

Saint Leo University

SSC 328: Drugs, Society, and Human Behavior

Course Description:

This course is an interdisciplinary examination of the nature of commonly used psychoactive substances and their interaction with the human nervous system. Included are the history and patterns of their use, as well as the medical, legal, psychological, and sociological consequences of their abuse. Current practices and strategies for drug education and treatment are covered.

Prerequisite:

None

Textbook:

Gahlinger, P. (2004). *Illegal Drugs: A Complete Guide to their History, Chemistry, Use, and Abuse*. ISBN: 978-0-452-28505-7

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Define of psychoactive substances, drugs, abuse, etc.
- Describe the historical perspective on the use of psychoactive substances.
- Understand the traditions of drug taking in western society.
- Examine current patterns of drug use.
- Determine the link between drug abuse, mental illness, and criminal behavior.
- Understand the biological, psychological, and social basis for drug use.
- Interpret the cultural attitudes toward drug use.
- Describe the history and current trends of drug regulation and controlled substance laws.
- Identify drug dose-response relationships.
- Recognize drug interactions.
- Understand drug biodistribution and elimination.
- Differentiate between drug tolerance and dependence.
- Recognize the effects of psychoactive drugs on neurons and synapses.
- Describe the use of patterns, pharmacology, and effects of nine major drug groups: CNS depressants, alcohol, analgesics, stimulants, tobacco, hallucinogens, marijuana, psychotherapeutic, and nonprescription drugs.
- Comprehend the nature of drug addiction.
- Examine drug education programs and strategies.
- Discuss drug use prevention programs and strategies.
- Evaluate drug treatment programs and strategies.

Core Value:

Students are expected to be mindful of the Benedictine Core Values of Saint Leo University when submitting work, interviewing outside resources, and working in groups. The Saint Leo University Core Value that will be focused on in this course is *Integrity*.

Integrity: The commitment of Saint Leo University to excellence demands that its members live its mission to deliver on its promise. The faculty, staff and students pledge to be honest, just, and consistent in word and deed.

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated via the following:

Item	Points	Weight
Exams (4 @ 100 points each)	400	45%

Research Paper (1 @ 100 points)	100	20%
Written Assignments (3 @ 50 points each)	150	20%
Discussion Questions (8 @ 25 points each)	200	15%
Total	850	100%

Grading Scale:

Grade	Score (%)
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	60-66
F	0-59

Exams:

Students will complete four exams, each consisting of 35 multiple choice and 15 true/false questions and will be completed during Modules 2, 4, 6, and 8. Students will be allowed one opportunity and given 75 minutes to complete each exam.

Written Assignments:

Each student will be required to submit three written assignments (due during Modules 3, 5, and 8) following the instructions given in the respective modules.

Research Paper:

Students will submit a research paper on a drug with the potential for abuse or misuse. There are numerous drugs that are utilized within our society today. Some are found predominately within the legitimate framework of medical practice, and others are designed solely for recreational and experimental purposes. No matter the use or the source, there is a tremendous amount of information available.

Students will pick a drug with some abuse potential that is NOT well covered in the text. There are numerous drugs both legal and illegal that can be investigated. The paper will be due by **Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT of Module 7**. For complete instructions, review the **Research Paper Guidelines** located in the Resources section of the start here menu.

APA Format:

APA is the American Psychological Association, and the style is one of many in the academic world used to regulate the language, citations, procedure and formatting of manuscripts and other examples of writing in the social sciences. Please be consistent throughout each written assignment.

Discussions:

Class participation is an important, graded component of the course. All students are expected to adhere to the course syllabus and schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of what is happening in the class.

When preparing for the discussion assignments, the student should plan on, at a minimum, three separate discussion postings.

Initial posting: The first posting is due by **11:59 EST/EDT Thursday** of each module. The first posting should be well thought-out, well-written, and include appropriately cited research and text references where applicable.

Response postings: Everyone is expected to build the discussion by posting thoughtful and substantive interactive responses to your classmates' posts. Two instances of interaction are required and more are encouraged. Interaction should include constructive criticism (positive and negative) offered in a supportive, collegial spirit. In an active learning experience such as discussion, constructive criticism can be a very powerful learning tool if offered in this manner. The deadline to post responses to classmates is **11:59 EST/EDT Sunday** of each module.

All communications in this course are required to be composed in a professional format using names and proper salutations, grammar, syntax, spelling, etc. No non-professional "text messaging" styles of written communication will be accepted.

Course Schedule:

Module 1

Introduction to Drugs and Society: Drug Use and Abuse

Objectives

At the conclusion of this module, students will be able to:

- Describe how drugs are affected by pharmacological, cultural, social, and contextual factors in society.
- Identify the major drugs commonly abused, the trends, and how widespread their abuse is.
- Identify the cost of drugs on society in relation to crime and violence and also on the workplace.
- Define the biological and genetic factors associated with drug use as well as low and high risk drug-taking behaviors.
- Examine the major psychological and sociological explanations of drug usage and describe the four social influence theories, social learning theory, labeling theory, subculture theories, and the role of significant others.

Assignments

Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Post introduction to the class	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Read the Assigned Materials	
View "Film Opening" (recommended)	
Post initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Review Research Paper Guidelines	

Module 2

Drug Use, Regulation and the Law, and Drug Prevention

Objectives

At the conclusion of this module, students will be able to:

- Examine how early laws established a pattern for subsequent laws and policies as well as the current controversy over legalizing drugs.
- Explain the program developed in 1972 by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ensure drugs safety and effectiveness and the steps taken to market the program.
- Discuss the controversy over how illegal drug users have been viewed as both sick and as criminals and how this has affected the laws and policies that have been developed.
- Identify and describe the types and goals of the major substance abuse prevention programs.
- List and define the drug prevention strategies used in higher education and the effectiveness of these programs.

