**PY 217: Drugs, Brain, and Behavior**

Section A TTh 12:30-1:50, Harbert 325

**Professor**: Lynne Trench, Ph.D.

**Office**: Harbert 307

**Phone**: 226-4835

**e-mail**: [ltrench@bsc.edu](mailto:ltrench@bsc.edu)

**Office Hours**: MW 10:00-11:00 or by appointment

**Required Text**:

Kuhn, C., Swartzwelder, S., & Wilson, W. (2019). *Buzzed: The straight facts about the most used and abused drugs from alcohol to ecstasy*, 5th Ed., New York: W. W. Norton and Company.

Extra readings from other sources will be required.

**Course Description**:

This course will be a survey of how various drugs affect the brain and behavior. We will focus on drugs of abuse. Be aware that we may not specifically cover psychotherapeutic drugs in this class. For the first part of the course, we will study how drugs affect the brain and body and some of the scientific research findings on addiction. In the second part of the course we will look at the main classes of drugs and study how these drugs affect the brain and behavior. In the last part of the course we will discuss how drugs affect society, prevention, treatment, and drug policy. Although this class is primarily psychological in nature, we will borrow from the disciplines of pharmacology, biology and sociology. In addition to daily readings and discussion, you will be required to complete a number of assignments.

**Learning Outcomes**:

Upon completing this course, you should be able to do the following, consistent with the learning outcomes for the Psychology department:

1. Assess scientific evidence regarding the effects of drug use on the body,
2. Realize common misperceptions regarding drug use and its consequences

3) Understand some of the moral and ethical implications of drug use (licit and illicit) and the effects on society

4) Improve your oral and written communication skills

1. Be better able to critically evaluate information and weigh that information (e.g., experimental evidence vs. anecdotal evidence)

**Class**:

The class period will be used to present lecture material (including, but not limited to, material from the textbook), to discuss material from the text and other readings, and to show video clips related to the topic of discussion. I expect you to complete the assigned reading before class and to be prepared to discuss the material and ask questions. I will not cover all the text material in class. You are responsible for all material covered in class and in the assigned readings.

**Attendance and Participation**:

Attendance will be taken daily. If you are in a borderline situation when I calculate final grades (defined as within ½ a percentage point of the next grade, e.g., a 92.5 %) exceptional attendance could be used to bump you up, at my discretion. There will be a participation grade assigned at the end of the course. This portion of your grade will be subjective, and will be based on how well and how often you participate in class. Please note that quality of comments is more important than quantity. I expect you to treat your classmates and me with respect. Please raise your hand to speak, don’t speak out of turn, *and minimize reporting of personal stories and repeating things that you have “heard” without any outside verification*. If you have already spoken once or twice in a given day, try to give some other students a chance to speak. I expect everyone to take part in class discussion. It is a great way to see how much you really know the material, and to remember it better for the test. If anyone is extremely shy and thinks that he/she will have a difficult time participating on a regular basis in class, please contact me (email me to set up an appointment) to discuss this.

**Exams and Quizzes**:

There will be four scheduled exams. Exams may consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, true/false, and essay questions. Absences on a scheduled exam day must be made up at my discretion or during the last week of classes. It is your responsibility to set a time with me to make up the exam and you cannot make up an exam during finals week. Exam absences may be considered excused if I am notified at least 12 hours in advance, or in the case of an extreme emergency, however, only I can determine whether an exam absence is excused or not. If I believe that students are not completing readings before class, I may decide to give pop quizzes. Quizzes will be given at the beginning of class. If you are late on a quiz day or if you miss class on a quiz day, you will not be given more time to finish it or be allowed to make it up.

**Classroom Conduct, Cheating, and Plagiarism**:

I expect everyone to treat this class as they would a job. I expect you to show up on time, be prepared for class, to treat me and your classmates with respect, to turn off and put away your cell phones and not to leave the room in the middle of class (unless it’s an extreme emergency). I would prefer that you do not use a laptop in class, unless you have academic accommodations that require it. If so, I expect that you will only have the class notes up and will not do anything else on your computer. I expect you to do your own work on assignments, tests, and papers. Be aware that plagiarism also relates to inappropriate “paraphrasing” from sources in writing your papers. Therefore, make sure all your writing is in your own words, and always cite the source of your information. During exams, I expect you to put your books/backpacks and cell phones at the front of the room, to do your own work, not to talk, and not to look at others’ papers. You are under the Honor Code of BSC. If any student is suspected of cheating or plagiarizing, they will be reported to the Honor Council, and if it is determined that cheating occurred, the student will get a zero on that test or paper. NO EXCEPTIONS! Also remember that you are obligated by the Honor Code to report someone else who you see cheating.

