

Anthropology of Addiction (ANTHS-202)

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Office hours: By appointment or drop-in
(usually in office 11:00-12:45)

Course Introduction: Addiction, addict, and addicted are terms frequently used to talk about a wide range of behaviors. At the innocuous end we are casually addicted (or like to say we are!) to coffee, social media, or chocolate - and typically suffer few, if any, consequences for such "addictions." Of greater social and individual concern are addictions to alcohol, tobacco, gambling, or body modification. Finally, the "addict" exists as a label for individuals whose addicted behavior is understood as destructive, damaging, and likely to eventually end in death for themselves and others. Yet what do we really know about addiction? Especially when its use as a definitional category spans such a range of substances, actions, social positions, and outcomes. This course looks at addiction from a variety of perspectives to better understand this complex term and cultural concept.



This is also a course designed to give you academic competence in the methods required for designing, researching, writing, and revising an independent research paper. All students are required to actively participate in each class session - this includes completing the required readings, coming to class prepared to discuss those readings, and conducting research outside of class for the final paper.

Course Goals:

- 1) Develop the ability to think critically about our topic (as well as generally): Critical thinking skills are essential to actively engaging our texts (or any text for that matter) as well as in developing problem solving skills for any situation. You are not only required to read the assigned material but participate in active discussions of its larger themes, claims, and arguments.
- 2) Develop and write on a research topic: By the end of the term, you will have produced an original **4,000+** word essay that analyzes an issue pertaining to addiction that interests you. This assignment requires that you integrate concepts

from the course into your own research, so you need to keep up with both the reading and the assignments throughout the term.

Grading: Three major components are used to determine your grade in this course:

1) In-class participation (10% of final grade) - The class will be divided into three groups, each of which will take turns playing three roles in class: 1) question-askers, 2) question-answers, and 3) question-critiquers.

At the beginning of each discussion, the question-askers will present the readings, highlighting the major argumentative points, relevant examples, and other pertinent points (approximately 15 minutes). They will end with discussion questions that the question-answerers respond to. Finally, the critiquers will play the role of “devil’s advocate” and offer counter-points to what has already been said.



It’s a little complicated initially, but in essence what this means is that sometimes you will need to finish the readings a few days in advance and prepare a presentation of the material that generates/ facilitates discussion. Each group is encouraged to be creative in how they present the material (simply reviewing what the author said is boring for you and everyone else).

2) Exams (40% of final grade) - We will have two online essay exams. You must author an original and argumentative essay that incorporates course readings to support your position. You will be given sample essay questions a week in advance to help prepare for the exam.

3) Research project (50% of final grade) -

Topics and preliminary bibliography	5%
Proposal	5%
Draft Thesis and outline	5%
Annotated bibliography	5%
Draft introduction	5%
Complete draft	10%
Final research paper	15%

Grades are calculated using a 100 point scale, so class participation is worth 10 points, the exams 40 points (20 points each), and the various components of your research project totals 50 points.

Policies:

1) **Academic honesty/integrity** - a crucial component of the research process. All students will practice these tenets as outlined by RHIT in all class related activities. Notably, plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form and punished to the severest extent possible.

2) **Attendance** - is required and while I'm not going to formally take attendance, your participation in class discussions is a graded component of the course. That participation will also serve as a record of your attendance. If you are going to be absent contact me in advance via email or during office hours to discuss the situation.

3) **Civil, critical discussion** - I advocate classroom discussion as a tool for fostering critical thinking and intellectually stimulating exchange. Disagreement is also a potential component of such exchanges. Such disagreements are healthy, but must also be treated appropriately. No student will be targeted or maligned, either in class or out by any member of our group, for expressing an opinion that digresses from your own. Additionally, constructive criticism is encouraged as a tool in fostering substantial intellectual exchange.

Required texts:

1. *Addicted to Christ: Remaking Men in Puerto Rican Pentecostal Drug Ministries* (2018), by Helena Hansen
2. *Getting Wrecked: Women, Incarceration, and the American Opioid Crisis* (2019) by Kimberly Sue
3. *Governing Habits: Treating Alcoholism in the Post-Soviet Clinic* (2016) by Eugene Raikhel
4. Articles as assigned and circulated

Course Schedule

Week zero: Course introduction (August 31 and September 1)

TH: Course introduction, syllabus, and goals

F: What is Addiction? - students assigned to discussion groups

Readings for the week: 1) Alexander's *Vancouver As Prototype* and *Addiction*₁, *Addiction*₂, *Addiction*₃, *Addiction*₄..., 2) Maté's *The Keys of Paradise: Addiction as a Flight from Distress*

