

AM421-30 The Drug Trade in the Americas

21/22

Department

History

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Benjamin Smith

Credit value

30

Assessment

60% coursework, 40% exam

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This final year Advanced Option module, which looks at the production, trade, and prohibition of narcotics throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, seeks to contextualize the current situation, teasing out the social, economic, and political effects of the drug trade and its US-led opposition.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

- To introduce students to the history of the Latin American drug trade.
- To explore the history of the production, trade, and prohibition of narcotics throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
- To contextualize the current situation regarding the Latin American drug trade, teasing out the social, economic, and political effects of the drug trade and its US-led opposition.
- To focus on the history of marijuana, opium, and cocaine as commodities, particularly their production in the Mexican sierra, the Peruvian region of Huallaga and the Bolivian region of Yungas.
- To consider how global and local technological advances, shifts in foreign demand and local political and socio-economic structures shaped the Latin American drug trade in individual

regions.

- To examine the attempts to regulate the Latin American drug industry from early twentieth-century prohibition to the contemporary war on drugs, integrating analysis of US planning, national and regional implementation, and its effects.
- To discuss relevant issues of Latin American culture.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Term 1

1. Introduction
2. The Global Drug Trade
3. The Early US Drug trade
4. Mid-century US Drug Control, Harry Anslinger, and the Federal Bureau of Narcotics
5. Drugs and the the U.S. Counterculture
6. Reading Week
7. U.S. Drug Policy Today: Race, Policing, and the Prison State
8. Peruvian Cocaine
9. The rise of the Colombian "cartels"
10. Radical Politics, US Foreign Policy and the Drug Trade in Colombia

Term 2

1. Democratization and Violence in Brazil
2. Youth gangs in Central America
3. The Early Mexican trade, (1890-1960)
4. Beatniks and hippies in Mexico (1960-1970)
5. The First War on Drugs (1970-1980)
6. Reading Week
7. The Rise of the Cartels and the Role of the State (1980-2000)
8. The Drug War (2006-2019)
9. Narcoculture
10. Civil society, democracy, and violence in Mexico

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a systematic knowledge and understanding of the history of the production, trade, and prohibition of narcotics in the United States and Latin America throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries
- Critically analyse and evaluate a broad range of primary sources relating to the US and Latin American drug trade, US and Latin American culture, and the history of marijuana, opium, and cocaine as commodities
- Effectively communicate ideas, and make informed, coherent and persuasive arguments,

relating to the history of the Latin American drug trade and the effects of US drug policy

- Critically review and consolidate theoretical, methodological, and historiographical ideas relating to the history of the US and Latin American drug trade.

Indicative reading list

- Elijah Wald's *Narcocorrido*
- Mark Edberg's *El Narcotraficante*
- Ioan Grillo, *El Narco*
- Oliver Villar and Drew Cottle, *Cocaine, Death Squads, and the War on Terror*
- George Grayson, *Mexico: Narco-Violence and a Failed State?*
- F. Thoumi's *Political Economy & Illegal Drugs in Colombia*
- Paul Gootenberg (ed.), *Cocaine: Global Histories* (London: Routledge, 2001)
- Paul Gootenberg, *Andean Cocaine: The making of a global drug* (London: Routledge, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2008)
- Isaac Campos, *Homegrown: Marijuana and the Origins of Mexico's War on Drugs* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012)
- Victoria Malkin, *Narcotrafficking, migration, and modernity in rural Mexico*, *Latin American Perspectives*, 28, pp 101-128
- Dominic Streatfeild, *Cocaine: An Unauthorized Biography* (London: Picador, 2001)
- Elaine Carey, "Selling is More of a Habit than Using": *Narcotraficante Lola la Chata and Her Threat to Civilization, 1930-1960* in *Journal of Women's History*, 21.2 (Summer 2009)
- Robin Kirk, *More terrible than death: War, drugs, and America's war in Colombia* (New York: Perseus, 2003)
- Coletta Youngers, Eileen Rosin (eds.) *Drugs and democracy in Latin America: the impact of U.S. policy* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2005)
- David F. Musto, *The American Disease: Origins of Narcotic Control* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
- Howard Campbell, *Drug War Zone: Frontline Dispatches from the Streets of El Paso and Juárez* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009)

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Subject specific skills

See learning outcomes.

Transferable skills

See learning outcomes.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	18 sessions of 2 hours (90%)
Tutorials	4 sessions of 1 hour (10%)
Total	40 hours

Private study description

History modules require students to undertake extensive independent research and reading to prepare for seminars and assessments. As a rough guide, students will be expected to read and prepare to comment on three substantial texts (articles or book chapters) for each seminar taking approximately 3 hours. Each assessment requires independent research, reading around 6-10 texts and writing and presenting the outcomes of this preparation in an essay, review, presentation or other related task.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group D1

	Weighting	Study time
Seminar contribution	10%	
1500 word essay	10%	
3000 word essay	40%	
7 day take-home assessment	40%	

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback provided via Tabula; optional oral feedback in office hours.

[Past exam papers for AM421](#)

Availability

Courses

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 4 of UITA-R3V2 Undergraduate History and Italian