



O.P. Jindal Global University
A Private University Promoting Public Service



**Jindal School of
Psychology & Counselling**
India's First Transdisciplinary Psychology School

SUBSTANCE USE, SOCIETY, AND GENDER
PCCU-02-BAP-SUSG2072
(Cross-Listed Elective Course)
Course Manual
Fall 2026

Course Information

Course Duration: 15 Weeks

Credit Hours: 3 credits

Meetings: By appointment

Location: Faculty Offices Block

Prerequisites: This course examines substance use and gender from multiple standpoints—psychological, cultural, and social. While the course will be particularly beneficial for students interested in clinical psychology, it will also provide insights for those who are interested in public health, women’s health, men’s health, social issues, and related fields.

Equivalent Courses: N/A

Exclusive Courses: N/A

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Karishma Godara

Biography: I’m an assistant professor at Jindal School of Psychology and Counselling and a clinical psychologist by training. My clinical training is from the Department of Psychiatry, PGIMS, Rohtak. Both my M.Phil. and Ph.D. theses, center on mental health and addiction disorders—substance and behavioural, respectively.

Following my doctoral studies, I worked at the National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi. My work in the field of addiction has been nationally recognized through awards at academic conferences.

Email: karishma.godara@jgu.edu.in

Phone: N/A

Office: 11A, 4th Floor, FOB

Office Hours: To be announced

Homepage: <https://jgu.edu.in/jspc/faculty/dr-karishma-godara>,
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Karishma-Godara?ev=hdr_xprf

1. Course Description

In May 2025, a 21-year-old man in Karnataka died after drinking five bottles of undiluted liquor to win a ₹10,000 bet with friends. Around the same time, the Allahabad High Court observed that a wife consuming alcohol does not in itself constitute cruelty, unless accompanied by unwarranted and uncivilized behavior. And in Amritsar's Majitha constituency, 23 people died and 13 were hospitalized after consuming spurious liquor made from ethanol. For a Cheap High, thousands of Delhi's Homeless Children have been Sniffing Industrial Glue.

Four news statements. Four very different stories from across the country, across socioeconomic class. And yet, they point towards one direction: Why was a young man willing to drink himself to death to prove something to his friends? Why does a court need to clarify that a wife's drinking is not automatically an act of cruelty against her husband? Who are the 23 people who died in Amritsar, why were they drinking what they were drinking? And why are our country's children sniffing industrial glue, and why is it still happening?

Substance use looks very different depending on who you are, where you were born, and what your body is expected to do. A man drinking sometimes is celebrated and even encouraged. A woman drinking is condemned. A bodybuilder injecting steroids is aspirational. A street child sniffing whitener is invisible. A farmer swallowing tramadol to forget his debt is a statistic.

This course will ask why?

Substance Use, Society, and Gender takes these questions seriously. Over the course of the semester, we will explore what addiction is, and go through some commonly used drugs. Mainly, we will examine how gender, social norms, power, media, and identity shape who uses substances, how society responds, and who gets left behind.

Note: *This course does not promote substance use, nor does it encourage stigmatizing or bullying those who engage in it. Moreover, one goal of this course is to raise awareness of its complexities and negative consequences, including health and mental health effects.*

Some topics may be emotionally challenging. As an instructor, I am committed to fostering a learning environment, and I will approach these discussions with sensitivity while not shying

away from difficult discourses. Hence, the students must also approach the course with empathy, compassion, respect, and a focus on scientific evidence.

If you anticipate that topics like violence, biological consequences of substance use, human trafficking, etc., can be uncomfortable or triggering for you, now is the time to decide whether this course is for you.

