

# psy383: Psychoactive Drugs, Winter 2013

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Welcome to Psychoactive Drugs! In this class, we will study a number of chemical substances that alter mood or behavior (effects) as a result of alterations in the function of the brain (mechanisms). As this is not a psychopharmacology class, however, we will also consider drugs in a sociopolitical context in an attempt to better understand how legal controls over public access to substances are determined and enforced.

## Required Text:

Kuhn, Swartzwelder, & Wilson (2008). *Buzzed: the straight facts about the most used and abused drugs from alcohol to ecstasy* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Norton.

Please obtain Buzzed and **read it in its entirety as soon as possible**. Everyone should have read the whole book by week 3. As we will endeavor to do a critical analysis of this text, it is imperative that we are all familiar with its contents.

## Evaluation:

Metric	Format	% Final Grade
Midterm Exam	60 multiple choice	30%
Cumulative Final	60 multiple choice	30%
Buzzkills	5 x 150 word critical analyses	30%
Participation	variable	10%

**Readings:** On the syllabus

**Midterm/Cumulative Final:** 60 multiple choice questions from reading/lectures.

**Buzzkills:** The point of this assignment is to demonstrate critical thinking about drugs. Find a claim in Buzzed that you believe to be misleading, incomplete, inadequately supported or demonstrably incorrect. Briefly, explain why and use a different source to back up your argument. There will be opportunities to elaborate upon and 'prezify' Buzzkills for extra credit.

**Participation:** Everyone starts out with full credit for participation. We will do a variety of in class activities, and if you fail to complete the activity or are absent that day, your participation grade will be penalized (based on the total number of in class activities). Active participation in or out of class (e.g., office hours, email-based discourse, etc.) will help your participation grade. Disruptive behavior or an apathetic approach to the course will hurt it. There will be various opportunities to earn extra participation points throughout the semester.

**Classroom Etiquette:** Please don't talk during lecture. To do so is very distracting to both the instructor and other students, and idle chatter fosters a climate of mutual disrespect. There will be plenty of opportunity to share your opinions and ask questions during class/small-group discussions.

**NO CELL PHONES!!!** There is no reason whatsoever that anyone should be using a cell phone during class. Please silence your phone (rather than set it to vibrate) before class.

If you elect to use your computer during class (to keep relevant readings handy, view the presentation on your own screen, take notes, etc.), please do not check your email, Facebook, favorite web comic, or anything else that is unrelated to class.

Failure to meet these requests will result in a new request: that the offending party be asked to leave class. In the unlikely event that you are asked to leave class, understand that the next class is a brand new day, and I have no intentions of holding a grudge or penalizing you for previous transgressions, so do please do come back (ideally with a helpful new perspective on classroom etiquette).

**Cheating:** Don't do it. Plagiarism is among the most egregious of crimes against information, and any attempts to take credit for work that is not your own will be met with extreme censure. During the midterm/final, keep your eyes on your own paper, keep the university honor code in mind, and in the event that you feel tempted to glance at someone else's test, ask yourself: "Does this person really know so much more than I do that it's worth risking a clean academic record to see their answer?" (If the answer is yes, perhaps addressing this disparity in knowledge through study would be a better policy). Please follow the university honor code at all times.

**Office Hours:** Office hours in 118 LISB are on Mondays from 10am-12pm or by appointment. If you can't make scheduled office hours (during which you should feel encouraged to drop by unannounced should you so choose), don't hesitate to send me an email in order to set up an alternative meeting time.

**Schedule:** Every class is better when it is regarded as a dynamic entity, constantly adapted to meet the needs of as many participants as possible. Consequently, the posted schedule is subject to change. I will post updated versions of the syllabus any time modifications are made. Do not make the mistake of downloading a copy of the syllabus and assuming that it will be accurate throughout the semester!

Note: relevant readings from Buzzed are paired with lecture topics, but **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR READING BUZZED BEFORE THE MIDTERM!!!** This text is intended to be a target of critical thought about drug information, so it would be unwise to memorize it directly. However, you should have a sense of what kind of stories it tells, and how they coincide with or contradict the lecture and alternate readings.

