

## Department of Sociology

SOCI 3630: Drugs, Crime and Society

Tuesday/Thursday 3:30-4:50 pm

Chemistry Building Rm 106

Instructor: Kevin McCaffree, PhD

**Office**: 288b Sycamore Hall

**Office Hours**: Tuesday/Thursday 2:00-3:00pm (Available to meet on Zoom)

**Teaching Assistant:** Emilia Gaston

**Email**: [emiliagaston@my.unt.edu](mailto:emiliagaston@my.unt.edu)

\*Contact the TA initially with your questions.

In this course you will learn about the leading theories for the causes and prevalence of criminal behavior. We will also discuss cutting edge and controversial issues within the field, with a special focus on the issues of drugs use, drug-related crime and incarceration. More specifically, the objectives of this course are to introduce you to:

* the development of the field of criminology.
* the criminological theories most widely used by researchers.
* current national data trends around drug use
* controversies and debates about drug classification, drug use, drug-related crime and drug policy.

**Textbooks:**

1) Ronald Akers, Christine Sellers and Wesley Jennings. Criminological Theories: Introduction, Evaluation, and Application. 2016. ISBN: 9780190455163. Oxford University Press

2) Michael L. Birzer and Paul Cromwell. In Their Own Words: Criminals on Crime. 2016. ISBN: 9780190298272. Oxford University Press.

3) Axel Klein. 2008. Drugs and the World. ISBN: 978-1861893819.Reaktion Books.

4) Patrick Keefe. 2021. Empire of Pain: The Secret History of the Sackler Dynasty. ISBN: 978-0385545686. Doubleday Press.

Assignments and Grading:

Your grade in this course will be determined by four exams. All testing will be done (and all grades will be posted) on the CANVAS site for this course: <https://unt.instructure.com>

Attendance and Participation:

A significant portion of exam questions will be drawn from lecture material. It is therefore in your interest to attend class regularly.

Participation in class (e.g., asking questions, sharing observations or experiences) is also a critical component of this course. Each class, a group of students will randomly be chosen for participation credit; if you want credit for participation, you will need to be in class and prepared to contribute to the discussion for that day. This will count for 1/5th of your total grade.

Exams:

There are four multiple-choice exams for this course that cover material from class lecture and assigned readings.

Exams will be administered online, via the CANVAS course site (visit [https://unt.instructure.com](https://unt.instructure.com/)), during the date and time we would normally meet for class (see course calendar below).

Each exam is worth 100 points for a total of 400 points possible.

No makeup exams or credit for participation will be available without evidence of a documented medical emergency.

Grading Scale:

A = 90 to 100% of 500 possible points

B = 80 to 89%

C = 70 to 79%

D = 60 to 69%

F = Below 60%

Academic Integrity:

It is the responsibility of each student to be familiar with UNT’s Policy on Academic Integrity. Plagiarism, copying, cheating, or giving assistance to other students during examinations is a violation of academic integrity. Cases of suspected cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Students office. Note that any and all work submitted in order to meet the requirements of this course must be originally created for this course. In other words, you may not turn in anything submitted for another course and/or section of this course you have previously taken.

University Policy 06.003 states, “UNT promotes the integrity of learning processed and embraces the core values of trust and honesty. Academic integrity is based on educational principles and procedures that protect the rights of all participants in the educational process and validate the legitimacy of degrees awarded by the university. In the investigation and resolution of allegations of student academic dishonesty, the university’s actions are intended to be corrective, educationally sound, fundamentally fair, and based on reliable evidence.”

For more information on what constitutes plagiarism, as well as tips on citing your resources, visit [www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org/). If you require clarification on what counts as academic dishonesty, it is your responsibility to ask the instructor of the course.

Academic Accommodations:

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at [http://disability.unt.edu](http://disability.unt.edu/). You may also contact them by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Course Schedule\*:

**Week 1:** 8/24, 8/26 **Topic:** Introduction and Overview

* Introduction
* Overview of the course
* Crime, incarceration and drug use: a survey of the best available data

**Week 2:** 8/31, 9/2 **Topic:** “Deterrence” and “Biosocial” Theories of Crime

* Akers, Sellers and Jennings, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3

**Week 3:** 9/7, 9/9 **Topic:** “Bonding/Control” and “Strain” Theories of Crime

* Finish up “Deterrence” and “Biosocial” theories
* Akers, Sellers and Jennings, Chapter 6 and Chapter 9

**Week 4:** 9/14, 9/16 **Topic:** “Social Learning” and “Labeling” Theories of crime

* Finish up “Bonding/Control” and “Strain” theories
* Akers, Sellers and Jennings, Chapter 5 and Chapter 7

**Week 5:** 9/21, 9/23 **Topic:** “Social Learning” and “Labeling” Theories of crime

* Finish up “Social Learning” and “Labeling” theories
* Birzer and Cromwell, Chapter 7
* Take “Exam One” on CANVAS Thursday, 9/23, between 3:30-4:50 pm.

**Week 6:** 9/28, 9/30 **Topic:** Leaving Illegal Drug Subculture

* Birzer and Cromwell, Chapter 22, Chapter 23

**Week 7:** 10/5, 10/7 **Topic:** Alcohol, Tobacco and Pharmaceuticals

* Birzer and Cromwell Chapter 11, Chapter 13, Chapter 20
* Rob Parker, Criminologist (10/7)

**Week 8:** 10/12, 10/14 **Topic:** Selling Drugs as a Business

* Birzer and Cromwell Chapter 14, Chapter 15, Chapter 17, Chapter 21
* Take “Exam Two” on CANVAS Thursday, 10/14, between 3:30-4:50 pm.

**Week 9:** 10/19, 10/21 **Topic:** The “War on Drugs”

* Klein “Drugs and the World,” Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 3
* Guest: Axel Klein, public health researcher

**Week 10:** 10/26, 10/28 **Topic:** The “War on Drugs”

* Klein “Drugs and the World,” Chapter 4, Chapter 5, Chapter 6

**Week 11:** 11/2, 11/4 **Topic:** The “War on Drugs”

* Klein “Drugs and the World,” Chapter 7, Chapter 8, Chapter 9, Chapter 11
* Guest: Jeff Davis, police captain, DEA agent
* Take “Exam Three” on CANVAS Thursday, 11/4, between 3:30-4:50 pm.

**Week 12:** 11/9, 11/11 **Topic:** The Opioid Epidemic

* Keefe “Empire of Pain,” pgs. 143-204

**Week 13:** 11/16, 11/18 **Topic:** The Opioid Epidemic

* Keefe “Empire of Pain,” pgs. 205-288

**Week 14:** 11/23, 11/25 **Topic:** THANKSGIVING BREAK—Classes Canceled

* Keefe “Empire of Pain,” pgs. 289-362

**Week 15:** 11/30, 12/2 **Topic:**  The Opioid Epidemic

* Keefe “Empire of Pain,” pgs. 363-434

**Week 16:** Finals Week

* Take “Exam Four” on CANVAS on Tuesday 12/7, between 1:30-3:30pm.

\*This syllabus, with its course schedule, is based on the most recent information about the course content and schedule planned for this course. Its content is subject to revision as needed to adapt to new knowledge or unanticipated events. Updates will remain focused on achieving the course objectives and students will receive notification of such changes. Students are responsible for attending to such changes or modifications posted on the CANVAS site ([https://unt.instructure.com](https://unt.instructure.com/)) for this course.