Assignments

Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read the Assigned Materials	
View "South Boston Drug Court" (recommended)	
Post initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit Research Paper topic	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete Exam 1	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 3

Homeostatic Systems, and How and Why Drugs Work

Objectives

At the conclusion of this module, students will be able to:

- Define the characteristics of the major drug administration methods and explain how dose, age, body weight, gender, time, disease processes, and emotional states can affect drug actions.
- Identify the differences between the Central Nervous System, the Peripheral Nervous System, and the functions of the sympathetic nervous system, the parasympathetic nervous system, and the endocrine systems.
- Explain the process in which a nerve impulse moves from one to another and describe the function of a neurotransmitter.
- Identify and explain additive effects, antagonistic effects, potentiative (synergistic) effects, the differences between intended and unintended side effects, and the importance of margin of safety.
- Define and explain the pharmacokinetic factors affecting drugs, biotransformation, physical and psychological dependence.

Assignments

Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read the Assigned Materials	
Interact with "Pathways to the Brain" animation	
View "Brain Imaging" (recommended)	
Post initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit Assignment 1	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 4

CNS Depressants and Sedative-Hypnotics, and the Pharmacological Effects and Behavioral Perspectives of Alcohol

Objectives

At the conclusion of this module, students will be able to:

- Identify drugs within the Central Nervous System (CNS) depressants group and describe their history (Bromides, Barbiturates, and Benzodiazepines).
- Define the pharmacological effects of sedative-hypnotics and discuss why they are frequently misused and abused.
- Explain how alcohol is a drug and the psychological and physical effects of alcohol on the body.
- Discuss the history of alcohol use within the United States and the current consumption patterns of alcohol in various groups (college, ethnicities, ages, and genders) within the U.S.
- Explain how drinking behavior can be influenced by cultural rules and attitudes and then describe the social and economic costs of alcohol use and its abuse.
- Define alcoholism and the features that make up alcohol addiction, and describe the different forms of alcoholic treatment available.

Assignments

Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read the Assigned Materials	
View "Prohibition" website (recommended)	
Post initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete Exam 2	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 5

Narcotics and Stimulants

Objectives

At the conclusion of this module, students will be able to:

- Identify the different forms (natural, semi-synthetic, and synthetic) of narcotics and detail the pharmacological effects, including the side effects, tolerance and dependence, and their therapeutic uses.
- Define amphetamines and “designer” amphetamines, how they work, their approved uses, possible side effects, and the causes of amphetamine misuse and abuse.
- Recount the history of opiates and its influence on current recreational use.
- Identify and describe the various methods of opiate administration, the hazards associated with each, and the treatment methods associated with opiate dependence.
- Identify the caffeine-like drugs, their common effects, and the difference between caffeinism and caffeine dependence.

Assignments

Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read the Assigned Materials	
Interact with the following animations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “How OPIATES Work in the Brain”• “How COCAINE Works in the Brain”	
View “How Does Cocaine Alter Neurotransmission”?	
View “The Meth Epidemic” (recommended)	
Post initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit Assignment 2	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 6

Tobacco and Hallucinogens

Objectives

At the conclusion of this module, students will be able to:

- Recount the history and current trends of tobacco use in the United States and the social and economic issues associated with its use.
- Detail the pharmacological effects of tobacco products and passive smoking.
- Discuss the methods and aids used to quit smoking.
- Recount the historical use of hallucinogens and how they relate to modern use.
- Identify and list the common characteristics of hallucinogens (psychedelics) and distinguish between the types of hallucinogenic agents, how they were used, and the potential effects experienced.

Assignments

Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read the Assigned Materials	
Interact with “In the Body” animation	
View “FDA Cigarette Warning Labels” slideshow (recommended)	
Post initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete Exam 3	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 7

Marijuana, Inhalants, and Over-the-Counter and Prescription Drugs

Objectives

At the conclusion of this module, students will be able to:

- Recount the history and current trends of marijuana use in the United States and the social and economic issues associated with its use.
- Define what marijuana is, its properties and the physiological and behavioral effects of marijuana on the body (nervous, respiratory, cardiovascular, and reproductive systems).
- Identify and describe the three categories (volatile substances, anesthetics, and volatile nitrates) of inhalants.
- Identify the dangers and health hazards associated with using inhalants and explain why adolescents have become involved in their abuse.
- Contrast the difference between prescription and nonprescription drugs and FDA regulations for safety.
- Explain the reasons for use and potential abuse of prescription drugs and nonprescription drugs.

Assignments

Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read the Assigned Materials	
View "The Pot Republic" View "So-called "Smart Drug" Plagues College Campuses"	
Post initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit Research Paper	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 8

Drug Use Within Major Subcultures and Treating Drug Dependence

Objectives

At the conclusion of this module, students will be able to:

- Explain how steroids work and their appeal.
- Identify and compare the differences in drug use by various categories of people, including age and gender, and the physiological responses that various groups of people have to drugs and the factors hindering treatment.
- List and define the factors associated with drug use by adolescents and college students along with their consequences.
- Detail how drugs present risk factors for the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS.
- Identify strategies and programs shown to be effective in the treatment of addiction.

Assignments

Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read the Assigned Materials	
View the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Opiate Addiction: Understanding Replacement Therapy" (recommended)• "The Adolescent Addict" (recommended)• "The Dangers of Anabolic Steroids"• "Getting an Addict into Treatment: The CRAFT Approach" (recommended)	
Post initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post Responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit Assignment 3	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete Exam 4	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT