

# *History 201A/301A*

## *The Global Drug Wars*

Spring 2023-2024  
4-5 Units  
Tuesday/Thursday 12:00 - 1:20 PM



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This course explores the global history of political struggles over the production, circulation, and consumption of illicit drugs from the early modern period to the present. It surveys medical and social controversies over intoxicants; the political economy of drug trafficking; the ethnic and racial politics of policing and interdiction; cultures of drug use, addiction, and treatment; the interplay of ‘narcostates,’ cartels, and international organizations; the emergence of globalized networks of exchange, regulation, prohibition, and incarceration; and the racialization of legislation on drugs.

This course counts toward the “Social Inquiry” and “Exploring Difference and Power” *Ways of Thinking/Ways of Doing* requirements.

## **Requirements and Grading:**

### **Attendance and preparation:**

You are expected to read and view films in advance of the class meeting for which they are assigned and take active part in class discussion. Attendance is mandatory; excused absences must be requested *before* the day of class. Students are permitted 2 unexcused absences. Each additional absence will lower one's final grade by one letter.

### **Exams and papers:**

#### **Students can choose among 3 options:**

- #1. a short paper + mid-term and final
- #2. two short papers (a response paper and a primary source analyses)
- #3. a research paper

#### **For students enrolled in History 201A for 4 units:**

##### **Option #1: a short paper + mid-term + final**

Students will select a reading or film and compose a 2-3 page response paper identifying the central claims of the text and analyzing their relationship to the major themes of the course.

There will also be an in-class mid-term exam on **May 14** and a final exam on **June 12**.

- It will consist of a selection of short identifications and essay.

##### **Option #2: two short papers (a response paper + a primary source analyses)**

Students may choose try to write, in addition to the 2-3-page response paper, a 5-page paper analyzing a primary source chosen in consultation with the instructor.

##### **Option #3: a research paper**

Students may complete a 10-page research paper on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor.

#### **For students enrolled in History 201A/301A for 5 units:**

##### **Option #1: a short paper + mid-term + final**

Students will select a reading or film and compose a 4-5-page response paper identifying the central claims of the text and analyzing their relationship to the major themes of the course.

There will also be an in-class mid-term exam on **May 14** and a final exam on **June 12**.

- It will consist of a selection of short identifications and essay.

### **Option #2: two short papers (a response paper + a primary source analyses)**

In addition to a 4-5-page response paper, students may choose try to write a 5-7-page paper analyzing a primary source chosen in consultation with the instructor.

### **Option #3: a research paper**

Students may complete an 12-15 page research paper on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor.

Papers may be submitted at any time between May 1 and June 12 via email to [rcrews@stanford.edu](mailto:rcrews@stanford.edu) in Microsoft Word (12 point font, double-spaced, and with standard margins).

\* Please note that the use of generative AI sources is not permitted in the drafting or composition of any assignment for this class.

## **Grading:**

Class participation will count for 40% of everyone's final grade.

For students pursuing option #1, the response paper will count 10%, the mid-term 25% and final 25%.

For option #2, the response paper will count for 20%, and each primary source analysis will count for 40% of the final grade.

The research paper option (option #3) will count for 60% of the final grade.

Students with Documented Disabilities: Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, <http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae>).

## **Reading the Drug Wars**

When approaching our assigned readings and films, we will read with the following questions in mind:

- 1) what is the author's central argument?
- 2) how does the author arrive at this analysis? (what kinds of sources and interpretive frameworks does the author rely upon?)
- 3) is the interpretation convincing - and how does it relate to other works we have encountered in this course?

## **Schedule**

### **April 2 - Introduction**

### **April 4 – Framing the Drug War**

David T. Courtwright, Forces of Habit: Drugs and the Making of the Modern World (2002), 1-5.

Julien Mercille, “The Media-Entertainment Industry and the ‘War on Drugs’ in Mexico,” Latin American Perspectives 41, no. 2 (2014): 110-29.

Carl L. Hart, Drug Use for Grown-Ups: Chasing Liberty in the Land of Fear (2022), xiii-14.

### **April 9 – Globalization and the Psychoactive Revolution**

Courtwright, Forces of Habit, 9-66.

### **April 11 – Empire and the Invention of ‘Drug Control’**

Courtwright, Forces of Habit, 67-111.

Timothy Brook and Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, eds., Opium Regimes: China, Britain, and Japan, 1839-1952 (2000), 1-27.

Documents in Janet Chen et al, The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (2014), 94-110.

### **April 16 – The Paradoxes of Capitalism and Empire**

Courtwright, Forces of Habit, 112-165.

Suzanna Reiss, We Sell Drugs: The Alchemy of US Empire (2014), 1-14, 174-216.

### **April 18 – The Pitfalls of Prohibition**

Courtwright, Forces of Habit, 166-207.

Alfred McCoy, “The Stimulus of Prohibition: A Critical History of the Global Narcotics Trade,” in Michael K. Steinberg, et al, eds., Dangerous Harvest: Drug Plants and the Transformation of Indigenous Landscapes (2004), 24-33, 39-55, 85-97.

