



Sociology 2222a (670)
Drugs and Society
Summer 2026

Instructor: T. Bruno

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Course Information

Calendar Description:

This course considers the sociological significance of drugs and drug use in society. The historical, political and cultural underpinnings of drug policies and drug use are examined, while highlighting the social implications of policies that approach drugs and drug use from moral rather than empirical positions.

Antirequisite(s): The former Sociology 3313F/G.

Prerequisite(s): 1.0 from Sociology courses at the 1000 level.

Extra Information: 3 hours.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: SOCIOLOG

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Soc2222A (670):
DRUGS & SOCIETY
SUMMER DISTANCE STUDIES 2026
May 4th-June 12th

Professor:
Tara Bruno
tara.bruno@uwo.ca

Office Hours:
Zoom office hour meetings by appointment on Wednesdays 10AM-11AM

Course Format:

This is a fully online course that will use Western's learning management system (LMS), Brightspace OWL. Additional online and other educational resources will also be used based on the needs of the course. This class is designed to be asynchronous, meaning we will not have a regular, mandatory time when the entire class must be online. However, there may be some synchronous activities that you choose attend based on your own schedule, including office hours, group work, or optional class check-ins on Zoom.

Course Overview:

This course will examine the sociological nature of drugs in contemporary society. Throughout the course several dimensions of drugs and drug use will be considered including the historical, political and cultural underpinning of drug policies and drug use. In addition to considering how sociology can help us to better understand drugs in society, the course will consider the following questions: Why are some drugs legal while others are illegal? Why do some people use drugs while others refrain? What drug policies have proven to be ineffective in controlling drugs? Alternatively, what kinds of policies are effective? What types of education and awareness are needed in society? Students will be encouraged to think about the social implications of policies that approach drugs and drug use from moral rather than empirical positions.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the sociological importance of drugs and drug use
2. Critically examine the models of addiction that dominate public discourse
3. Recognize the value of a biopsychosocial model of addiction and understand the social relevance
4. Appreciate the importance of making connections over social isolation to address addiction
5. Learn to examine various forms of evidence-based knowledge and critically assess the sources
6. Critically examine what makes policies and public education effective or ineffective
7. Apply evidence-informed knowledge to creatively and effectively educate the public about drugs
8. Learn to work collaboratively and take other's perspectives and strengths into account

Required Readings:

The following text is required for this course and is available in both print (\$84.65) and e-book (\$71.00) versions from the [UWO Bookstore](#). Alternatively, you can opt to rent the text from the [publisher](#) (6 months \$53.95 or 1 year \$61.95).

Bruno, Tara L. and Rick Csiernik. (2018). *The Drug Paradox: An Introduction to the Sociology of Psychoactive Substances in Canada*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars.

NOTE: Students will also be required to access additional readings and materials on OWL Brightspace.

OWL Brightspace and Pulse App:

All course materials will be available through [OWL Brightspace](#). You will need to use your WesternID and password to access the system and our course. Be sure to check for messages and updates regularly on OWL Brightspace AND through your email notifications. I will post grades, class messages, slides, and all additional course materials on OWL Brightspace. Please take some time to familiarize yourself with the format and course layout on OWL Brightspace. If there is anything missing or things are unclear, please let me know. We will work on making this a good experience together. I encourage you to download the Pulse app for Brightspace to keep up to date on all messages and course related activities.

Course Evaluation

Introductory Forum:	10%
Online Website Activities (4 worth 5% each):	20%
Online Quizzes (2 worth 10% each):	20%
Finding & Assessing Online Sources Test:	10%
Outline of Final Resource Format, Topic/Focus & Group Contracts:	10%
Final Creative Resource for Caregivers/Parents/Adult Allies:	20%
Final Synopsis of Resource & Sources Consulted:	10%

Introductory Forum

In the first week of the course, everyone will participate in an introductory forum found under the **Communications** tab and under **Discussions**. This will serve as an opportunity to get to know one another, engage with classmates, and respond to a specific prompt/question. Students will be asked to introduce themselves briefly and engage in a reflection forum on the drug education they received throughout their lifetimes. Posts and responses should be limited to 250 words max. This discussion will hopefully help students generate some ideas for the final project and perhaps meet some potential group members. This forum will be evaluated based on both an initial post and a response to at least one other classmate. The forum is worth 10% of your final grade.

