



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



Illicit Drug Abuse and its Implications

Course Instructor: Dr. Shankey Verma

Jindal Institute of Behavioral Sciences (JIBS)

4 Credit Course

SPRING 2026

Faculty Contact: Dr. Shankey Verma

Email: shankey.verma@jgu.edu.in

Office Hours: TBD

Classroom: TBD

The information provided herein is by the Course Coordinator. The following information contains the official record of the details of the course.

PART I

Course Title:		
Course Code	BE-E-0071	
Course Duration	01 Semester	
No. of Credit Units	04	
Level	UG/PG	
Pre-Requisites	Nil	
Pre-Cursors	Nil	
Equivalent Courses	Nil	
Exclusive Courses	Nil	
Class Timing		

PART II

Course Description:

This elective examines illicit drug abuse through a criminological lens, situating it within broader debates on crime, deviance, and social control. The course explores the causes and consequences of substance misuse while analyzing its intersections with criminal behavior, policing, law, and corrections. Drawing on criminology, sociology, psychology, and public health perspectives, students will engage with contemporary debates around drug laws, harm reduction, treatment, and policy reform. Special attention will be given to the challenges posed by organized crime, trafficking networks, and the global war on drugs, as well as their implications for justice and human rights.

Learning outcomes:

After the completion of the course the student will be able to:

1. Describe patterns of illicit drug use and their social, psychological, and criminological dimensions.
2. Analyze the relationship between drug abuse, crime, and justice institutions (e.g., policing, courts, and corrections).
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of various policy frameworks, from prohibitionist approaches to harm reduction and decriminalization.
4. Critically assess the role of organized crime and trafficking in shaping drug markets and enforcement strategies.
5. Compare global perspectives on drug abuse and control, with a focus on human rights, public health, and social justice.

Course Format:

The course will be delivered through a combination of lectures and case study analyses. Students will engage with academic readings and real-world examples to critically examine the relationship between drug abuse, crime, and justice. Class sessions will integrate interactive components such as debates on drug policy, law enforcement and treatment responses, and student-led presentations on contemporary issues. The use of documentaries/media reports will further enrich classroom learning.

Assignments:

1. Mid-Term Assessment (20 marks)

The mid-term will test students' understanding of key theories, concepts, and case studies discussed in the first half of the course. It will consist of a mix of short-answer questions, application-based scenarios, and one essay-type question.

2. Media Response Exercise (25 marks)

In this in-class exercise, students will watch a selected documentary, film excerpt, or news report related to illicit drug abuse, trafficking, or criminal justice responses (e.g., *Uda Punjab*, UNODC documentaries, Netflix's *Drug Lords*). Each student will then write an individual one-page reflection connecting the media representation to criminological theories, class readings, or policy debates.

3. Group Presentation (25 marks)

Students will work in groups of to design and present a policy reform proposal addressing a pressing issue related to drug abuse (e.g., prison rehabilitation, NDPS Act reforms, harm reduction strategies, campus drug use, organized trafficking). Each group will deliver a 20-25 minutes presentation, followed by a Q&A session with peers and faculty.

***Please note that absenteeism on day of assessment will not be entertained and no assessments shall be rescheduled.**

**** The assignments shared above are tentative and subject to change at instructor's discretion.**

Missed or Late Assessment Submission

All assessments are expected to be submitted on the scheduled day. In case of exceptional circumstances, the student can contact the course instructor and at their discretion (with or without penalty), the instructor may take a call on the concession that is granted. It is the student's responsibility to double check that the correct file has been submitted. In case the incorrect or corrupted document is submitted for evaluation, it may result in a lower grade for the student.

Grading of Student Assessment

Letter Grade	Percentage of Marks	Grade Points	Interpretation
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	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	7	Very Good: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, excellent organizational capacity, ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles, critically analyse existing material and originality in thinking and presentation.
A-	65 -69	6	Good: Good understanding of the subject matter, ability to identify issues and provide balanced solutions to problems and good critical and analytical skills.
B+	60 - 64	5	Fair: Average understanding of the subject matter, limited ability to identify issues and provide solutions to problems and reasonable critical and analytical skills.
B	55 - 59	4	Acceptable: Adequate knowledge of the subject matter to go to the next level of the study and reasonable critical and analytical skills.
B-	50 - 54	3	Marginal: Limited knowledge of the subject matter and irrelevant use of materials, and poor critical and analytical skills.
P1	45 - 49	2	Pass 1: Pass with Basic understanding of the subject matter.
P2	40 - 44	1	Pass 2: Pass with Rudimentary understanding of the subject matter.
F	Below 40	0	Fail: Poor comprehension of the subject matter; poor critical and analytical skills and marginal use of the relevant materials. Will require repeating the course.

Course Outline:

1. Unit I: Introduction to Illicit Drug Abuse (Week 1)

Defining illicit drugs, overview of Indian and global scenario, historical perspectives: cultural use vs. criminalization, and interdisciplinary approaches.