### **April 23 – Crack**

Freeway: Crack in the System (2015) [1 hr., 43 mins.]

### **May 2 – Anti-Communism, White Supremacy, and Empire**

“The Contras, Cocaine, and Covert Operations,” National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 2, excerpts.

The Kerry Committee Report (1989), excerpts.

Alfred McCoy, “[Afghanistan as a Drug War](#),” *Tom Dispatch*, March 30, 2010.

### **May 7 – Policing, Race, and Citizenship**

Matthew D. Lassiter, The Suburban Crisis: White America and the War on Drugs (2023), 1-36.

The House I Live In (2012) [1 hr., 50 mins.]

### **May 9 – Mass Incarceration**

Michelle Alexander, The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness (2012), 1-19, 40-139.

### **\*May 14 – Mid-term Exam**

### **May 21 – ‘Latin American’ Drug Wars?**

Alan Knight, “Narco-Violence and the State in Modern Mexico,” in W. G. Pansters, ed. Violence, Coercion, and State-Making in Twentieth-Century Mexico: The Other Half of the Centaur (2012), pp. 115-134.

Birds of Passage (2018) [2 hrs, 6 mins.]

Mariana Calvo, “The Costs of Cocaine,” The New Paradigm, Institute for New Global Politics (March 2023).

James North, “[The Rise and Fall of a Honduran Narco-Regime Is an American Story](#),” Truthdig, March 11, 2024.

### **May 23 – Cartel Fictions?**

Oswaldo Zavala, Drug Cartels Do Not Exist: Narcotrafficking in US and Mexican Culture (2022), 1-81.

### **May 28 – Sinners and Saints**

W. G. Pansters, La Santa Muerte in Mexico: History, Devotion, & Society (2019), 1-57.

William A. Calvo-Quirós, Undocumented Saints: The Politics of Migrating Devotions (2022), 31-83.

Jim McDowell, Godfathers: Inside Northern Ireland’s Drugs Racket (2001), 15-22, 149-172.

### **May 30 – Recovering from the Past**

Angela Garcia, The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession along the Rio Grande (2010), 1-36, 111-149.

### **June 4 – Addicted to Capitalism?**

*The Crime of the Century* (2021) 3h 51m

**\*June 12 – Final exam and due date for all papers by 5:00 PM to [rcrews@stanford.edu](mailto:rcrews@stanford.edu).**

## **Supplementary Reading**

Carlos A. Pérez Ricart “Mexico and Central America: Flexibility and Frameworks” and John M. Pokoo and Kwesi Aning, “West Africa: Securitized Drugs as an Existential Threat?” in Annette Idler and Juan Carlos Garzón Vergara (eds), Transforming the War on Drugs: Warriors, Victims and Vulnerable Regions (2021)

Tim Golden, “The Cienfuegos Affair: Inside the Case that Upended America’s Drug War,” ProPublica, December 8, 2022.

Helena Hansen, Jules Netherland, and David Herzberg, Whiteout: How Racial Capitalism Changed the Color of Opioids in America (2023)

Alfred W. McCoy, The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade, Afghanistan, Southeast Asia, Central America, Colombia 2<sup>nd</sup> rev ed. (2003)

Julia Lovell, The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of China (2011)

Ryan Gingeras, Heroin, Organized Crime, and the Making of Modern Turkey (2014), 1-18, 239-270.

Jonathan Marshall, The Lebanese Connection: Corruption, Civil War, and the International Drug Traffic (2012), 1-32, 163-173.

Paul Gootenberg, Andean Cocaine: The Making of a Global Drug (2008)

Lukasz Kamienski, Shooting Up: A Short History of Drugs and War (2016)

Ioan Grillo, Gangster Warlords: Drug Dollars, Killing Fields, and The New Politics of Latin America (2016)

Roberto Saviano, Zero Zero Zero: Look at Cocaine and All You See Is Powder. Look Through Cocaine and You See the World, trans. Virginia Jewiss (2015)

Isaac Campos, Home Grown: Marijuana and the Origins of Mexico’s War on Drugs (2012)

Ana Guadalupe Valenzuela Zapata and Gary Paul Nabhan, ¡Tequila! A Natural and Cultural History (2003)

Mark Cameron Edberg, El Narcotraficante: Narcocorridos and the Construction of a Cultural Persona on the U.S.-Mexico Border (2004)

Peter Maguire and Mike Ritter, Thai Stick: Surfers, Scammers, and the Untold Story of the Marijuana Trade (2014)

Sam Quinones, Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic (2015)

Kojo Koram, ed. The War on Drugs and the Global Colour Line (2019)

Liat Kozma, "White Drugs in Interwar Egypt: Decadent Pleasures, Emaciated Fellahin, and the Campaign against Drugs," Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East vol. 33, no. 1 (2013): 89-101.

