use and abuse	Chapter 3	Exam 1
5	Drug use and crime	Chapter 4	None
6	The war on drugs	Chapter 5	Exam 2
7	Wars on drugs: Comparative approach	None	Paper 2
8	Policing drugs	Chapter 6	None
9	Drugs in the courts	Chapter 7	Paper 3
10	Sentencing drug offenders	Chapter 8	Exam 3
11	The impact of the war on drugs	Chapter 9	None
12	Treatment	Chapter 10	None
13	Diversion and drug courts	Chapter 10	None
14	Legalization and decriminalization	Chapter 10	Exam 4
15	Wrap up	None	Paper 4