**Tech in the Classroom:** Cell phones are to be turned off during class. If I see you looking at your phone or texting, I will ask you to leave. I do **NOT** want you to look up information on class material on the internet during class. If you are interested in what we are talking about and you want to look up more information on it outside of class, and using reputable sources, please do! But please don’t do that during class because it is distracting to you and everyone else. During exams, cell phones, iPods, computers, or PDA devices of any kind will not be allowed on your person or near your desk.

***Required Assignments*** (Everyone must do all of the following assignments):

Individual or Pair “In the News” Presentation*:*

This will be a short (5-10 min per person) presentation on a topic that interests you. It could be something we are currently or have recently discussed in class, or it could be a drug-related topic that you are interested in. Students will sign up for a date to present. Students can obtain and present information from: journal articles, newspapers, magazines (approved by me), a video clip from the news (approved by me), a portion of a book, or a portion of an interview with an expert. Please, NO internet sources unless it is a journal article that you got full-text over the internet! Regardless of what sources you use, ONE of your sources MUST be a primary scientific journal article. **On the date of the presentation, you must turn in a list of your sources.** If you are extremely shy and think this will be a problem, talk to me and we will work something out. This assignment allows students to improve their oral communication skills and engage in self-directed teaching, consistent with the goals of the explorations curriculum.

Writing Two Reaction Papers, either two on an Intervention episode or one on a movie and one on Intervention:

Each student will watch one or two one hour episodes of the TV show “Intervention” (on the A&E network or online). I would like it to be a full hour on one individual, as opposed to two separate individuals with two separate problems. Just make sure that the episode you watch for class deals with substance abuse or addiction and not something else (e.g., an eating disorder or gambling). Please answer the following questions: Describe the person (sex, age, employment, living arrangement, etc.), and what are the problems caused by use/abuse/addiction to the substance? How are family members and friends of this person contributing or not contributing to the problem? How does this person respond to the intervention? If applicable, what is treatment like for this individual? What is the outcome (as far as you know – what does the end of the show report) for this individual? What did you think about the show? Was anything surprising or shocking? If so, what? Using 3 specific examples, citing class notes or text quotes, how was this relevant to class? *For the 2ond Reaction Paper Only: Should I include this assignment again? Why or why not?*

Watching a Drug-Related Movie and Writing a Reaction Paper on it.

In place of the first Intervention Reaction paper, here is an alternate assignment. Drugs and their effects are depicted in many popular movies. For this assignment you will watch one drug-related movie *from a list that I will provide*. Please answer the following questions: Describe the main character(s), e.g. sex, age, employment, living arrangement, etc., and what are the problems caused by use/abuse/addiction to the substance? What did you think of the movie and the portrayal of the drug(s)? What did you like about it and what didn’t you like? What are 3 specific examples, citing class notes or text quotes, of accuracies and/or inaccuracies portrayed in the movie? e.g. The book stated that heroin causes constriction of the pupils (cite text page) but the movie showed dilation of the pupils.

**Grading Expectations:**

Be aware that I have high expectations when it comes to grading papers and presentations. Whenever possible, I grade blind (not knowing who’s paper it is) so I can be as fair as possible. I take a great deal of time making sure I am grading consistently (e.g., taking off the same amount for the same type of error) across all the papers. I do not give out “A”s or “B”s lightly. I believe that just fulfilling the requirements earns you a “C” grade. To get a “B”, you need to go over and above the expectations, and have no major errors. I consider a “B” to be a very good grade. To get an “A”, you need to be far above and beyond the requirements, do something truly unique or outstanding, and have no major errors of any kind. Please keep these things in mind when writing/speaking:

*Clarity of ideas*: What do you mean? Can you say this is a more understandable way? Can you elaborate by giving an example?

*Backing up your ideas*: How do you know this? What is the source for this idea? How do I know this is true?

*Detail*: What else can you tell me about this? What are some other examples? How can you support this idea? How does this apply to other concepts? In short, be thorough!

*Flow/Coherence/Logic*: Do your ideas and topics flow easily from one to another? Do they make sense when seen as a whole and in relation to each other? If not, work on transitions between ideas so it’s clear how it all fits together.

*Writing*: No, this is not an English class, but I consider writing to be very important. Poor grammar or typos are distracting and do not allow you to express your ideas well. Is the writing though, detailed, and concise? Could you better express the idea with fewer words? Are you keeping my attention?

**BSC Resources for Writers**

The Writing Center is located in Hum. 102, and it has a new structure and vibe this year. Two graduate student coordinators will be on site at all times the Writing Center is open to supervise peer tutors and to conduct tutorials themselves, as needed. We will be open Sunday-Thursday late afternoon and evenings, and students do not need an appointment. Tutorials are about 30 minutes long, free of charge, and available on a drop-in basis. Tutors will not proofread or "fix" student papers. They will provide one-on-one consultation about writing issues--small and large--for any student from any major at any point in the writing process. There is no limit to how many tutorials a student may attend. We are here to help!