Online Website Activities

Throughout the course, students will have a chance to review and reflect on a real-life example of research being used with young people in Ontario. Students will be asked to review the content, engage in some online activities, and provide thoughts on the learning experience as it relates to the course. These activities will happen through the **Assignments** page under **Assessments**. All content assigned is related to the topics in this course and the course learning objectives; thus, participation is intended to reinforce learning, while also providing students an opportunity to share their thoughts on the resource. These assignments will open on Saturday morning for the assigned week and will close on the Friday at 11:59PM (EST). Your participation in **each of the four activities will be worth 5%** for a total of 20% of the final grade. Additional details will be posted on OWL Brightspace.

Quizzes:

There will be two **online** quizzes held throughout the course. These quizzes can be found under the course content or under the **Quizzes** page under the **Assessments** tab. Each quiz will contain 10 multiple choice questions and will be worth 10% of the final grade. In total, the quizzes amount to 20% of the final grade. The purpose of these quizzes is to give the instructor the opportunity to see if students are grasping the key concepts and research covered in the readings and additional course content that is posted on Brightspace.

Assessing Online Sources Test

Many people turn to the internet to find out information about substances and substance use. However, not all online sources are credible or suitable for certain purposes. It is important to learn to be critical of online sources and know what you are using the source for. Students will be tasked with assessing an online source to determine whether it would be suitable for a particular use. This task will be completed under the **Quizzes** section on Brightspace during the timeframe noted in the outline below. This will be a **timed activity** where students will be given **1 hour** to answer a series of questions and determine whether or not their source is suitable for the stated purpose (which will be noted on the assessment). All accommodations for written tests will be added to Brightspace before the assessment is active.

Final Creative Resource for Caregivers/Parents/Adult Allies (3 parts)

It is strongly recommended that this course component be completed in a group to ensure multiple perspectives and skills are incorporated into the final project PLUS this is a sociology class after all, and we like groups 😊 However, given that this is an accelerated online summer course and there may be challenges with scheduling, students will have the option to work in a group or complete the project individually.

For this final project, it's your turn to be the educator and spread your evidence-informed message. For this assignment, you and your group members will develop a creative, evidence-informed, harm reduction-based resource that is geared towards caregivers/parents/adult allies. The resource **MUST** incorporate up-to date research (within the past 5 years). You can use personal insights from your own experience to guide your resource, but you need to be able to support this with reputable, scholarly evidence. What do you think caregivers/parents/adult allies should know? You will need to define a single key message with a minimum of 4 recent and relevant sources to support your messaging. A list of potential topics will be posted on OWL Brightspace. If a different, relevant topic comes to mind, please reach out and it may be considered.

If you want to reach out to classmates to find a group, you can connect with other classmates under the **Communications** tab and the **Discussions** page on Brightspace. If you have already organized a group, you each need to sign up under the same numbered group under

the **Groups** tab (under the **Communications** dropdown menu). If there are any issues with signing up, please email me right away so I can help fix the issue.

Please connect with your group members early to come up with a plan for your project. Summer courses FLY BY!

There are THREE components of the project:

1. Outline of Resource and Topic plus Group Contracts (if applicable)

Each group will submit a group contract outlining the terms of how you will work together to complete the final creative resource. Please note this contract will not be used to determine grades on the assignment. Only one contract needs to be submitted for each group. This tool is used as a personal and group guide for managing the tasks and working together. Templates for the group contract are provided on Brightspace—you are free to adjust the contracts to suit your group needs. To ensure that you are on the right track with the format and consulting appropriate and timely scholarly evidence early in the course, you will submit a separate document (shared link) that outlines your project plan and topic focus/key message with at least 4 sources you plan to use for the project. Further details will be posted under the **Assignments** on Brightspace. Note: If you are working individually, no contract will be submitted. Students working alone are accountable to themselves. The outline and group contract are worth 10% of your grade.

2. Final Creative Resource

In terms of the resource content and design, you will be expected to develop a visually appealing (think Canva...infographics, posters, pamphlets, short guides, Instagram pages/posts, etc.), research-based resource that focusses on one of the topics listed on Brightspace, incorporates a harm reduction approach, AND includes a consideration of the **sociological significance** of drugs and drug use. Students will want to use visual elements in the resource and are strongly encouraged to use a creative platform like Canva to create the resource. The Final Creative Resource is worth 20% of your overall grade. Further details will be posted under the **Assignments** tab on Brightspace.

3. Group Synopsis of Resource

Students will submit a brief synopsis of the drug education resource that will address the target audience, the approach you used, the topic and content you included, along with any other relevant details that would help a reviewer understand the resource, topic and the key message that the audience should take away from it. Please limit the length of the synopsis to one-page, double-spaced in 12-pt font (not including your references, which should also be included and cited throughout the synopsis and resource). This should be submitted separate from the final creative resource. The synopsis is worth 10% of your grade. Further details will be posted under the **Assignments** tab on Brightspace.