2. Course Intended Learning Objectives (Aim)

By the end of the course, students should be able to

Course Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Activities	Assessments/ Activities
Gender is a social construct which has real consequences. This includes substance use and substance use disorder.	Lecture and interactive discussions.	Group discussions, active participation, and reflections on readings.
A basic understanding of common drugs and their health consequences.	Lecture and reading assignment	Group discussions, active participation, and reflections on readings
Demonstrate an understanding of the consequences of substance use disorders, focusing specifically on women.	Lecture and reading assignments, case study analyses	Roleplay, active participation, and group discussion,
Critique how the media, particularly advertisements and movies portrays substance use in women and men, and in general.	Lecture and reading assignments, case study analyses	Reviewing popular media pieces, and active participation
Critique how the film media and social media influence and impacts people in the context of substance use.	Lecture and	
Evaluate how institutions — law, media, medicine, the family, and the market — produce, reinforce, and respond to gendered substance use, and identify	Reflection, discussion	Self-reflection, debate, and group discussion.

whose interests these institutional responses serve.		
--	--	--

3. Scheme of Evaluation and Grading

Internal Breakup		
Class Participation		10 marks
Assignment 1	In-class examination	30 marks
Assignment 2*	Group Project Students will be required to identify a research question at the intersection of gender, substance use, and Indian society, investigate it through a methodology of their choice (secondary data, policy analysis, expert interviews, media analysis, etc: subject to instructor approval, and submit a written report (20 marks) and deliver a group presentation (10 marks)	30 marks
Total		70 marks
External Breakup		
End Term** (Closed Book)		30 marks

* The topic and scope will need to be approved by the instructor.

** Will include the complete syllabus

Please note that absenteeism on the day of assessment will not be entertained; neither will any extension be granted for the assessments.

Grade Definition

Grade	Percentage of Marks	Grade Value	Grade Description
O	80% and above	8	Outstanding: Exceptional knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles; and extraordinary critical and analytical ability.
A+	75 - 79.75%	7.5	Excellent: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles; and critical and analytical ability.

A	70 - 74.75%	7	Very Good: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, organizational capacity; ability to synthesize ideas, rules, and principles; critically analyze existing material and originality in thinking.
A-	65 - 69.75%	6	Good: Good understanding of the subject matter, ability to identify issues and provide balanced solutions to problems; good critical and analytical skills.
B+	60 - 64.75%	5	Fair: Average understanding of the subject matter, limited ability to identify issues and provide solutions to problems; reasonable critical and analytical skills.
B	55 - 59.75%	4	Acceptable: Adequate knowledge of the subject matter to go to the next level of the study; passable critical and analytical skills.
B-	50 - 54.75%	3	Marginal: Limited knowledge of the subject matter and irrelevant use of materials; poor critical and analytical skills.
P1	45 - 49.75%	2	Pass 1: Pass with a passable understanding of the subject matter; lacking in critical and analytical skills.
P2	40 - 44.75%	1	Pass 2: Pass with a rudimentary understanding of the subject matter; lacking in critical and analytical skills.
F	Below 40%	0	Fail: Poor comprehension of the subject matter; poor critical and analytical skills and marginal use of the relevant materials. Requires student to repeat the course.
I	Incomplete		Incomplete: Issued due to extenuating circumstances that prevent the student from completing internal or external marks. If an 'I' grade is assigned, the JSPC Academic Committee will suggest a schedule for the completion of work, or a supplementary examination.

4. Academic Integrity

Academic Honesty, Cheating and Plagiarism

Academic honesty forms the cornerstone of scholarly pursuits, emphasizing integrity, trust, and accountability within the academic community. Academic honesty involves presenting one's work, ideas, and findings truthfully, and giving due credit to the contributions of others. As scholars and learners, we must uphold the highest standards of academic honesty, respecting the intellectual contributions of others while ensuring that our work reflects originality, attribution, and authenticity.

Cheating and plagiarism, on the other hand, are antithetical to academic honesty. In line with JGU policy, JSPC operates a zero-tolerance approach to plagiarism. Further, cheating involves deceptive practices aimed at gaining an unfair advantage, such as using unauthorized materials during an examination or falsifying data. The unacknowledged use of material by others within your work is a violation of academic integrity, and all reported cases will be investigated for potential disciplinary action.

Classroom Punctuality and Conduct

JSPC conducts all classes based on a foundation of professionalism. It is expected that students will be present in class and seated within five minutes of the class start time. Students arriving after a ten-minute window from the designated start time will be refused entry/attendance. The classroom is a place for free expression and critical thinking—students must respect opinions expressed and actively participate in classroom discussions.

