Department of Justice, Law and Society
School of Public Affairs
The American University

Spring 2010

DRUGS, CONSCIOUSNESS AND HUMAN FULFILLMENT – JLS.301.001

Thursdays 2:10 PM to 4:50 PM
Ward 101

Faculty: Dr. Jeffrey A. Schaler
schaler@american.edu
http://www.schaler.net
Office: #255, Dept. of Justice, Law and Society, Ward Building, 2nd floor
Telephone: 202.885.3667

Office hours: (Please send an email to make an appointment — no walk-ins)
Graduate Teaching Assistants: Ms. Stefanie Parker sp2011a@american.edu and
Mr. Andrew Lewis, andy.lewis@american.edu

Course Description

[From the catalogue: "Positive approaches to achieving alternative states of consciousness with and without drugs; the nonaddictive use of addicting drugs; a balanced assessment of the latest findings on the dangers and benefits of the most widely used nonopiate recreational drugs, such as marijuana, tobacco, caffeine, alcohol, quaaludes, and cocaine; choices for individuals and society regarding the use and control of the substances."]

Most people believe alcohol and illegal drugs cause "addiction." They believe addiction is involuntary and characterized by "loss of control" over alcohol and drug consumption. They also believe addiction is a "treatable disease." If you disagree and/or challenge those ideas, you are likely to be labeled ignorant at best and a heretic at worst. In this course, you will comprehend the fiction about drugs and addiction masquerading as fact, and the fact about drugs and addiction many people regard as fiction.

Together, we will examine accurate versus inaccurate definitions of addiction: You will understand the analytic and synthetic truth about addiction. We will review empirical evidence supporting the idea that people use drugs to change their perception of themselves and the world for existential and psychological reasons, not necessarily for chemical or biological reasons. We will investigate the scientific validity of the claim that addiction is a treatable disease.

We will also examine the religious, moral, and ethical bases of drug use, for example, how alcohol and drug use becomes a "central activity" in a person's life—and why. We will review how illegal mind-altering drugs and their users are scapegoats and victims of religious and political persecution. Drawing on philosophical, psychoanalytic, sociological, and psychological perspectives, we will investigate existential explanations for why people choose to use drugs as a way to attempt to escape from reality and what it means to be an autonomous, "heroic," or "self-actualized" person. Finally, we will examine Buddhist perspectives on the nature of human suffering and what we can do about it.

In this course you will learn

(1) how drug use is a way to avoid coping with life;
(2) how drug use is a form of self-deception;
(3) how drug use is a religious activity;
(4) how treatment for addiction is a religious activity;
(5) how thinking about drug addiction as a disease is a form of self-deception;
(6) a Buddhist perspective on contemporary psychology and psychiatry to increase understanding of self-imposed suffering and problems-in-living usually labeled "mental illness" and addiction disease;
(7) new ways of self-examination leading to greater consciousness and human fulfillment.

Lecture and discussion format.

Course Objectives

- To improve the student's scientific and psychologically-oriented thinking about drugs, consciousness and human fulfillment.
- To evaluate the evidence supporting and contesting the idea that addiction exists, is characterized by involuntariness, and is treatable.
- To explore the sociological basis for the conventional wisdom about addiction, with particular emphasis on the nature and practice of scapegoating.
- To understand what happens in voluntary and involuntary treatment for drug addiction.
- To understand philosophical, psychoanalytic, and psychological perspectives on why people choose to use mind-altering drugs.
- To comprehend the meaning of being an existentially-heroic individual.
- To learn about Buddhist perspectives on human suffering and their relation to contemporary western psychological perspectives.
- To develop skill in debating these and related controversial issues in public policy settings.

