Psychoactive substances have played an outsized role in the modern history of the Americas. As marijuana is being decriminalized, our class will ask how the Americas have been embroiled in a war on the habits of its peoples. In our first unit, we will consider how the coca leaf, one of the defining symbols of indigenous culture in the Andes, has been transformed into cocaine, an international villain. In the second unit, we will look at the ways in which production units and commercial routes have adapted to the growing appetites of American consumers. We will use Eric Hobsbawm’s work on social banditry to understand the role that drug traffickers play within their communities, and to explain the source of their power. In our final unit, we will ask how the “War on Drugs” has changed the U.S. and Latin America, and consider whether we are currently at a historical watershed in the world’s relationship with drugs. As we refine our analytical and writing skills, we will also spend some time on meditation, with the goal of better understanding our own minds, and cultivating concentration and equanimity.
Main Readings


Assignments
1. In each unit, you will submit two short (one-page) response papers. Each of these papers is designed to help you build one skill, which you will need in order to write your essays.
2. You will submit a draft of each of the three larger essays. On each draft, you’ll receive detailed comments from me (in writing and in 1-1 conferences).
3. You will include a cover letter with each essay draft. In this short letter, state your research question and your thesis; mention what you are still trying to figure out; what aspect of your research is not yet completed; and what parts of the essay you think you need help with.
4. We will have an in-class draft workshop after you submit each draft. For this workshop, I will choose two students’ drafts, and we will look at them closely. In preparation for the workshops, you will submit written comments on the students’ work. The comments you will provide will help you become better editors of your own work.
5. We will meet for a 15-25 minute conference after each draft you submit, and talk about strategies for revising your essay. Missed conferences may not be rescheduled.
6. The key to good writing is revision. Thus, you will revise each of your drafts before submitting a final version of the essay for a grade.
7. You will submit three academic essays. Essay 1 is a 4-5 page discussion of the criminalization of cocaine. In Essay 2, you will use the analytical framework that Eric Hobsbawm developed in *Bandits* to explore the lives of the criminals we will look at. (This is essay will be no longer than 7 pages). In Essay 3, you will examine any subject related to the War on Drugs. In this 8-12 page essay, you will develop your own argument, using primary and secondary sources of your choice. Descriptions of these assignments will be found on our Canvas site (under Assignments), and we will discuss each of them in class.

Other Policies
- **Grading:** I will grade only the last version of your essays, not the drafts. The overall course grade will be determined as follows:

  Attendance and Participation: 12.5%
  Paper 1: 20%
  Paper 2: 30%
  Paper 3: 37.5%

- **Attendance and participation:** The policy of the Harvard College Writing Program is as follows. If you miss more than one class without the excuse of a religious holiday or illness, you will receive a formal warning letter, copied to your Freshman Dean. If you then miss another class without a legitimate excuse, you are eligible to be officially excluded from the course and failed. Please note that absences to participate in athletic or other extracurricular activities are not excusable. If you have to be absent for a religious holiday or other important event, please speak to me before the date you will be away.
Participation is the key to our class’ success. I expect you to come to class having done the readings, and having submitted the response papers.

- **Deadlines:** Our class will move very quickly, so you must submit work on time. I will only accept late work if the student contacts me to request an extension *well in advance* of the deadline, and has a compelling reason. Otherwise late work will receive a significant grade penalty.

- **Completion of Work:** The policy of the Harvard College Writing Program is as follows: You must complete all three of the required courses essays (including drafts) in order to pass the course. All work must be completed by the relevant deadline unless you have made *prior* arrangements with me for an extension. If you then miss the extended deadline, you may be excluded from the course.

- **Collaboration Among Students:** Developing or refining ideas in conversation with other students, and through peer review of written work (including feedback from Writing Center tutors) is recommended. If you would like to acknowledge the impact someone had on your essay, it is customary to do this in a footnote at the beginning of the paper. As stated in the Student Handbook, “You do not need to acknowledge discussion with others of general approaches to the assignment or assistance with proofreading.” However, all work submitted for this course must be your own: in other words, writing response papers, drafts, or revisions with other students is expressly forbidden.

- **Academic Honesty:** All work submitted for this course must be your own work. Any outside sources you use must be cited properly. Any student submitting plagiarized work is eligible to fail the course and will be referred to the college’s Administrative Board for further disciplinary action, including expulsion from the university. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, consult the relevant sections of *Harvard Guide to Using Sources* and/or speak with the instructor.

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**Unit 1 – Prohibition**

**Wed, Sept 6**
Watch: [Prohibition Episode 1](#) (online streaming through Hollis link. Make sure to disable Ghostery or the link will not work. Alternatively, trying opening the link in a different browser.)