Participation and Attendance Policy

This course covers a lot of detailed information. There is no way to get a good grade without attending class. Students are still expected to attend all classes. If individual course attendance is below 70 percent and overall below 75 percent, a penalty deduction is imposed.

Phone Usage

Phones are not allowed during classroom hours. Use of phones by students may result in their removal by course instructor. Repeated violations may result in academic discipline.

Disability Support

JGU endeavours to make all its courses accessible to students. The Disability Support Committee (DSC) has identified conditions that could hinder a student's overall well-being. These include physical and mobility related difficulties, visual impairment, hearing impairment, mental health conditions and intellectual/learning difficulties—e.g., dyslexia and dyscalculia. Students with any known disability needing academic and other support are required to register with the Disability Support Committee (DSC) by following the procedure specified at <https://jgu.edu.in/disability-support-committee/>.

Students who need support may register any time during the semester up until a month before the end semester exam begins. *Those students who wish to continue receiving support from the previous semester, must re-register within the first month of new semester.* Last minute registrations and support might not be possible as sufficient time is required to make the arrangements for support.

The DSC maintains strict confidentiality about the identity of the student and the nature of their disability and the same is requested from faculty members and staff as well. The DSC takes a strong stance against in-class and out-of-class references made about a student's disability without their consent and disrespectful comments referring to a student's disability. All general queries are to be addressed to disabilitysupportcommittee@jgu.edu.in

Mental Health Services

The Centre for Wellness and Counselling Services (CWCS) provides comprehensive guidance and counselling services to the JGU community. If you are experiencing distress, be it personal, academic, social, or career related, CWCS has a competent and well-qualified group of counsellors available for consultation (personal and group). You can be assured that your confidentiality will always be protected. To schedule an appointment, call 83969 07312 or write an email to cwcs@jgu.edu.in.

Apart from CWCS, student in need may utilize Your Dost – an Online Counselling & Emotional Wellness Coach. Help is available 24/7 from professional counsellors. To book an appointment or speak to a counsellor, visit: <https://yourdost.com/>

Safe Space Pledge

This course may discuss a range of issues and events that might result in distress or provoke strong emotional responses in some students. To make sure that all students collectively benefit from the course, it is incumbent on everyone to maintain respect towards one another. Each person will be responsible and accountable for creating and maintaining a culture of respect at every level of the program. This does not mean that you must feel restrained about what you feel and say—rather, it is about creating a safe space where everyone can speak and learn without inhibitions and fear.

5. Keywords Syllabus

Addiction, substance use disorders, drug use, women and substance use, women's health, men's health, opioid use, alcohol use, media

6. Course Material

(This is not an exhaustive list; relevant study material will be shared as we proceed)

Textbooks

Brady, K. T., Back, S. E., & Greenfield, S. F. (Eds.). (2009). *Women and addiction: A comprehensive handbook*. Guilford Press.

Carson, R. C., Butcher, J. N., & Mineka, S. (2017). *Abnormal psychology and modern life* (16th ed.). HarperCollins College.

Peters, W., Guille, C., & Mittal, L. (2019). Substance use disorders in women. *Neurology and Psychiatry of Women: A Guide to Gender-based Issues in Evaluation, Diagnosis, and Treatment*, 103-113.

Research Papers

Godara, K., & Phakey, N. (2026). "It's the so-called feminism these days" – A Qualitative Study of Public Perceptions and Attitudes towards Women's Alcohol Use. *Journal of Substance Use*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14659891.2026.2619135>

McHugh, R. K., Votaw, V. R., Sugarman, D. E., & Greenfield, S. F. (2018). Sex and gender differences in substance use disorders. *Clinical psychology review*, 66, 12-23.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2017.10.012>

Emiliussen, J., & Morrison, A. D. (2017). Alcohol use and generational masculinity: An interdisciplinary approach. *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 34(4), 314-329.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1455072517709>

