



Sociology 2222a (570)
Drugs and Society
Fall/ Winter 2026-2027

Instructor: T. Bruno
Email: tara.bruno@uwo.ca

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 (570):
DRUGS & SOCIETY
IN-PERSON FALL 2026**

Instructor:

Tara Bruno
tara.bruno@uwo.ca

Office hours may also be held via zoom or in person. If you would like to arrange a meeting, please email the instructor.

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 and practices have proven to be ineffective in controlling drugs? Alternatively, what kinds of policies and practices are effective? Students will be encouraged to think about the social implications of policies and practices that approach drugs and drug use from moral rather than empirical positions.

Course Learning Objectives:

- Understand the sociological importance of drugs and drug use
- Critically examine the models of addiction that dominate public discourse
- Recognize the value of a biopsychosocial model of addiction
- Realize the importance of making social connections over social isolation
- Learn to examine various forms of evidence-based knowledge and critically assess sources
- Critically examine what makes policies and public education effective or ineffective
- Apply evidence-informed knowledge to develop a sociological intervention that can be evaluated
- 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 (\$78.00) versions from the [UWO Bookstore](#). Alternatively, you can opt to rent the text from the [publisher](#) (6 months \$56.95 or 1 year \$64.95).

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

You will also be required to access additional readings 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 new format 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 Components:

In-class Participation (ongoing):	10%
In-class/online Website Activities (4 worth 2.5% each):	10%
In-Person Quizzes (3 worth 10% each):	30%
Finding and Assessing Online Sources:	10%
Drug Intervention Design, Implementation & Evaluation Plan:	40%

Participation (ongoing):

Part of the learning expectations for this course are to attend class regularly and actively engage in class activities and discussions. Your attendance and participation in class will be worth 20% of your final grade.

Online Website Activities (ongoing—dates noted in schedule below):

Throughout the course, you will have a chance to review and reflect on a real-life example of research being used in select high schools with students in Ontario. You will be asked to review the content, engage in some online activities, and provide your insights on how the resource is helping you build your own understanding of drugs. These activities will happen through the ASSIGNMENTS tab under Assessments **during class time** and may be completed in pairs. Your participation/insights for each of the four activities will be worth 2.5% for a total of 10% of your grade.

Quizzes:

There will be three **in-person quizzes** held throughout the course. Each quiz will contain 10 multiple choice questions and will be worth 10% of the final grade. In total, the quizzes amount to 30% of the final grade. Quizzes will contain material from both the lectures and the assigned readings. Students will be given 20 minutes to complete the quiz after which a short break will take place and class will resume with regular lecture for the remainder of the class time.

Finding and Assessing Online Sources:

Students will be tasked with assessing online sources for their credibility and usability for academic writing by responding to a series of questions based on an online source. This activity will happen through the ASSIGNMENTS tab under Assessments **during class time** and may be completed in pairs. Your participation and the quality of your responses will be assessed and worth 10% of your grade.

Evidence-Informed Drug Intervention (2 parts):

In lieu of a final exam, students will work throughout the course to develop and refine an evidence-informed drug intervention that can be implemented in one of the following four domains: families, schools, peers, or leisure. Using the principles of harm reduction, evidence-informed research, and insights from your own personal experiences with drugs in society, you will be tasked with coming up with an idea to improve the harms associated with drugs in society, propose an implementation of the intervention, and map out an evaluation plan. All details and materials for this project will be posted on Brightspace.

Students are strongly encouraged to work with others on this project to meet the course objectives of collaboration, considering other's perspectives and skills, problem solving, and making social connections. This is a sociology class after all—we like groups and building social connections. Moreover, the final project is rather large in scope, requiring multiple people to work together to achieve success. Groups should vary in size from 2-5 people. If you want to reach out to classmates to find a group, you can connect with other classmates in-class OR under the DISCUSSIONS page on OWL Brightspace. If you have already organized a group, you each need to sign up under the same "Intervention Group" under GROUPS (under Communications). If there are any issues with signing up, please email me right away so I can help fix the issue. Anyone who does not have a group by October 6th, will be placed in a group, unless there are extenuating circumstances or specific academic accommodations that must be met. If you must work alone, you will need to reach out to me via email by September 29th and indicate how you will incorporate multiple perspectives, teamwork, and making social connections in your final assignment. Students who opt to work independently, will still be required to consult with classmates on their ideas during in-class activities.