* Fill in a student introduction form. Upload the form on Canvas (Assignments >> Student Introductions).

** Having uploaded your introduction form, come meet me for a 5-min chat.

**Mon, Sept 11**

*** Response paper 1: "What is Gootenberg’s thesis?" due Tuesday, Sept 12, at 9pm. Upload your paper to Canvas (assignments >> Response paper 1.)
Wed, Sept 13
Read: Gootenberg, Andean Cocaine, Ch. 3 and 5.

*** Draft of Essay 1 Due Thursday, Sep 15, 5pm. (Upload it to Assignments >> Essay 1 Draft. )***

Mon, Sept 18
Watch: Prohibition, Episode 2.

Wed, Sept 20
Essay 1 Workshop:
Read and comment on students’ drafts. Bring two hard copies of your comments on each student's draft to class.
* Optional: watch: Prohibition, Episode 3

*** 1-1 conferences with me will be held between Tuesday and Friday. Please sign up on the class scheduler (Canvas >> Calendar >> Scheduler). Sign up early for the meeting.

Unit 2 – Social Narcos?

Mon, Sept 25
1. Read: Mezz Mezzrow, excerpt from Really the Blues
2. Watch: NYTimes RetroReport: LSD's Long, Strange Trip

*** Response paper 2: Bring three hardcopies of your introduction, as it currently stands, to class. Underline all the pieces of information that you think are vital. We will spend time in class workshopping these introductions.

Wed, Sept 27
Watch: News From a Personal War (Noticias de uma guerra particular). Kátia Lund, Dir. (Brazil, 1999).

Your revised Essay 1 is due on September 29, at 5pm. (To upload: Assignments >> Essay 1 -- Revised Essay Upload) ***
**Mon, Oct 2**

*** Response Paper 3: What’s a Social Bandit? Due Tuesday, Oct 3, 9pm.***

**Wednesday, Oct 4**
Read: Banits, Ch. 4-6 and 9.

*** Mon, October 9 – Columbus Day – No Classes ***

*** Response Paper 4: Primary and secondary sources. Due Tuesday, October 10, 9pm.***

**Wed, Oct 11**
Watch: *The Two Escobars* (Documentary). Jeff and Michael Zimbalist, dirs. (USA, 2010)

*** Essay 2 Draft due Friday, Oct 13, 5pm. ***

**Mon, Oct 16**

**Wed, Oct 18**
Draft workshop (bring two hard copies of your critiques of other students' essays).

*** 1-1 conferences with me will be held Tues, Oct 17 through Fri, Oct 20. Please sign up early for a conference on Canvas scheduler.***

**Mon, Oct 23**
No reading – work on your essays.

**Wed, Oct 25**
Class visit to Lamont (no reading). Class meets at the lobby of Lamont Library. Please be prompt.

***Your revised Essay 2 is due on Friday, Oct 27, at 5pm ***
Unit 3: War

Mon, Oct 30
Watch: Cocaine Cowboys. Billy Corben, Dir. (Documentary: USA, 2006)

*** Response Paper 5: 1-paragraph proposal for final essay. Due Tues, Oct 31, 9pm. ***

Wed, Nov 1
Read: Scott and Marshall, Ch. 2 and 4.

Mon, Nov 6

*** Response Paper 6: Revised essay proposal and Annotated Bibliography. Due Tuesday, Nov 7, 9pm ***

Wed, Nov 8
*** No class will be held. Instead, we will hold workshops in groups of 4-5 students. Please sign up early on the Canvas scheduler. Bring 5 hardcopies of your annotated bibliography. ***

Mon, Nov 13

Wed, Nov 15
Read: Margaret Talbot, “The Addict Next Door,” The New Yorker, June 5 and 12, 2017. (Canvas)

Mon, Nov 20
No Reading – Work on your drafts.

*** A draft of Essay 3 is due Tuesday, Nov 21, 5pm. ***

*** Thanksgiving Recess – November 22-26 ***
Mon, Nov 27
Read: Global Commission on Drug Policy, "Taking Control: Pathways to Drug Policies that Work" (2014).

Wed, Nov 29
Last class!
Discussion: watershed on drug policy? (Please bring a laptop to this class.)

*** Instead of 1-1 conferences, we will hold small workshops with 4 students each, between Wednesday, Nov 29 through Friday, Dec 1. Please sign up for these workshops early. Come prepared to the workshop with hard copies of your friends’ drafts. ***

*** Revised final essay due date TBA ***