

HLTH AGE 2L03: Drugs, Sex, and Alcohol: Society and Its Addictions  
Fall 2017

**Instructor:** Dr. Mat Savelli  
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**Office:** Kenneth Taylor Hall Rm 230  
**Office Hours:** Mondays, 2:30-5:20pm

**Course Description:** This course analyzes the place of addiction in modern society. Taking an interdisciplinary perspective, it examines both the social factors that help shape addictive behaviours, as well as those that construct our notions of addiction and dependency. Additionally, the course considers the historical origins of the addiction concept as well as the diversity of contemporary perspectives related to it. Finally, the course includes several substantial case studies to provide students with a broad perspective of the social uses (and abuses) of addiction.

**Course Objectives:** After the course, students should have a basic understanding of the historical evolution of addiction as a concept. They should be able to explain major theories as to what causes addiction, including concepts drawn from psychology, psychiatry, and sociology. They should also develop and demonstrate a firm understanding of how the idea of addiction has been put to use by governments, medical practitioners, corporate entities, and the public more widely. In the process, students should come to realize the complex nature of addiction as an explanatory mechanism. In completing the course, students should gain an appreciation for the major debates that characterize discussions on the relationship between addiction and society.

**Required Texts:**

- 1) All required readings are available on [Avenue to Learn](#).

**Lectures:**

**Week 1 (Sept 6, 7)** - Introductory Perspectives on Addiction

**Week 2 (Sept 11, 14)** - Historical Roots of the Addiction Concept  
Reading: May, "Pathology, Identity, and the Social Construction of Alcohol Dependence"

**Week 3 (Sept 18, 21)** - Theoretical Perspectives on Addressing Addiction  
Reading: Graham et al., "Addiction as a Complex Social Process"

**Week 4 (Sept 25, 28)** - Alcohol: Mass Production and Social Regulation  
Reading: Williamson, "Destigmatizing Alcohol Dependence"

**Week 5 (Oct 2, 5)** - Caffeine: Cultural Ritual or Undiagnosed Addiction?  
Reading: Topik, "Coffee as a Social Drug"

**Reading Week (Oct 9, 12)** - No Classes

**Week 6 (Oct 16, 19)** - MIDTERM (held during both classes)

**Week 7 (Oct 23, 26) – Nicotine: Corporate Obfuscation and Public Power**  
Reading: White, Oliffe, and Bottorff, “Tobacco and the Invention of Quitting”

**Week 8 (Oct 30, Nov 2) – Narcotics: Racialization and Spatialization**  
Reading: Mackenzie, “Feeling Good”

**Week 9 (Nov 6, 9) – Prescription Drugs: Hillbillies and White Collar Workers**  
Reading: Keyes et al., “Understanding the Rural-Urban Differences in Prescription Opioid Use and Abuse”

**Week 10 (Nov 13, 16) – Addiction on Film (Essay due Nov 13)**

**Week 11 (Nov 20, 23) – Sex: from Victorian Masturbation to Pornhub**  
Reading: Clarkson and Kopaczewski, “Pornography Addiction and the Medicalization of Free Speech”

**Week 12 (Nov 27, 30) – Digital Media: Major Problem or Moral Panic?**  
Reading: Tiger, “Celebrity Gossip Blogs”

**Week 13 (Dec 4, 6) – Are We Addicted to Addiction?**  
Reading: Alexander, “The Globalization of Addiction”

**Grade breakdown:**

Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 4% per day.

Online Discussion: 10%

Essay: 32%

Midterm: 25%

Final Exam: 33%

**Midterm and Final Exams:** Both the midterm and final exam will include (a) 10-15 multiple choice questions that cover both the readings and lecture material, and (b) written components that could include short answer or long answer essay questions. Students will have two hours to complete the midterm and final exam. Both the midterm and final are cumulative. Students will be expected to have studied material from the whole of the course.

**Essay:** Students are required to write a 5-6 page essay on one of the topics that will be assigned during class. Students must use a minimum of SIX peer reviewed sources. Papers should be cited in full using APA referencing style. All papers should include a title page with the question clearly stated, as well as a bibliography.

**Online Discussion:** Students will be divided up into groups and must participate in an online discussion hosted on Avenue to Learn. Students will be assigned FOUR different questions based on readings or online videos. Each student is expected to post a response consisting of roughly 200 words to each question. You may comment in reference to your fellow students’ postings, or you may post your own thoughts. All four questions MUST be answered by the day of the last lecture.

### Other Crucial Course Notes

- 1) Do not email the course instructor or TAs via Avenue to Learn. Direct all communication to our McMaster email addresses from your McMaster address.
- 2) Students making use of MSAFs will have to complete all assignments at a later date. In other words, there is no chance that the grade for missed assignments or tests will be tacked onto the final exam.
- 3) There will be absolutely no leniency on plagiarism. Don't copy and paste anything directly into your essay...even if you cite it!

If you require this information in an alternate/accessible format, please contact the Department of Health, Aging & Society at 905.525.9140 ext. 27227 or [hasdept@mcmaster.ca](mailto:hasdept@mcmaster.ca).

Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities: Students who require academic accommodations must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652, or by email at [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca). For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation for Students with

Disabilities: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-StudentsWithDisabilities.pdf>

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

**Avenue to Learn:** Course material will be posted on Avenue to Learn. Please check the site often to keep informed of important course information or announcements.

**Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy:** Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Email Forwarding in MUGSI: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html>

\*Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link

### **Academic Integrity**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.