Peter Watt and Roberto Zepeda, Drug War Mexico: Politics, Neoliberalism and Violence in the New Narcoeconomy (2012)

Nick Schou, Orange Sunshine: The Brotherhood of Eternal Love and Its Quest to Spread Peace, Love, and Acid to the World (2010)

Schumpeter, "Narconomics," The Economist July 28, 2012

Janne Bjerre Christensen, Drugs, Deviancy and Democracy in Iran: The Interaction of State and Civil Society (2011),

Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy, "The Myth of the Narco-state," Space and Polity 20, no. 1 (2016): 26-38.

Neil Carrier and Gernot Klantschnig, "Quasilegality: Khat, Cannabis and Africa's Drug Laws," Third World Quarterly, 39, no. 2 (2018): 350-365.

Suzanna Reiss, We Sell Drugs: The Alchemy of US Empire (2014)

Carmen Boullosa and Mike Wallace, A Narco History: How the United States and Mexico Jointly Created the "Mexican Drug War" (2016)

Nick Schou, Orange Sunshine: The Brotherhood of Eternal Love and Its Quest to Spread Peace, Love, and Acid to the World (2010)

Gabriela Polit Dueñas, Narrating Narcos: Culiacán and Medellín (2013)

Hérodote - Géopolitique des drogues illicites

112 (2004) <http://www.herodote.org/spip.php?rubrique9>

Miguel A. Cabañas, "The Global Drug Trade and the War on Drugs in the Americas: A Historical Review," Latin American Perspectives 41, no. 2 (2014): 232-35.

Maziyar Ghiabi, Drugs Politics: Managing Disorder in the Islamic Republic of Iran (2019)

Ashley Neese Bybee, "The Twenty-First Century Expansion of the Transnational Drug Trade in Africa," Journal of International Affairs, vol. 66, no. 1, 2012, pp. 69-84.



Stephen Ellis, "West Africa's International Drug Trade," African Affairs 108, no. 431 (2009): 171-96.

Emmanuel Akyeampong, "Diaspora and Drug Trafficking in West Africa: A Case Study of Ghana," African Affairs 104, no. 416 (2005): 429-47.

David Mansfield, "Turning Deserts into Flowers: Settlement and Poppy Cultivation in Southwest Afghanistan," Third World Quarterly, 39, no. 2 (2018) 331-349.

"Drug Policy as Conservation Policy: Narco-Deforestation," Science 343 (31 January 2014): 489-490.

María Socorro Tabuenca Córdoba, "Mirrors, Ghosts and Violence in Ciudad Juárez," and José Skinner, "The Sicario in the Salon," in Sarah Cortez and Sergio Troncoso, eds., Our Lost Border: Essays on Life amid the Narco-violence (2013)

Miguel A. Cabañas, "Introduction: Imagined Narcoscapes: Narcoculture and the Politics of Representation," Latin American Perspectives 41, no. 2 (2014): 3-17.

Howard Campbell, "Narco-Propaganda in the Mexican "Drug War": An Anthropological Perspective," Latin American Perspectives 41, no. 2 (2014): 60-77..

Kate Dolan, Shabnam Salimi, Bijan Nassirimanesh, Setareh Mohsenifar, and Azarakhsh Mokri, "The Establishment of a Methadone Treatment Clinic for Women in Tehran, Iran," Journal of Public Health Policy 32, no. 2 (2011): 219-30.

Shaylih Muehlmann, When I Wear My Alligator Boots: Narco-Culture in the US-Mexico Borderlands (2014)

Matthew R. Pembleton, Containing Addiction: The Federal Bureau of Narcotics and the Origins of America's Global Drug War (2017)

Alexandra Chasin, Assassin of Youth: A Kaleidoscopic History of Harry J. Anslinger's War on Drugs (2016)

Norman Ohler, Blitzed: Drugs in Nazi Germany (2016)

Javier Valdez Cárdenas, The Taken: True Stories of the Sinaloa Drug War (2017)

Beth Macy, Raising Lazarus: Hope, Justice, and the Future of America's Overdose Crisis (2021)

## **Selected Primary Sources**

[JSTOR Primary Sources](#)

“Drugs and the Guatemalan Military,” [National Security Archive](#), November 18, 2005

“The Allende Massacre in Mexico: A Decade of Impunity,” [National Security Archive](#), March 18, 2021

“Operation Intercept,” [National Security Archive](#), April 13, 2003.

“War in Colombia: Guerrillas, Drugs, and Human Rights in U.S.-Colombia Policy, 1988-2002,” [National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 69](#), May 3, 2002.

“Colombia Project,” [National Security Archive](#)

Nineteenth-century Opium primary sources at [JSTOR](#)

[Opium and China](#)

[Truth Tobacco Industry Documents](#)

[Counternarcotics in Afghanistan](#)

[Drug Industry Documents](#)

[Opioid Industry Documents](#)

[United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#)

[Media Awareness Project](#)

[Arthur P. \(“Skip”\) Endres Papers](#)

[19th Century British Pamphlets](#)

[Cannabis Research Collection \(Humboldt State University\)](#)