Week one: Course introduction (September 4, 5, 7, and 8)

M: Addiction throughout history

T: Discussion of individual research topics

TH: The current state of addiction research

F: Discussion of readings (*including Week zero!*) - Group #1 question-askers, #2 question-answers, and #3 question-critiques

Readings for the week: 1) *Addicted to Christ* - Introduction - ch. 2 (pages 1-72)

Week two: The history of addiction (September 11, 12, 14, and 15)

M: Library excursion #1

T: The proposal - what is it, why its important, and what it does / discussion of topics

TH: Addiction and boundary creation

F: Discussion of readings - Group #2 question-askers, #3 question-answers, and #1 question-critiquers - **Topic and preliminary bibliography (5 sources) due**

Readings for the week: 1) *Addicted to Christ* - ch. 3 - ch. 5 (pages 73-133)

Week three: Addiction and boundary creation (September 18, 19, 21, and 22)

M: The ethics of research

T: Addiction and treatment

TH: Peer review exercise - **proposal due. BRING 4 COPIES!**

F: Discussion of readings - Group #3 question-askers, #1 question-answers, and #2 question-critiques

Readings for the week: 1) *Addicted to Christ* - ch. 6 - ch. 7 (pages 134-166) 2) O'Malley et. al *Methamphetamine, amphetamine, and aggression in humans: A systematic review of drug administration studies* (2022)

Week four: Policing addiction (September 25, 26, 28, and 29)

M: Library/research excursion #2

T: Academic theory and addiction

TH: *Through a Blue Lens*

F: Discussion of readings - Group #1 question-askers, #2 question-answers, and #3 question-critiquers

Readings for the week: 1) *Getting Wrecked* ch. 1-3 (pages 1-83)

Week five: Addiction and the law (October 2 and 3)

M: The evolving legality of marijuana in America

T: **Exam #1**

Readings for the week: 1) *Getting Wrecked* ch. 1-3 (pages 1-83)

Fall break!

Week six: Exam #1 / - America's most dangerous drug(s)? (October 9, 10, 12, and 13)

M: The public presence of the addict

T: Meth to fentanyl - fear, and profits - **Annotated bibliography from library research due**

TH: Peer review exercise - **Draft thesis and outline due BRING 4 COPIES!**

F: Discussion of readings - Group #2 question-askers, #3 question-answers, and #1 question-critiquers

Readings for the week: 1) *Getting Wrecked* ch. 4-6 (pages 84-161)

Week seven: Shopping, the Internet, and gambling (October 16, 17, 19, and 20)

M: The boundaries of addiction - are we all addicts?

T: Non-substance based addiction

TH: Peer review exercise - **Draft introduction due. BRING 4 COPIES!**

F: Discussion of readings - Group #3 question-askers, #1 question-answers, and #2 question-critiques

Readings for the week: 1) *Getting Wrecked* ch. 7-8 (pages 162-201)

Week eight: The junky (October 23, 24, 26, and 27)

M: Deaths of Despair

T: Prescription drugs and America's opioid epidemic

TH: Peer review exercise - **Complete draft due - BRING 4 COPIES!**

F: Discussion of readings - Group #2 question-askers, #3 question-answers, and #1 question-critiques

Readings for the week: 1) *Governing Habits* Introduction - ch. 3 (pages 1-103) 2) Alexander's *Addiction as a Way of Adapting to Dislocation*

Week nine: Addiction and popular culture (October 30, 31, November 2, and 3)

M: The addict in popular culture

T: *Breaking Bad*, *Narcos*, and depictions of addiction

TH: Discussion of *Breaking Bad*, *Everything Must Go* and how is addiction presented in film

F: **Exam #2**

Readings for the week: 1) *Governing Habits* ch. 4 - Conclusion (pages 104-184)

Viewing assignment: Watch *Everything Must Go* and *Breaking Bad* season 2 episode 12 - *Phoenix* - how are addicts depicted in this episode (you are of course free to watch or re-watch any other episodes to compliment this one)

Week ten: Research presentations (November 6, 7, 9, and 10)

M: Paper presentations

T: Paper presentations

TH: Paper presentations

F: Paper presentations

Presentations will be academic conference style (approximately 5 minutes with a brief q&a period to follow). While presenting your papers, do not simply read them, that will take too long and bore everyone (including yourself). Instead, prepare a presentation appropriate to the time length and audience.

FINAL PAPER DUE BY MIDNIGHT ON 11/10