2. Unit II: Theories of Drug Use and Abuse (Week 2-4)

Criminological theories (strain theory, social learning theory, labeling theory, and control theory), psychological models (reinforcement, personality, and trauma), sociological perspectives (subcultures, social disorganization), and biological explanations.

3. Unit III: Pharmacology and Health Implications of Illicit Drugs (Week 5)

Categories (depressants, stimulants, hallucinogens, opioids, cannabis, synthetics), psychological and physiological effects, distinction between dependence and addiction, short- and long-term consequences.

4. Unit IV: Drugs and Crime Nexus (Week 6)

Causal vs. correlational links between drugs and crime, drug-related violence and systemic crime, victimization and community impacts.

5. Unit V: Organized Crime and Trafficking Networks (Week 7)

Global drug cartels and organized crime, the economics of drug trafficking, routes, methods, and challenges in detection, the darknet and emerging cyber-drug markets.

6. Unit VI: Policing and Law Enforcement Strategies (Week 8)

Policing approaches: supply reduction, raids, undercover operations; challenges: corruption, profiling, community relations; role of specialized agencies (NCB and DEA) and NDPS Act, 1985; and case law examples

7. Unit VII: Drugs in Prisons and Corrections (Week 9)

Prevalence of drug abuse among incarcerated prisoners, challenges: smuggling, addiction, and violence in prisons, correctional responses: therapeutic, communities, drug courts, rehabilitation and reintegration issues.

8. Unit VIII: Public Health Perspectives on Drug Abuse (Week 10)

Epidemiology of drug abuse, risk and protective factors across the life course, public health campaigns and prevention models, youth, campus, and community interventions.

9. Unit IX: Emerging Trends: Vaping, E-Cigarettes, and New Substances (Week 11)

Rise of vaping and e-cigarettes: global and Indian trends, marketing, youth, and accessibility, public health controversies, legal status across countries, and criminological concerns.

10. Unit X: Drugs, Technology, and Cybercrime (Week 12)

How darknet fuels the global drugs market, cryptocurrency and money laundering in drug trade, online communities promoting drug use, law enforcement challenges in cyber-policing.

11. Unit XI: Drugs and Popular Culture (Week 13)

Representation of drugs in media; music countercultures, and youth identity (psychedelic era to EDM & rave scenes); social media influencers and normalization of drug use.

12 Unit XII: Drugs, Gender, and Vulnerable Populations (Week 14)

Women as users, trafficker, and victims; gendered pathways into drug use and treatment barriers; LGBTQ+ perspectives: stigma, HIV, and access to services; children of incarcerated drug offenders.

Reading List:

1. Brown Jr, L. S. (1981). Substance abuse and America: Historical perspective on the federal response to a social phenomenon. *Journal of the National Medical Association*, 73(6), 497.
2. Drapela, L. A. (2006). The effect of negative emotion on licit and illicit drug use among high school dropouts: An empirical test of general strain theory. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 35(5), 752-767.
3. Shaw, R. L., Whitehead, C., & Giles, D. C. (2010). 'Crack down on the celebrity junkies': does media coverage of celebrity drug use pose a risk to young people? *Health, risk & society*, 12(6), 575-589.
4. Sharan, R. N., Chanu, T. M., Chakrabarty, T. K., & Farsalinos, K. (2020). Patterns of tobacco and e-cigarette use status in India: a cross-sectional survey of 3000 vapers in eight Indian cities. *Harm Reduction Journal*, 17(1), 21.
5. Kavanaugh, P. R., & Anderson, T. L. (2008). Solidarity and drug use in the electronic dance music scene. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 49(1), 181-208.
6. Flamand, C., & Décary-Héту, D. (2019). The open and dark web: Facilitating cybercrime and technology-enabled offences. In *The human factor of cybercrime* (pp. 60-80). Routledge.
7. Overbeek, D. L., Kass, A. P., Chiel, L. E., Boyer, E. W., & Casey, A. M. (2020). A review of toxic effects of electronic cigarettes/vaping in adolescents and young adults. *Critical reviews in toxicology*, 50(6), 531-538.
8. Kolind, T., & Duke, K. (2016). Drugs in prisons: Exploring use, control, treatment and policy. *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy*, 23(2), 89-92.
9. Bagley, B. (2013). The evolution of drug trafficking and organized crime in Latin America. *Sociología, problemas e prácticas*, (71), 99-123.
10. Szalavitz, M., Rigg, K. K., & Wakeman, S. E. (2021). Drug dependence is not addiction—and it matters. *Annals of medicine*, 53(1), 1989-1992.
11. Kruis, N. E., Seo, C., & Kim, B. (2020). Revisiting the empirical status of social learning theory on substance use: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Substance use & misuse*, 55(4), 666-683.

