

LCC4300 Biomedicine and Culture Senior Seminar

Fall 2012: Drugs and Culture

Professor Anne Pollock, apollock@gatech.edu

Course Meets: Skiles 343, Tuesday/Thursday 9:35-10:55

Office Hours: Skiles 360, TBD

Overview

This course is an advanced seminar exploring drugs and culture. It uses historical, anthropological, sociological, and science studies approaches to provide students with both information and analytical tools to grapple with the intersections of drugs and culture in society. Attending to the whole life cycle of drugs – from production to consumption, and how those intersect – provides opportunities to think creatively about how drugs matter culturally, moving beyond common sense and simplistic pro and con answers to social and policy questions. Over the course of the semester, we will read broadly about a variety of drugs, including those that straddle medicine and recreation, such as amphetamines and cannabis, as well as those that are unquestionably on one side (e.g. antiretrovirals) or the other (e.g. ecstasy). We will be attentive to how expert knowledges about drugs are produced, and how drugs are enrolled in narratives of health and danger in broader public spheres. Each student will choose one drug to analyze in depth, with small assignments building toward a final research paper that considers that particular drug in cultural context.

Objectives:

- To be exposed to a range of key themes in the scholarship of drugs and culture, ranging from the construction of clinical trials to pharmaceuticalization to the “War on Drugs”
- To use the scholarship of drugs and culture as a window into broader scientific and cultural questions
- To gain in-depth knowledge about a particular drug of interest
- To develop research skills
- To hone writing skills to produce a polished research paper

Required Books

Abadie, Roberto. *The Professional Guinea Pig: Big Pharma and the Risky World of Human Subjects*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

Herzberg, David. *Happy Pills in America: From Miltown to Prozac*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008.

Race, Kane. *Pleasure Consuming Medicine: The Queer Politics of Drugs*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009.

Whyte, Susan, Sjaak van der Geest, and Anita Hardon. *Social Lives of Medicines*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

All other readings are on T-Square

Assessment:

Half of the assessment is based on keeping up with the readings and participating in class:

Attendance and Participation: 30 points

This class is an advanced seminar, which means that not only attendance but active participation is required. Each student is expected to come to class each day prepared to discuss the readings and any other assignment for that day.

Blogs: 20 points

Before class on each day for which readings are assigned, write an entry on your response to the readings on the blog section of T-Square. Your short comments (150-300 words) should be posted by 8AM, demonstrate that you have done the reading, and note comments and questions that you would like to raise in class.

Half of the assessment is based on a research project about a particular drug of your choosing. You may choose any drug, licit or illicit. The only drugs you may not choose those that are comprehensively covered in course readings (antidepressants, marijuana, and Ritalin).

Short written assignments: 25 points

Periodic assignments help to pace the research component of the class: five short research assignments about the drug you are analyzing, worth five points each.

Final Paper: 25 points

Rough draft due before Thanksgiving, final draft due on the last day of Dead Week: 12-15 page paper that analyzes the drug you have chosen in cultural context. The paper must have a relevant analytical thesis, support it with material from course texts from throughout the semester as well as outside research, and be a polished piece of writing.

All assignments are due on T-Square on the date and time specified on the assignment. Late assignments will be penalized one point if they are an hour late or more, and one point for each additional day.

Wk 1	Tues Aug 21 Intro to Class	Thurs Aug 23 Dumit, Joseph, "Pharmaceutical Witnessing: Drugs for Life in an Era of Direct-to-Consumer Advertizing," in Jeanette Edwards, Penny Harvey, and Peter Wade, eds., <i>Technologized Images, Technologized Bodies</i> (New York and Oxford: Berghan Books, 2010): 37-64. Metzl, Jonathan, "Mainstream Anxieties about Race in Antipsychotic Drug Ads," <i>Virtual Mentor: American Medical Association Journal of Ethics</i> 14.6 (June 2012): 494-502.
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Wk 2	Tues Aug 28	Thurs Aug 30
	<p>Start <i>Social Lives of Medicines</i> Introduction: An Anthropology of Materia Medica (pp. 3-22)</p> <p>Start <i>Happy Pills</i> Introduction: Medicine, Commerce, and Culture (pp. 1-14) Chapter 1: Blockbuster Drugs in the Age of Anxiety (pp. 15-46)</p> <p>Choose individual research topics: <i>Because each student must analyze a different drug, we will discuss choices in class to be sure there are no repeats.</i></p>	<p><i>Happy Pills</i> Chapter 2: Listening to Miltown (pp. 47-82) Chapter 3: Wonder Drugs and Drug Wars (pp. 83-121)</p>
Wk 3	Tues Sep 4	Thurs Sep 6
	<p>Assignment 1 “Close Reading of an Image” <i>Due on T-Square at 8AM</i> <i>Bring in images for in-class discussion</i></p>	<p><i>Happy Pills</i> Chapter 4: The Valium Panic (pp. 122-149) Chapter 5: Prozac and the Incorporation of the Brain (pp. 150-191) Conclusion: Better Living Through Chemistry? (pp. 192-204)</p>
Wk 4	Tues Sep 11	Thurs Sep 13
	<p><i>Social Lives of Medicines</i> II: The Consumers (pp. 23-78) III: The Providers (pp. 79-132)</p>	<p><i>Social Lives of Medicines</i> IV: The Strategists (pp. 133-162) V: Conclusion (pp. 163-171)</p>
Wk 5	Tues Sep 18	Thurs Sep 20
	<p>Assignment 2 “Object Mapping” <i>Due on T-Square at 8AM. Bring electronic or print copy of object map to class for discussion.</i></p>	<p>MOVIE DAY: <i>Wit</i> [Oxford “Lives of Property”]</p>
Wk 6	Tues Sep 25	Thurs Sep 27
	<p>Jain, S. Lochlann, “The Mortality Effect: Counting the Dead in the Cancer Trial,” <i>Public Culture</i> 22.1 (2010): 89-117.</p> <p><i>The Professional Guinea Pig</i> Introduction (pp. 1-20) Chapter 1: “Guinea Pigging” (pp. 21-44)</p>	<p><i>The Professional Guinea Pig</i> Chapter 2: “Market Recruitment” (pp. 45-64) Chapter 3: “Local Knowledge” (pp. 65-84) Chapter 4: “Big Pharma and HIV” (pp. 85-96) Chapter 5: “Strategies of Survival” (pp. 97-120)</p>

