Drugs and Culture

Course Description
Many drugs have mind-altering effects but some are defined as legal and some as illegal. The War on Drugs have been launched in many societies but none of them has successfully become a drug-free society. This course provides students an understanding of drug-related issues from a perspective of medical anthropology. Through close readings of ethnographies, viewing of videos, and fieldtrips, the class explores drug use, prevention, and treatment in both scientific and cultural perspectives and re-examines the linkages between legal and illegal behaviors, healthy and unhealthy bodily conditions, as well as science and culture.

What you will learn:
Student taking this course will:
• acquire basic knowledge in medical anthropology;
• learn the skills to comprehend the drug history in Hong Kong, China, and other parts of the world;
• develop the ability to apply the learned knowledge to analyze the complex relationship between science and culture; and
• acquire a critical mind to evaluate any social issues.

Course Requirements:
Response Papers:  50% (25% x 2)
Final Exam*:  50%

1) Response Papers (50%)
Choose two weekly topics and write two 3-4 page response papers. Response papers should discuss the topic with reference to the assigned reading and/or lecture. Instead of merely summarizing the readings/lecture, you should raise critical points of views, for example, what new insights you have got, what limitations you have identified, what follow-up questions have come to your mind, etc. Ideally, a central theme should be raised to link up your arguments. Submit your first response paper on or before 7 April and second response paper on or before 6 May.

2) Final Exam (50%):
The final exam includes 40 MC questions (40%), three short questions (30%), and one (out of two) essay question (30%). It is a centralized exam and the questions cover all the topics in the lecture.

After finishing your written assignments, please submit soft copies to both VeriGuide and the course website (Blackboard). Hard copies are not required.

The paper should be written in the following format: Double line spacing, Times New Roman, and font 12 (either Chinese or English).

Please submit your assignment on time. Marks will be deducted (i.e. one point per day) for late submission.

*If centralized exam cannot be arranged, take-home exam will be arranged. Four open-ended questions will be given and choose two to answer. Write each answer of 2-3 pages. The exam covers all the topics in the lecture. You will have two weeks’ time to complete the exam.
Course Schedule:
1) Introduction (14 Jan.)

Section I: Drug Ethnographies
2) Theories and Methods in Drug Research (21 Jan.)

Section II: Drug Scene in Hong Kong
3) An Overview of Drug Use History in Hong Kong (28 Jan.)
4) Drug Use by Gender and Ethnicity (4 Feb.)
5) Holiday (11 Feb.)

Section III: Drug Treatment and Prevention
6) War on Drugs (18 Feb.)
7) Fieldtrip I: Visit Drug Rehabilitation Center in Hong Kong (20 or 27 Feb.) (Optional)
8) No lesson (25 Feb.) Replaced by Fieldtrip I
9) Harm Reduction (4 Mar.)
10) Drug-related Services in Macau (11 Mar.) (Guest Speaker)

Section IV: Drug Use by Specific Topics
11) Sexualized Drug Use: Chemsex (18 Mar.)
12) Doping in Sport (25 Mar.)
13) Reading Week (1 Apr.)
14) Smart Drug: Adderall (8 Apr.)
15) Therapeutic Use of Psychedelic Drugs (15 Apr.)

16) Plant Teachers – Cannabis (22 Apr.)

Grade descriptors are as follows for the assessment of this course:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Overall course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.</td>
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