I. COURSE PURPOSE

This course provides essential knowledge and engages students in critical thinking about drug abuse and dependence and related public policies and their impact on individuals, families, and communities. It introduces students to the impact on clients and their families, especially ethnic minority populations, of disparate intent and impact of law, regulation, policy, and practice. Students will be introduced to the pervasive consequences of drug abuse and addiction upon the individual user attendant to associated problem behaviors, social problems, medical conditions, and even drug abuse history. Students will examine the consequences of policies that distinguish illegal drug abuse from abuse of tobacco and alcohol in terms of how the implementation of these policies affects their well-being and that of their family. Implications for accessing services for clients and advocating on their behalf will be addressed. This course is one of a series of three one-credit companion courses in drug abuse, each of which can be taken independently, with no prerequisite. Each has a different focus. The focus of this course is the conflict between individual and societal rights; the focus of SSS 561 is treatment, its effectiveness, policy and politics; and the focus of SSS 562 is current policy issues, their effect on clients, and the national debate.
II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

A. To introduce students to the ideology underlying drug abuse and dependence and related policies to understand why society treats drug abuse and dependence differently from other public health problems, including addictions to other substances, and the impact of this distinction on the poor, the underserved, and on minority populations.

B. To consider the dichotomy between the disease concept of drug addiction and the concept of acceptance of personal responsibility for one's behavior.

C. To consider the ethical implications, as well as the implications for the client and family, of legislative policies such as mandatory reporting of drug use by pregnant women and screening of women for domestic partner violence, particularly given their disparate effect on African-Americans, due to inequitable application of these policies.

D. To understand the differential effect of the use of illegal drugs on loss of liberty, through an examination of sentencing guideline disparities, their differential impact on majority versus minority populations, and how the law distinguishes drug abuse “status” crimes as opposed to “behavior” crimes.

E. To familiarize clinical concentrators on content on and analysis of policies to understand the full range of issues faced by clients and their families and to prepare them to best advocate on their behalf.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Text


B. Recommended Texts


C. Required Journal and Other Articles

Because of the intense and ongoing public debate related to issues of drug abuse, public health, and public safety, the content of this course is updated during the semester. Accordingly, additional readings or citations to websites, beyond the required readings that are listed in the Class Schedule for each class, are distributed in class for review and discussion.
D. Other Recommended Readings


E. Course Assignments

**Participation:** Each student is responsible for active oral class involvement on weekly assigned readings and interactive discussions on materials distributed in class for group exercises. Presentation of point of view and the arguments supporting them are expected and encouraged at each class. **Due Date: each class**

**Written Assignment:** Each student will develop a 7- to 10-page original paper examining an issue of how drug abuse may bring individual rights into conflict with societal rights. Issues may include, but are not limited to, compulsory drug testing, criminal sanctions for drug use by pregnant women, or the disparity in sentencing guidelines between offenses relating to so-called “crack” versus powder cocaine. If a student chooses to write on one of these topics, no approval is needed. If a student chooses to write on another topic, prior consultation with and approval of the instructor is needed. **Due Date: February 17, 2012, which is one week after the last class.** **Papers are to be submitted electronically.**

F. Grading Policy

Grades for this course are based on the University grading system. The grade is based on content (substance, attention to assignment, attention to page limit), style (scholarly writing style, APA format), and timely submission (assignments submitted later than the assigned date, or an otherwise agreed upon date determined prior to the due date of the assignment, will be downgraded).

Active participation and involvement in discussions 40%
Written Paper 60%
G. Course and Instructor Evaluation

NCSSS requires written evaluation of this course and the instructor. Forms for this purpose will be distributed at the last meeting of the class. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to requests.

IV. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

A. Scholastic Expectations

Please refer to NCSSS Announcements, or appropriate Program Handbook for Academic Requirements, including scholastic and behavioral requirements. All written work should reflect the original thinking of the writer, cite references where material is quoted or adapted from existing sources, adhere to APA format, and should be carefully proofread by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

B. Academic Honesty

Joining the community of scholars at CUA entails accepting the standards, living by those standards, and upholding them. Please refer to University Policy and appropriate Program Handbooks.

C. Accommodations

Students with physical, learning, psychological or other disabilities wishing to request accommodations must identify with the Disability Support Services (DSS) and submit documentation of a disability. If you have documented such a disability to DSS that requires accommodations or an academic adjustment, please arrange a meeting with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.
Class Schedule

Class | Topics and Readings

1 | **Introduction to Drug Abuse and Drug Abuse Policy Concepts**: Use, abuse, addiction, dependence; legal vs. illegal drugs; “hard” vs. “soft” drugs; science versus ideology; disease concept versus personal responsibility; why do people use drugs anyway?

Required Reading


Recommended Reading

Goldstein, Chapter 1
Mignon et al., Chapter 3
Kleiman et al. Chapter 1 and Appendix

2 | **Individual Versus Societal Rights: Compulsory Drug Testing**: Why test? Who should be tested? Who should be exempt, and why?

Required Reading

Cohen, Chapter 9. Read the chapter and bring to class the four scenarios presented on pages 113-115.


11/3/11
3 Individual Versus Societal Rights: “Crack Babies”. Criminal sanctions for drug use by pregnant women; the role of domestic violence and of trauma on drug use and abuse.

Recommended Reading

Dupont, pages 424-430

Cohen, Chapter 10.


Required Reading

Cohen, Chapter 12
on federal cocaine offenses. Access at
http://www.ussc.gov/Meetings_and_Rulemaking/index.cfm
United States Sentencing Commission (2011, August 1). Most frequently asked
questions: The 2011 retroactive crack cocaine guideline amendment. Access at
http://www.ussc.gov/Meetings_and_Rulemaking/Materials_on_Federal_Coc
aine_Offenses/FAQ/index.cfm
retroactive use of shortened cocaine prison sentences. Wall Street Journal
Online. Access at
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB100014240527023037453045763591511390
05180.html?wpisrc=nl_wonk

Recommended Reading

hydrochloride: Are the differences myth or reality? Journal of the American
Medical Association, 276, 1580-1588.
minimum drug sentences: Throwing away the key or the taxpayers’ money?
Santa Monica, CA: Rand Drug Policy Research Center. Goldstein, Chapters
12, 18, and 19