Grading Scale for Assessments (Western’s university-wide expectations):

A+	90 percent or higher	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80 and 89.99 percent	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70 and 79.99 percent	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60 and 69.99 percent	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50 and 59.99 percent	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	49.99 percent or lower	Fail

Shared Google Docs

All document submissions for this course must use the shared Google Docs format outlined on Brightspace. Any submissions that do not follow this format and sharing permissions will not be graded. This format is being used to ensure that you are being evaluated not only for the final product but also your writing process.

Late Policy/Extensions

If for some reason you are unable to write a quiz or submit your assignments by the deadlines noted, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor **prior** to the event via email. Students are entitled to ONE self-reported absence (SRA) in the course, but this cannot be used for the final project. An SRA is an undocumented/compassionate consideration that students submit on their own behalf. If you need a formal/documented accommodation (i.e. medical), please connect with the counsellors in the Academic Dean’s Office. A late penalty of 10% per day will be in effect for any late submissions throughout the course.

Course Outline for Summer 2026:
Dates, Topics, Required Readings, Scheduled Due Dates
DP=Drug Paradox (main text for readings)

*****Part 1: History and Foundations of Drugs in Society*****

Week 1: May 4-8

Lesson 1: Paradoxical Approaches to Drugs in Canada

- *Readings:* Course Outline, DP Chapters 1 and 13

Lesson 2: Historical and Political Context of Drug Use and Control

- *Readings:* DP Chapter 2 + Posts on Brightspace Content

Tasks/Due: Review Brightspace, Course Outline, Participate in Intro Forum (Opens Monday at 7AM and Closes Friday at 11:59PM), and Online Activity #1: Website Introduction (Opens Saturday at 7AM and closes Friday at 11:59PM)

Week 2: May 11-15

Lesson 3: Biological and Psychological Explanations

- *Readings:* DP Chapter 3

Lesson 4: Sociological Explanations

- *Readings:* DP Chapter 4

Tasks/Due: Attend Optional ZOOM session for Q & A Wednesday at 9AM (see Brightspace for invite); Online Website Activity #1: Website Introduction (Opens Saturday at 7AM and closes Friday at 11:59PM)

*****Part 2: Classifying Drug Use and Drug Use in Society*****

Week 3: May 18-22

Lesson 5: Classifying Drugs Pharmacologically and Legally

- *Readings:* DP Chapter 5

Lesson 6: Drugs are a Problem: Moral Panic or Empirical Reality?

- *Readings:* DP Chapter 6

Tasks/Due: ONLINE Quiz #1 (Opens Saturday at 7AM and closes Friday at 11:59PM); Online Activity #2: Classifications & Laws (Opens Saturday at 7AM and closes Friday at 11:59PM); Group Contracts (if applicable) and Outline of Final Resource Format, Topic/Focus (Opens Saturday at 7AM and closes Friday at 11:59PM);

Week 4: May 25-29

Lesson 7: Methods of Studying Drug Use in Society

- *Readings:* DP Chapter 7

Lesson 8: Correlates of Drug Use

- *Readings:* DP Chapters 8 & 9

Tasks/Due: Finding, Assessing and Critiquing Online Sources Test (ONLINE--Opens Saturday at 7AM and closes Friday at 11:59PM), AND Online Activity#3: Social Determinants of Health (Opens Saturday at 7AM and closes Friday at 11:59PM)

*****Part 3: Responding to Drugs and Drug Users in Society*****

Week 5: June 1-5

Lesson 9: Prevention Strategies for Drug Problems

- *Readings:* DP Chapter 10

Lesson 10: Therapeutic Strategies for Drug Problems

- *Readings:* See Brightspace for additional materials

Tasks/Due: ONLINE Quiz #2 (Opens Saturday at 7AM and closes Friday at 11:59PM); Online Activity #4: Reducing Harms & Relationships (Opens Saturday at 7AM and closes Friday at 11:59PM); Work on final creative resource;

Week 6: June 8-12

Lesson 11: Legal Responses to Drug Problems

- *Readings:* DP Chapter 11

Lesson 12: International Policies

- *Readings:* Chapter 12

Tasks/Due: FINAL CREATIVE PROJECTS DUE (no later than Friday, June 12th at 11:59PM)

King's University College General Course Policies 2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at [here](#).

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course. Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course. For further information, please see:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details https://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/exams/index.html.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King’s University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King’s University College: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/personal-counselling>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King’s University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>

GBSV Support:

King’s is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/campus-safety-and-reporting/gender-and-sexual-violence>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western’s Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/campus-safety-and-reporting/student-code-of-conduct>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at [here](#).

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with you instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/OriginalityReports-TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member.

Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.