Wk 7	Tues Oct 2	Thurs Oct 4
	<p>Assignment 3 Bio/medical Annotated Bibliography <i>Due on T-Square at 8AM. Bring in annotated bio/medical sources for in-class discussion.</i></p>	<p><i>The Professional Guinea Pig</i> Chapter 6: "From Prisoners to Professionals" (pp. 121-136) Chapter 7: "Ethics and Exploitation" (pp. 137-156) Conclusion: "Living In/Off the Mild Torture Economy" (pp. 157-166) Epilogue: "Following Up" (pp. 167-171)</p>
Wk 8	Tues Oct 9	Thurs Oct 11
	<p>One drug, multiple perspectives 1: Marijuana</p> <p>Becker, Howard S. "Becoming a Marihuana User," <i>The American Journal of Sociology</i>, 59.3 (November 1953): 235-242.</p> <p>Chapkis, Wendy, "Cannabis, Consciousness and Healing," <i>Contemporary Justice Review</i> 10.4 (December 2007): pp. 443-460.</p> <p>Lavoie, Dusty. "Smoking the Other: Marijuana and Counterhegemony in <i>Weeds</i>," <i>Substance Use & Misuse</i>, 46 (2011):910-921.</p>	<p><i>Pleasure Consuming Medicine</i> Chapter 1: "Pleasure Consuming Medicine" pp. 1-31 Chapter 2: "Prescribing the Self" pp. 32-58.</p>
Wk 9	Tues Oct 16	Thurs Oct 18
	FALL BREAK: NO CLASS	MOVIE DAY: TRAFFIC [4S]
Wk 10	Tues Oct 23	Thurs Oct 25
	<p>Finish and Discuss Traffic</p> <p>Assignment 4 Liberal Arts Annotated Bibliography <i>Due on T-Square at 8AM. Bring in annotated liberal arts sources for in-class discussion.</i></p>	<p><i>Pleasure Consuming Medicine</i> Chapter 3: "Recreational States" pp. 59-79. Chapter 4: "Drugs and Domesticity: Fencing the Nation", pp. 80-105. Chapter 5: "Consuming Compliance," pp. 106-137.</p>

Wk 11	Tues Oct 30	Thurs Nov 1
	<p><i>Pleasure Consuming Medicine</i> Chapter 6: "Embodiments of Safety," pp. 137-163. Chapter 7: "Exceptional Sex," pp. 164-189</p>	<p>One Drug, Multiple Perspectives 2: Ritalin</p> <p>Comstock, Edward, "The End of Drugging Children: Toward the Genealogy of the ADHD Subject," <i>Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences</i>, 47.1 (Winter 2011): 44-69.</p> <p>Singh, Iliana, "Not Just Naughty: 50 Years of Stimulant Drug Advertising," in <i>Medicating Modern America: Prescription Drugs in History</i>, edited by Andrea Tone and Elizabeth Siegel Watkins, New York University Press, 2007, pp. 131-155.</p> <p>Keane, Helen, "Pleasure and discipline in the use of Ritalin," <i>International Journal of Drug Policy</i> 19 (2008): 401-409.</p>
Wk 12	Tues Nov 6	Thurs Nov 8
	<p>Assignment 5: Paper Pitch <i>Due on T-square at 8AM. Bring in paper pitch for in-class discussion</i></p>	<p>Flex Day 1: Readings TBD by student interest</p>
Wk 13	Tues Nov 13	Thurs Nov 15
	<p>Flex Day 2: Readings TBD by student interest</p>	<p>No Class: Writing Day [AAA]</p>
Wk 14	Tues Nov 20	Thurs Nov 22
	<p>Full draft of final paper <i>Bring in an electronic or print copy for peer critique in class, tidy up to turn in on T-Square by midnight.</i></p>	<p>THANKSGIVING: NO CLASS</p>
Wk 15	Tues Nov 27	Thurs Nov 29
	<p>Flex Day 3: Readings TBD by student interest</p>	<p>LAST CLASS MEETING Course wrap-up and evaluations</p>
Wk 16	Tues Dec 4	Thurs Dec 6
	<p>Dead Week: Individual Meetings to discuss final papers</p>	<p>Dead Week: Individual Meetings to discuss final papers</p>
<i>Final paper due Friday Dec 7 at midnight</i>		