Required Texts

- Becker, E. (1997). *The denial of death*. New York: Free Press. ISBN: 0684832402
- Leifer, R. (1997). *The happiness project: Transforming the three poisons that cause the suffering we inflict on ourselves and others*. Ithaca, N.Y: Snow Lion Press. **You MUST purchase this book on your own**. The AU bookstore does not carry it because it is out of publication. Find it used or new on Amazon.com, or another online bookstore, **NOW**. You must have this book for the course. ISBN: 1559390794
- Schaler, J.A. (2000). *Addiction is a choice*. Chicago: Open Court. ISBN: 081269404X
- Steele, D.R. (2008). *Atheism explained: From folly to philosophy*. Chicago: Open Court. ISBN: 13: 978-0-8126-9637-0
- Szasz, T. (2003). *Ceremonial chemistry: The ritual persecution of drugs, addicts, and pushers*. Publisher: Syracuse University Press; Rev edition. ISBN: 0815607687

Course Requirements and Grades

Paper	50%	
Final exam	50%	
Class participation	*20%* →	Note: You **must** do the CP assignment. There is no grade for it. It is just a required part of the course. If the assignment is not completed, the final grade is reduced by twenty
Total =	100%	

percent. The Blackboard access is terminated after the last week CPs are due.

Note: Throughout this course you must abide by Virchow and Szasz's definition of a disease; Disease refers to cellular abnormality, a physical lesion (wound). In other words, you must abide by a pathologist's definition of disease, not that of mental health professionals. This has nothing to do with denying the existence of disturbing, abnormal, or irrational behavior. We are simply abiding by the empirical and scientific meaning when it comes to defining and describing disease.

Description of course requirements

You are going to learn an important model in this course that was developed by Professor Schaler. Some of you have used it in other courses of mine: It is called the "three-step model of policy analysis." Throughout the course, refer back to this model. Whatever it is that you are reading in books, articles that I post for you to read, lectures, discussions, the topic and what we are focusing on fits somewhere in this model. The three-step model is an intellectual compass. It will help you not only in this course, but in other courses you are and will be taking.

First, there is what I call a "**phenomenon of interest**." The phenomenon of interest for the course could be anything, "mental illness," "addiction," and so on. We are learning about, comprehending, explaining, and determining the efficacy of policy in light of how the three steps relate to one another → all concerning the phenomenon of interest. So, with the phenomenon of interest " addiction," the model looks like this:

Step One: We must **describe and define addiction.** Describe is different from define. Describe and define are different from "explain." Never confuse explanations for **addiction** with description and definition of **addiction**. We are concerned with the description and definition of **addiction**. We do not want to confuse description and definition with theories about why **addiction** occurs, or what we call "explanations for **addiction**." We are interested in explanations for **addiction**, they are tremendously important to comprehending and evaluating policy, we just don't want to confuse explanation with description and definition. How do the drugs get into the body? Are we talking about behavior or disease? Study the meaning of behavior. We are using the Virchowian definition of disease → Disease = cellular abnormality. This is also the definition that pathologists use. We are ***not*** using the definition of disease frequently used by members of the mental health profession. To the extent that we are concerned with medicine in this course we are concerned with, and differentiate, scientific medicine not/from clinical medicine. Everything that is in *the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) is part of Step One. This is because the *DSM* describes many diverse behaviors. It does not explain why the behavior occurs.

We will also discuss and **you will learn about the difference between public and private health**. Both are concerned with disease. One way of remembering the difference is that a true public health problem is phenomena whereby you can contract a disease simply by being in the vicinity of another. Private health problems are the result of a consensual relationship where contracting a disease is a potential risk of the relationship. Catching *herpes genitalis* from having consensual sex with someone is a private health problem or risk. Catching *swine flu* virus simply by breathing the air in a contagious person's vicinity is a public

health problem or issue. You didn't do anything to contract the disease but be in the vicinity, be near a person who was contagious. We will discuss many other examples.

Step Two: Explanations. Why does **addiction** occur? We will examine four domains of explanation: Religious or theological; Biological/genetic; Psychological; and Sociocultural. The biological and genetic explanatory paradigms are most popular here, however, this has not always been so, and it is unlikely to remain this way. Much of what you may have learned elsewhere regarding the truth about neurotransmitters and genes or mutations of genes as causes of **addiction** and mental illness may not be true. We will examine the evidence supporting claims regarding each of these explanations. It is up to you to decide what you think makes the most sense.