There are TWO components of the project and **only one student from each group will submit** on Brightspace.

1. Contracts and Outline of Evidence-Informed Drug Intervention:

Each group will submit a group resume and group contract outlining the terms of how you will work together to complete the final project. Example templates for the group contract are provided on OWL Brightspace—you are free to adjust the contract templates to suit your group needs. The outline will provide basic details about your proposed intervention along with 2-3 scholarly sources in ASA or APA format.

2. Final Intervention Implementation and Evaluation Plan:

Building on the ideas and feedback from the original outline, students will be expected to refine their intervention, develop an implementation plan, and propose a basic framework for evaluating the intervention. Each group will be expected to describe the main features of a feasible and sustainable intervention that is evidence-informed and incorporates a harm reduction approach. All interventions must use a clear sociological foundation or theory to ground the work. The final project will include a report style resource (8-10 pages max and references).

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

Group Grading:

For all in-class and assignment-based tasks that are completed in pairs or groups, everyone in the group will receive the same grade, unless someone is not in class for the activity, in which case they receive no grade. Working in groups requires everyone to be on the same team and working towards the same goals for success. If there are any issues working together, I encourage students to practice effective communication and problem solving with group members.

Communication:

My primary objective is to make this course an enjoyable learning experience, where students feel comfortable learning and growing as sociologists. It is important that students understand that I am here to help you with whatever difficulties you may have or foresee happening. Email is usually the best way to get in touch with me. While I will try my best to respond to emailed questions and concerns within 24-48 hours, there are some circumstances where this cannot always be fulfilled (especially over the weekends). If for some reason you are having difficulty with the course material, the instructor, or any other problem for that matter, do not hesitate to address these concerns. There are many resources to help support you at King's and beyond.

Course Policy on AI Use and Turnitin:

The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools including but not limited to ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools, are not permitted for work that is submitted for evaluation. There may be instances during in-class activities where these tools are used to demonstrate a lesson or explore ideas. However, if AI tools are used at any point, students must acknowledge use and state how the tool was used. Any unauthorized and undeclared use of AI in course work will be subject to academic discipline. 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. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between UWO and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Late Policy/Extensions/Academic Considerations:

If for some reason you are unable to write a quiz, participate in class activities, or submit any of your assignments, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor prior to the deadline. In the case of any unforeseen circumstances, you will need to submit your request through the extranet within 48 hours of the missed assessment deadline. Students are permitted to have **one self-reported absence without requiring formal documentation**. The final intervention assignment is exempt from this—formal documentation will be required if the deadline is missed. It will be up to the discretion of instructor and/or the Academic Dean's Office to determine if there are legitimate grounds for compassionate consideration or accommodations. You must be in-class to receive credit for in-person attendance and participation activities. Re-weighting of grades for missed coursework will only be considered on a case-by-case basis. A late penalty of 10% per day will be in effect for the intervention project components and in-class online activities once the submission window has closed. Since the submission deadlines for all assessments already include flexibility (except the in-class activities), the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for assignments or course components submitted past the deadlines.

Course Outline for Fall 2026:

Dates, Topics, Required Readings, Scheduled Due Dates

DP=Drug Paradox (main text for readings)

*****PART 1: HISTORY AND FOUNDATIONS OF DRUGS IN SOCIETY*****

September 15: Paradoxical Approaches to Drugs in Canada

- *Readings:* Course Outline, DP Chapters 1 and 13
- *Tasks/Due:* Introduction and Administrative Business

September 22: Historical and Political Context of Drug Use and Control

- *Tasks/Due:* In-Class Website Activity: Website Introduction

- *Readings:* DP Chapter 2

September 29: The Biopsychosocial Approach & Harm Reduction

- *Readings:* DP Chapters 3 and 4

October 6: Classifying Drugs Pharmacologically and Legally

- *Tasks/Due:* QUIZ #1; & In-Class Activity: Classifications & Laws
- *Readings:* DP Chapter 5

October 12-16: Reading Week

- *Tasks/Due:* Catch-up and continue connecting with your group
- *Readings:* NO CLASS and NO READINGS

*****PART 2: EXAMNING DRUG USE ACROSS DIFFERENT SOCIOLOGICAL DOMAINS*****

October 20: Drugs are a Problem: Moral Panic or Empirical Reality?