Cafferky, B. M., Mendez, M., Anderson, J. R., & Stith, S. M. (2018). Substance use and intimate partner violence: a meta-analytic review. *Psychology of Violence*, 8(1), 110-131. <https://doi.org/10.1037/vio0000074>

Jain, P., Roy, E., Garud, N., & Mazid, I. (2019). Sexuality and substance abuse portrayals in item songs in Bollywood movies. *South Asian Popular Culture*, 17(1), 15–29.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14746689.2019.1585605>

Lipsky, S., Caetano, R., Field, C. A., & Larkin, G. L. (2005). Psychosocial and substance-use risk factors for intimate partner violence. *Drug and alcohol dependence*, 78(1), 39-47.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2004.08.028>

Rao, R., Panda, U., Gupta, S. K., Ambekar, A., Gupta, S., & Agrawal, A. (2020). Portrayal of alcohol in Bollywood movies: A mixed methods study. *Indian journal of psychiatry*, 62(2), 159–166. https://doi.org/10.4103/psychiatry.IndianJPsychiatry_294_19

7. Session Plan

Week	Topic	Approach/Pedagogy
1	Gender, Power & Society: Building the Lens Before We Look Through It	Interactive discussion and lecture
2	What is addiction? Who defined it? And who does it serve? Theories of addiction (from the brain disease model to moral and criminal models to social environmental models) <i>Key Question: Who Does Each Model Serve?</i>	Lecture, interactive discussion, and classroom activity
3	Addiction as an experience. <i>Key Question: What Does Addiction Actually Look Like Across Lives?</i>	Lecture, interactive discussion, and classroom activity
4	Substances, Bodies & Health (Basic overview of the most common drugs and their health consequences)	Lecture, interactive discussion, and classroom activity
5-6	“You’ve Come a Long Way, Baby”: Tobacco, Nicotine, Gender & the Business of Addiction	Historical evidence/case study, and lecture
7-9	The Closet Drinkers: Women, alcohol, Shame, and Stigma <i>Key takeaway: Recreational Alcohol use is often</i>	Lecture, interactive discussion, and classroom activity

	<i>construed as a lifestyle choice in men, and a 'character flaw' in women. This prejudice and consequent internalized stigma serve as a strong barrier for women if they need treatment for alcohol use disorders, which is rapidly increasing.</i>	
	From “Desi Daaru” to Scotch to Liver Cirrhosis: Men, Alcohol, Power & Failing Health in India <i>Key takeaway: What begins as a symbol of masculinity and status often spirals into addiction, organ damage, and early death, revealing alcohol's deadly grip on Indian men.</i>	Lecture, interactive discussion, and classroom activity
10	Living at the Margins: Sexual Minorities & Substance Use in India <i>Key takeaway: Systemic stigma and social exclusion push sexual minorities toward higher substance use, masking a deep and neglected mental health crisis.</i>	Lecture and interactive discussion
11	Poverty, deprivation & survival: The Inhalant tragedy <i>Key takeaway: An estimated 30 lakh children (particularly street children) are addicted to substances like whiteners, glue, and petrol. These easily accessible products are used for quick intoxication, often causing severe physical damage, neurological issues, and even death.</i>	Lecture, interactive discussion, and classroom activity
12	From Bollywood to the Gram: How Media Sets the Trap <i>Key takeaway: Media not only influences, but also subtly manipulates and entrenches such norms.</i>	Media analysis, role play, lecture, and interactive discussion
13	The farm, the fix, and dying young: The opioid crisis. <i>Key takeaway: From Punjab to Kashmir to Mizoram, India is facing a pressing opioid health crisis. This unit draws attention to this rapidly escalating public health catastrophe.</i>	Documentary screening, lecture, and interactive discussion
14	The perfect body: steroids, gender and the business of 6-pack abs and ‘dewy’ skin. <i>Key takeaway: Behind every six-pack and glowing complexion is an industry deliberately manufacturing insecurity and selling dangerous chemical solutions to both men and women</i>	Media analysis, lecture and interactive discussion
15	Revision Week	

*Course material and relevant research papers (exclusive to what has been mentioned) will be shared as the course progresses.

*** The course outline is tentative and may be revised in response to changing conditions.**