Step Three: Policy. What do we do about **addiction**. Keep in mind that one of the policies can always be doing nothing, that is, leaving people alone. Policy here means what we do about **addiction** and the people who are labeled addicts.

We are concerned with policy in four domains: **The legal domain**, meaning, **to what extent does addiction exculpate criminal behavior**? Here we are concerned about variations on addiction as an insanity defense, and court-ordered treatment for addiction as involuntary commitment and situations where the state is trying to dictate self concept, beliefs, religious thinking. **The second domain is concerned with clinical treatment**. If we regard addiction as a "treatable disease," or even just a treatable problem in living, what approaches are best? Do any treatment approaches actually work? **The third area of policy** is concerned with what we call **"informal social control,"** in sociology, or what we shall refer to here as "social policy." There are two areas we are especially concerned with here: relational forms of social control and self control. Remember that when it comes to social policy, or informal social control, we are not talking about the involvement of the state. And finally, the fourth area of policy that we are focusing on in this course is referred to as **"formal social control"** by sociologists, or public policy. Here we are talking about the involvement of the state in controlling addiction. Does the State have any business "inside a citizen's head?" Moreover, why just addiction to drugs? Why not addiction to any number of activities or belief systems that ultimately become self destructive or a danger to others?

So, this is the three-step model that we will constantly return to in terms of comprehending addiction, explaining it, and comprehending the relationship between explanations and policy in each of the four domains mentioned. If you are ever lost in terms of material we are covering, always go back to this three-step model and find out where you are stuck in the model. Then ask the professor or teaching assistant for help if you need more assistance. The three-step model makes learning this very new and different perspective easy and fun. If you have been in class with Dr. Schaler before, you learned the three step model with mental illness as the phenomenon of interest. The process is the same here. The content is slightly different. However, addiction, according to conventional wisdom, is a type of mental illness. There are socially acceptable addictions and socially unacceptable ones.

<u>Paper</u>:
You are free to write about anything you want, as long as it is somehow related to what we read and discuss in the course. You must follow the instructions regarding format, though.
No page limit. You decide how long your paper should be. Most students submit papers between six and ten pages long. Your paper must have the following sections in it: A title

page, an introduction – containing your thesis, or the purpose of your paper. A section containing operational terms and definitions, if needed. A literature review (your opinion must be absent from this section. You include only the opinion of others). A discussion section, where you analyze and interpret your findings in the literature review (your opinion is appropriate for this section—no colloquialisms, or "casualisms," please). A summary/conclusion followed by your references, which begin on a separate page at the end.

Note: Each of the other sections do not begin on a separate page, except for the title page and your introduction. You must use American Psychological Association style/format. (Find APA format guidelines on the web. There is only one version of APA format. If someplace suggests a different version, it is not the correct version. We will go over all of these requirements the first week of class.

Keep the following points in mind regarding your paper:

- Take into consideration the relationship between liberty and responsibility, a positive correlation as discussed in class, not a negative correlation.
- Yes, focusing on all the existential issues, issues concerning religion and atheism, Buddism, etcetera, are all fine to focus on. If you search the terms "religion," "religious thinking," "spiritual thinking," "spiritual," and so on in one of the regular databases for the social sciences you will find plenty of empirical research as well as analytic research. Consider: Are atheists or theists more or less anxious knowing that they have a terminal illness, or that they are dying?
- For those of you especially interested in the lectures Dr. Schaler gives on existentialism, see Irwin Yalom's book entitled *Existential Psychotherapy*. New York: Basic Books.
- All references to literal disease are consistent with the definition of disease by pathologists and nosologists, that is, disease is a lesion of the physical body, cellular abnormality, defined primarily by signs, not symptoms. Disease is defined as by Rudolf Virchow in his nineteenth century classic *Cellular Pathology*. Behavior is a metaphorical disease, not a literal disease. You must differentiate between metaphorical and literal disease if you are ever to refer to behavior as disease.
- Your paragraphs must neither be too short nor too long. Each paragraph should be able to stand alone.
- Make sure you have smooth and logical transition from sentence to sentence and from paragraph to paragraph.
- Make sure you keep people, possession, and time parallel. For example, if you begin a sentence speaking in the plural and present tense, don't follow up in the same sentence using the singular and past tense.
- Make sure each sentence is a complete sentence.
- Make sure you differentiate between factual material and your opinion. Your opinion is fine, however, do not express your opinion as if it is fact. Use qualifiers like "in my opinion," to be clear to your reader.
- If you cite a source within the text, make sure you **use APA format**. If you don't know what APA format is, go to the library or purchase the APA Manual of Style. In-text citation is like this (Smith, 1969), and only like that. Not, (Smith, p. 46). It's always author's last name, year of publication, and if necessary, the page numbers, like this (Smith, 1969: pp. 12-15).