- *Group Work:* Resumes, Contracts and Defining the “Problem” and Picking a Domain for Change; CONTRACTS & OUTLINES DUE (Oct 23)
- *Readings:* DP Chapter 6

October 27: Methods of Studying Drug Use in Society

- *Tasks/Due:* In-Class Activity: Finding, Assessing and Critiquing Online Sources
- *Readings:* DP Chapter 7

November 3: Demographics, Families & Peers

- *Tasks/Due:* QUIZ #2
- *Readings:* DP Chapters 8 and 9

November 10: Schools & Leisure

- *Tasks/Due:* In-Class Activity: Social Determinants of Health
- *Readings:* Online Reading #1 and #2 (see OWL)

November 17: Prevention Strategies for Drugs

- *Tasks/Due:* Work on Intervention Project
- *Readings:* DP Chapter 10

*****PART 3: RESPONDING TO DRUGS AND DRUG USERS IN SOCIETY*****

November 24: Designing, Implementing, and Evaluating an Intervention

- *Group Work:* Considering feedback and refining your focus for success
- *Readings:* See OWL

December 1: Familial Responses to Drug Use

- *Special Event:* Professional Guest Speaker
- *Tasks/Due:* QUIZ # 3; In-Class Activity: Reducing Harms & Relationships
- *Readings:* See OWL for materials

December 8: Legal Responses to Drug Problems & International Policies

- *Tasks/Due:* INTERVENTION PROJECTS DUE (no later than Dec 9)
- *Readings:* DP Chapters 11 and 12 and Online Reading #3 (see OWL)

**KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2026-27**

1. Academic Accommodations (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 at [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

2. Academic Consideration for Student Absences

Students must be approved to write a makeup exam or for an extension of the assignment deadline. If you need to miss an exam or the deadline for the assignment, please follow these instructions.

There are two ways to seek academic consideration:

(i) Academic consideration based on medical or compassionate grounds

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate grounds), they should contact the Academic Advising Office. As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration.

For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is the appropriate documentation. The SMC is available at <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf>

- King's students: The Academic Advising Office website is located in DLH 104. The Academic Advising website is <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>.
- If your home faculty is Huron or at Western, please submit your documentation to your faculty's academic counselling office.
- Requests must be made as soon as possible, and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

You may submit requests for academic consideration through the **Student Absence Portal**, linked on this website: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>.

(ii) Academic consideration through an undocumented absence

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per half-course (0.5) weight.

- Note that instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline to confirm this which assessment has been designated as requiring documentation for consideration (that is, exempt from undocumented absences).
- Undocumented absences can not be used as the basis for academic consideration for December or April exams.

If an instructor has built flexibility into their assessments (e.g., “complete 8 of 10 quizzes”), this flexibility will already address consideration needs and thus academic consideration may be denied.

For further information on the academic consideration policy, please see

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

c) Absences from Final Exams

If you miss the Final Exam, **contact your Academic Advising Office** 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 (i.e., you are scheduled to write 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 (under [Special Examinations](#)).

d) Religious Accommodations

Students should consult the University’s list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and their 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.

3. Support Services

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

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

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>

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

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options on how to obtain help:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/academics/academic-supports/>

4. Statement on Gender-Based Sexual Violence

King's and Western are committed to reducing incidents of gender-based sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [Mental Health and Wellness at King's](#).

You can reach supports at King's 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 (health@uwo.ca) or by calling 519-661-3568. Additional support services can be found <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/support/index.html>

5. 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://kings.uwo.ca/sites/2025/assets/files/campus/Kings_Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf

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.

6. 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 https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

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 to check which tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in each course.** Note that although some courses may permit the use of such tools, it does not mean use of such tools 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/Originality_Reports_-_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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.