12. Askew, R., & Salinas, M. (2019). Status, stigma and stereotype: How drug takers and drug suppliers avoid negative labelling by virtue of their 'conventional' and 'law-abiding' lives. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 19(3), 311-327.
13. Hunt, G., & Joe-Laidler, K. (2015). The culture and subcultures of illicit drug use and distribution. *The handbook of drugs and society*, 460-481.
14. Ignaszewski, M. J. (2021). The epidemiology of drug abuse. *The Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*, 61, S10-S17.
15. Sharma, S., Kumar, K., & Singh, G. (2017). An overview on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances act, 1985. *Journal of Forensic Science & Crime Investigation*, 4(4).
16. Janik, P., Kosticova, M., Pecenak, J., & Turcek, M. (2017). Categorization of psychoactive substances into "hard drugs" and "soft drugs": A critical review of terminology used in current scientific literature. *The American journal of drug and alcohol abuse*, 43(6), 636-646.
17. Fuchshuber, J., & Unterrainer, H. F. (2020). Childhood trauma, personality, and substance use disorder: The development of a neuropsychanalytic addiction model. *Frontiers in psychiatry*, 11, 531.
18. Cuomo, C., Sarchiapone, M., Di Giannantonio, M., Mancini, M., & Roy, A. (2008). Aggression, impulsivity, personality traits, and childhood trauma of prisoners with substance abuse and addiction. *The American journal of drug and alcohol abuse*, 34(3), 339-345.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Professional Conduct in Classroom

Developing professionalism means arriving on time to the classroom, maintaining classroom decorum, such as being seated within the first two minutes, being respectful to the instructor, peers, conflicting opinions, and submitting assignments on time. As a student of this course, you are expected to integrate these skills into your daily behaviour as maintaining professionalism is an essential component of the course. It is essential that we pursue higher ideals which means incorporating behaviours such as listening to others when they are contributing, being sensitive to other individuals and diversity, and supporting the overall learning environment. Disrupting the learning environment by arriving after a two-minute window from the designated start time would mean that the student will be refused entry/attendance. It is also expected that the student contributes in classroom discussions, activities, and presentations to enhance the overall learning environment.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes (100% attendance). Students that are regularly absent cause a disruption to the learning environment and limit their own potential. A student who fails to attend a class is expected to inform the Course Instructor, beforehand, orally or in writing, the reason for their absence. A minimum of 75% attendance is mandatory, failing which, student is not permitted to take the final exam or end term exam.

Punctuality

Students are expected to be seated and prepared inside the class at the scheduled class time. Regular late comers will be denied entry. Both late comers and early departures disrupt the learning environment and would be penalized. A student who might feel like that they might be late for a class is expected to inform the Course Instructor, beforehand, orally or in writing, the reason for the same.

Respectfulness

Students must maintain the integrity of the classroom which means respecting peers, faculty, and staff. It is essential that the student is attentive and sensitive about the words that they use and its impact on others. Students who harm the decorum of the classroom will be asked to leave the classroom and marked absent for the day.

Electronic Devices

Electronic devices such as laptops, headphones, mobile phones are known to be major distractions for learning. Therefore, students will be permitted to use electronic devices only at the behest of the course instructor.

Notes on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is not acceptable! Chat GPT extracted answers are not acceptable either. Please refrain from copying and pasting paragraphs and sentences from your reading materials. This includes copying someone's words, structure, grammar, ideas, thoughts, and phrases and passing them as your own. Too many quotes are not acceptable! Using

What is acceptable? Using one quote which is not more than 40 words with proper citation. Use citation! It's a must! Present the content you read from your reading materials in your own words! It is necessary to cite all material that is not the student's original work. Think and critically analyse the content! The source should be always acknowledged in your written material and presentation. All papers in this class will be checked electronically for plagiarism. Sharing or using past work is also counted as plagiarism.

Academic learning is founded on ideals of honesty, integrity, and civility and students are expected to display these ideals at all times. Serious consequences could result when the ideals of academic behaviour are violated.

Safe Space Pledge

Some parts of this course may discuss a range of issues that might result in distress for some students. Discussions and images in the course might also provoke strong emotional responses. To make sure that all students collectively benefit from the course, and do not feel troubled due to either the contents of the course, or the conduct of the discussions, it is incumbent upon all within the classroom to pledge to maintain respect towards our peers. This does not mean that you need to feel restrained about what you feel and what you want to say. Conversely, this is about creating a safe space where everyone can speak and learn without inhibition and fear. This responsibility lies not only on students, but also the instructor.

Disability Support and Accommodation Requirements

JGU endeavors to make all its courses accessible to students. All students with a known disability needing academic accommodations are required to register with the Disability Support Committee. The Committee has so far identified the following conditions that could possibly hinder student's overall well-being. These include: physical and mobility related difficulties; visual impairment; hearing impairment; medical conditions; specific learning difficulties e.g. dyslexia; mental health. The Disability Support Committee maintains strict confidentiality in its discussions. The students should preferably register with the Committee in the first week of the semester as disability accommodation requires early planning. DSC will approve and coordinate all the disability related services such as appointment of academic mentors, specialized interventions and course related requirements such as accessible classrooms for lectures, tutorials and examinations. All faculty members are required to refer students with any of the above-mentioned conditions to the Disability Support Committee for addressing disability-related accommodation requirements.

Centre for Wellness and Counseling Services:

Contact: Email ID: cwcs@jgu.edu.in

Mobile: +91 8396907312