- Do not use footnotes.
- Do not cite material in the reference section that you did not cite in-text. Do not cite material in-text that you do not cite in the reference section. The reference section is on its own page.
- Make sure your name is on the first page. Give your paper a short and descriptive title. Make sure each page is numbered, centered, at the bottom of each page.
- Do not quote more than two lines of material. Paraphrase material in your own words, then reference it from the source it came from.
- Keep your writing and language formal, no colloquialisms.
- Keep a copy of your paper.
- Your paper may be selected to be run through turnitin.com, to check for originality. This can also lead to suspicions regarding plagiarism. You may use turnitin.com to check your own paper.
- You may not use past papers written for other classes, in part or whole. Doing so violates the academic integrity code.
- Avoid using the pronoun "I".
- Do not cite Professor Schaler. You may address ideas in class, of course, but neither praise nor attack persons in your paper. Focus on ideas.

This is a short research paper. You must have the following sections clearly indicated with these headings: **Introduction; Operational Terms and Definitions (if needed); Literature Review; Discussion; Summary/Conclusion**. Do not put your opinion in the literature review. Your opinion goes in the second half of the Discussion section, plus, Summary/Conclusion. **You must use APA (American Psychological Association) format**. Make sure your in-text citations are correctly cited as per APA, and your references in the end are EXACTLY APA format. No paper length—you decide—however, you must use the section headings. Further instructions will be handed out or talked about in class, if needed. There should be little need for further discussion. Everything is here.

- You may not use *Wikipedia* for research.
- Do not quote more than two lines of material.
- Do not rely exclusively on Internet research, that is, by citing urls. You must give author, date, title, journal, editors, publishers, and place of publication.
- Any and all court case citations must be in italics with the date of the decision, for all intexts referencing.
- Use the following headings: ***Introduction (make sure you state the purpose of your paper here); Operational terms and definitions (list and define any that may be relevant and unfamiliar to a reader); Literature review (list what other people have found); Discussion (clearly state your opinion, don't present it as fact); Conclusion: (Summarize, list limitations and possible biases); References: APA style. Important.***

<u>Final examination</u>: The final examination may consist of multiple choice and/or essay questions focused on the material we study throughout the whole course. You may be given the opportunity to express your own point of view on the many controversial issues we addressed in the course. You are always welcome and encouraged to disagree with material that we cover in class. The primary focus is on comprehension of concepts and their application in policy domains of law, clinical, public, and social arenas. There will also be

philosophical questions. The point and purpose of the course is on how to think about issues we address in class, not what to think. Thus, agreeing or disagreeing with the professor is irrelevant to the final grade you will receive.

Class participation (CP): One post per week. We start the second week of class. Your post for the week is due no later than each Sunday evening at midnight. The last week for posts in the discussion board will be announced in class as we the end of the semester. If you have any questions about Blackboard and your posts, contact Ms. Stephanie Parker.

You may also be called on by name to answer questions throughout the course, and especially to give your opinion on issues we are reading or discussing. This is a time for everyone to be involved. You are perfectly free to disagree with me, your professor, and the authors of material we are reading together. Do not, however, attack anyone's character to try and win an argument. Stick with ideas. Be respectful. Argue *ad rem*, not *ad hominem*.