 Any questions or concerns, please contact the English department faculty liaison, Melinda Thompson.

**BSC Academic Resource Center (ARC)**

The Academic Resource Center (ARC), located on the ground floor of the Library, offers drop-in tutoring and one-on-one assistance for all BSC students. We offer assistance in Accounting, Arabic, Biology, Business, Chemistry, Chinese, Economics, History, Latin, Marketing, Music Theory, Philosophy, Physics, Physiology, Political Science, Psychology, Religion, Sociology, Spanish, and Statistics. Peer tutoring is free and tutors spend an hour or more per one-on-one appointment, and there is no limit to the number of tutoring sessions you can have. Also feel free to stop by during regular drop-in hours (Monday-Thurs, 7- 9 p.m. for assistance without an appointment). For more information or to make an appointment email [arc@bsc.edu](mailto:arc@bsc.edu) or visit the [Academic Resource Center web page](https://www.bsc.edu/academics/arc/index.html)and submit a form. Reach out to us, we can help!

**Academic Accommodations:**Birmingham-Southern College complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations must make their request by contacting the Office of Accessibility in-person, via email (accessibility@bsc.edu), or by calling 205-226-7909. The Office of Accessibility is located in the Counseling and Health Services Suite of Norton Center Room 241. Students who are registered with the Office of Accessibility are responsible for providing faculty with a copy of their accommodation letter and scheduling a meeting to discuss how their approved accommodations will apply to this course. Visit the Office of Accessibility website for additional information or contact Angela Smith at awsmith@bsc.edu.

**Title IX:**Birmingham-Southern College is committed to the creation and maintenance of a safe learning environment for students and the campus community. The College forbids any type of sexual or gender-based misconduct among its students, faculty, and staff. The College encourages all members of the academic community to report suspected sexual and gender-based misconduct to the appropriate authorities so that it can be investigated, remedied, and eliminated. Such misconduct is prohibited whether the actor is a student, faculty member, staff member, contractor, visitor, or another member of the College community. BSC forbids retaliation against any person who has opposed, reported or participated in an investigation concerning sexual or gender-based misconduct.

In accordance with federal policy, all College employees are required to report information related to discrimination and harassment which includes, but is not limited to, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual harassment. For this reason, if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the Title IX coordinator. As a student, you can report allegations of sexual misconduct to officials in Student Development (Assistant Dean of Students, Dana Bekurs; Associate Dean of Students, W. David Miller; Vice President for Student Development, David Eberhardt), Campus Police, or confidential resources in Counseling Services, Health Services, and Religious Life. Please refer to the Title IX section of the BSC website for more information on filing a report and available resources.

**Course Grading**:

Grades will be assigned based on a standard percentage (93-100 is an A, 90-92 is an A-, etc.). Because many grades do not get entered until the end of the semester (e.g., participation, final exam, final paper), some previous students have seemed surprised by their final grade. Please keep this in mind and talk to me *during the semester* if you want to know how you are doing on participation or if you have questions on test or paper grading. I am a stickler for being consistent on grading, as well as making sure scores are added and entered correctly. Therefore, unless there is an *extremely compelling* reason, consider final grades as *final*, and do not call or email with questions about your grade after the course is completed.

Participation 50 points Reaction paper 1 30 points

In the News Presentation 30 points

Exams 300 points Reaction paper 2 30 points

*Total points possible 440 points*

**Course Schedule (subject to change!)**

##### Date Topic / Assignment

T Feb 4 Introduction, Just Say Know, Test your drug knowledge

Th Feb 6 Brain Basics

T Feb 11 Drug Basics

Th Feb 13 Addiction

T Feb 18 Alcohol

Th Feb 20 Alcohol

T Feb 25 *Exam 1*

Th Feb 27 Nicotine

T Mar 3 Caffeine;

Th Mar 5Opiates; *Reaction Paper 1 Due*

T Mar 10 Sedatives

Th Mar 12 Inhalants, Prescription Drug Use

T Mar 17 *Exam 2*

Th Mar 19 Stimulants

T Mar 31 Marijuana

Th Apr 2 Marijuana

T Apr 7 Ecstasy and Herbal Drugs

Th Apr 9 Hallucinogens

T Apr 14 Hallucinogens

Th Apr 16 Steroids

T Apr 21 *Exam 3*

Th Apr 23 Decriminalization and Harm Reduction

T Apr 28 Treatment

Th Apr 30 Legal Issues and Prevention; *Reaction Paper 2 Due*

T May 5 Intervention discussion

**T May 19, 9:00 AM FINAL EXAM**