## **Class #**

## **Title**

*Content of the lecture*

Readings (subject to update)

### **M: 1/7 Biases: Len & Otherwise**

*Class business, Overview, Demonstration of Buzzkill in Action!*

Buzzed: obtain it

### **W: 1/9 The Suitcase (Thompsonian)**

*Classes, mechanisms, and effects of psychoactive drugs*

Buzzed: Introduction

**M: 1/14      “get with the Ultraviolet Dream”**

*Membrane properties (same or otherwise), Receptors, Transporters*

Wiki: Cell Membrane, Neuron      Buzzed: Brain Basics

**W: 1/16      Limbic Reset?!**

*Neuroanatomy, Prediction Error, Addiction*

Buzzed: Brain Basics

*\*Buzzkill #1 Due*

**M: 1/21      MLK Day, no class**

**W: 1/23      Action, Action, Action, Action**

*The Action Potential, Synapses*

Wiki: Action Potential

**M: 1/28      Fetish\*, Fugu, Fast Transmission, Flavor Country?**

*Tetrodotoxin (\*think like voodoo, not like sex), Nicotine, Acetylcholine*

Buzzed: Nicotine      Wiki: Nicotine, Acetylcholine, Tetrodotoxin

**W: 1/30      Sleep when you're dead, pretty eyes**

*Fly agaric, Caffeine, Acetylcholine <-> Dopamine interactions*

Buzzed: Caffeine      Wikipedia: Caffeine, Dopamine

**M: 2/4 PiHSaD (Phenethylamines i Have Shown are Drugs)\***

*Phenethylamines, Vesicular Transport, 'Scheduling Ecstasy'*

Wikipedia: Phenethylamine, Amphetamine, Norepinephrine

Article: Fellous & Kuti (2002) [annotated version available]

\*(with apologies to Dr. Shuglin)

**W: 2/6 When You're Ready to Come Back Down...**

*GABA, Benzodiazepines, Barbiturates*

Buzzed: Sedatives

Wiki: GABA, Benzodiazepines

*\*Buzzkill #2 Due*

**M: 2/11      Licit Synthesis (a preparation both of and for critical evaluation)**

*Excellent review prez on Blackboard, review all readings to date*

**W: 2/13      Molecules @T=1; (midterm examination, MCQ x 60)**

*ANYTHING from Buzzed is fair game! Read the whole thing!*

**M: 2/18 Scientists, Hipniks, Spooks, and Bodhisattvas**

*Albert Hoffman → Ken Kesey, A CIA Quest for Enlightenment (||~)*

Buzzed: Ecstasy, The Law

Wiki: History of LSD

**W: 2/20 Concerning Phantastica: Just Say HalluciNOgens!**

*Tryptamines, Arlycyclohexylamines, Anticholinergic Doozies*

Buzzed: Hallucinogens

Wiki: Psychedelics, Ketamine

Article: Vollenweider & Kometer (2010) [annotated version available]

**\*Buzzkill #3 Due**

**M: 2/25 “I don’t take intelligence drugs, b/c I don’t know what they are”**

*Nootropics (piracetam, hydergine, donezipil, LSD?)*

Wiki: Nootropics

**W: 2/27 “Nothing in the world more helpless, irresponsible and depraved...”**

*Intoxicants, Ethanol, Inhalants*

Buzzed: Alcohol, Inhalants

Wiki: Ethanol, Nitrous Oxide

**M: 3/4 “Who needs reasons when you’ve got heroin?”**

*Opiates vs. Opioids, Heroin vs. Oxycontin, Harm reduction*

Buzzed: Opiates

Wiki: Opiate

**W: 3/6 “When I was a kid I inhaled frequently. That was the point.”**

*Did Shakespeare rock the ganj? What y’all know about Mary Jane?*

Buzzed: Marijuana

Wiki: Cannabinoids

**\*Buzzkill #4 Due**

**M: 3/11 Licit Synthesis II (a preparation both of and for critical evaluation)**

*Come prepared to demonstrate your ability to apply skeptical, informed approaches to interpreting new information about psychoactive drugs!*

**W: 3/13 TBA**

**W: 3/20, 10:15am CUMULATIVE FINAL EXAM** (60 multiple choice questions)