CP Directions: Each week you post one CP assignment for the appropriate week on the BlackBoard discussion board. There are three parts to one CP assignment or post. Title each CP post the following way and make sure your name is listed as it appears with the registrar: CP post, date, your name.

Inside your post you do this: You post the name of the news item along with the url. You summarize the article briefly, put the url there so that fellow students can read the article you found, then you give your brief opinion of the article. Thus,

1. CP, your name, the date, in the subject area.
Title of article in the text area with the
URL of article, followed by

2. Your opinion of article/issue. You decide the length. You should present enough to establish a clear statement of your opinion.

3. Then, underneath this you write "Reply to (name of student you are replying to)."
Here you post a response to the opinion written by someone else in class—their opinion in any post of theirs for that week. Please be polite and respectful. *Argumentum ad rem, no argumentum ad hominem*.

You complete this by Wednesday evening, midnight. Remember: This counts for twenty percent of your final grade. This means that your final grade can drop by twenty percent if the CP assignment is not completed perfectly. Remember, you do not receive a grade for your weekly CP post. If you fail to complete the assignment, or do a poor job on the assignment, your final grade can drop by as much as twenty percent.

Punctuality
It is very important to be punctual, or on time, for class or when you have an appointment with Professor Schaler, Mr. Lewis, or Ms. Parker If you set up an appointment, you must be on time. If you skip the appointment, you may not be seen again, or, you may be seen at a later date, at the Graduate Assistant, or Professor's convenience. Please sign in at each class.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Any topic is subject to change. Additional readings and articles will be sent out by email or be available to download on BlackBoard.

Date	Topic	Reading
January 14	Drugs as scapegoat	Szasz ix-60
January 21	Drugs and medicine as magic	Szasz 61-124
January 28	Medicine as social control	Finish Szasz
Feb 4	Addiction Is a Choice	Chapters 6-9
Feb 11	Addiction Is a Choice	Chapter 10-11, Finish
Feb 18	Ideology of Alcoholics Anonymous	
Feb 25	Religion v. Atheism	Steele I
	Mere Atheism	Steele II
March 4	The arguments for God	Steele III
March 11	**The arguments against God**	**Steele IV**
Spring break	**God or the truth?**	
READ		
March 18	**Depth psychology of heroism**	**4Becker ix-124**
	Papers due	
March 25	The failures of heroism	Becker 125-252
April 1	The dilemmas of heroism	Becker 253- end
April 8	Introduction and the Buddhist view	Leifer 11-122
	Western views of suffering	Leifer 123-158
April 15	Western views of desire	Leifer 159-214
	Western views of self	Leifer 215-264
	Transforming suffering	Leifer 265-finish
April 22	Review	
April 29	**Final exam**	**2:10 PM to 4:40 PM**

Note: Try to get the readings done by the dates shown. Readings and dates are approximate. When in doubt, read ahead. We may spend more time on one chapter than another. Often, lectures are based on ideas in the readings, however the illustrations of the ideas are not in the book. Thus, you will need to take good notes. We will have discussions about points related to the readings, to illustrate ideas in the readings, however, we may not necessarily discuss in class every part of the readings. You will share in presenting parts of Proctor, assigned in class. The final exam has to be on taken on the date assigned, based on the date assigned by the university registrar's office. Changes to this syllabus may be made by the professor. **One grade reduction if you miss more than four classes, regardless of reason.** This is a "no-fault policy." You have four absences. If you miss class after the four excused absences due to a medical reason you may have your final grade lowered. Save your excused absences so that if you do get sick, or have a medical emergency, you can use them then. Important: Any and all of your writing may be scanned for originality using www.turnitin.com . You are encouraged to use this software before you hand in your paper to make sure that all your sources and citations are in order. You may not use a paper for this course that you used in another course. That is considered a violation of the academic integrity code.

Academic Integrity Code

"Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code. It is expected that all examinations, tests, written papers, and other assignments will be completed according to the standards set forth in this code. By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary action will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as they relate to particular requirements for this course."