

**SOCI 398.20 Selected Topics: Cannabis Legalization in Canada
(Winter, 2022)
Dr. P. Cormack**

**Office: 605 Nicholson Tower
(office hours – see Moodle page)
Email: pcormack@stfx.ca**

Overview

In 2018 Canada became the second country in the world to legalize recreational cannabis. This does not mean, however, that government and state are no longer involved in the regulation of cannabis. In fact, legalization is only the latest chapter in the story of cannabis and drug regulation in Canada. This course examines the history of drug prohibition and moral/social control preceding 2018. Historical discussions include the role of racism and moral panics around drugs, “innocent victims” and “dope fiends”, the various recommendations toward decriminalization, and finally fully legalization of cannabis. Issues include policy around young cannabis users; the role of the state in regulating illicit “street” cannabis; sales, marketing, and education of the Canadian cannabis consumer.

Learning Goals

- To think about drugs and cannabis in terms of historical marginalization of minorities and state prohibition.
- To think about the role of the state in the definition and control of adult recreational consumption.
- To think about legalization of cannabis in terms of provincial and federal law and policy.

Evaluation

- “From the headlines” 10 minute presentation (5%) – book your slot on moodle Scheduler; submit to moodle for grading after presentation.
- Moodle quizzes* - 10 x 5 pts each (50%)
- Essay (15%) – due April 5th to moodle (LATE ESSAYS WILL BE PENALIZED 2% PER DAY LATE)
- Final Exam (30%) – *optional with at least 80% average on quizzes*

*All moodle quizzes will all be available as soon as this course begins. You will be able to do them anytime up until the beginning of the classes each week (usually a Tuesday), at which point moodle will close for that particular quiz.

Required Reading

Potter A and Weinstock D (eds), High Time: The Legalization and Regulation of Cannabis in Canada. Montreal, QC; Kingston, ON : McGill-Queen's University Press

Articles posted to moodle.

SCHEDULE:

Week 1 (Jan 18 and 21) Earliest Drug Laws.

Malleck, D. 1997. "Its Baneful Influences are Too Well Known": Debates of Drug Use in Canada, 1867-1908. *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 14(2): 263-88. (moodle)

Carstairs, C. 1998. "Innocent Addicts, Dope Fiends and Nefarious Traffickers: Illegal Drug Use in 1920s English Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 33 (3): 145-1. (moodle)

Week 2 (Jan 25) Race and Prohibition (NO CLASSES ON FRIDAY, JAN28)

Carstairs, C. 1999. "Deporting Ah Sin to Save the White Race: Moral Panic, Racialization and the Extension of Canada's Drug Laws," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 16 (1): 65-88. (moodle)

Campbell, R. 2008. "Making Sober Citizens: The Legacy of Indigenous Alcohol Regulation in Canada, 1777–1985." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 42(1): 105-126. (moodle)

CBC Radio Race, On Drugs <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/ondrugs/drugs-what-s-race-got-to-do-with-it-1.4206616> (moodle)

Week 3 (Feb 1 and 4) Social Class, Race and Prohibition

Gordon, T. 2006. "Neoliberalism, Racism, and the War on Drugs in Canada". *Social Justice* 33(1): 59-78. (moodle)

Khenti, A. 2014. "The Canadian war on drugs: structural violence and unequal treatment of Black Canadians." *International Journal of Drug Policy* 25(2):190-5. (moodle)

Bourgois, P. 2009. "Poverty at Work: Office Employment and the Crack Alternative." Pp. 227-239 in *Conformity and Conflict*, edited by J. Spradley and D. McCurdy. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. (moodle)

Week 4 (Feb 8 and 11) Policing and Surveillance

Hewitt, S. 2016. " 'While Unpleasant it is a Service to Humanity': The RCMP's war on drugs in the interwar period." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 38(2):80-104. (moodle)

Boyd, S. & Carter, C. 2012. "Using Children: Marijuana Grow-ops, Media, and Policy." *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 29(3): 238-257. (moodle)

Owusu-Bempah, A. & Luscombe, A. 2021. "Race, cannabis and the Canadian war on Drugs: An examination of cannabis arrest data by race in five cities". *International Journal of Drug Policy*. (moodle)

Week 5 (Feb 15 and 18) Canadian Government Messaging

Boyd, S. 2013. "A Canadian perspective on documentary film: Drug Addict". *The International Journal on Drug Policy*. 24(6): 589-596. (moodle)

NFB film, The Drug Addict available through STFX library at "Data bases"; "N"; "NFB campus online"; D (The Drug Addict) <https://stfx.libguides.com/az.php?a=n> (moodle)

Boyd, S. 2014. "The Criminal Addict: Canadian Radio Documentary Discourse, 1957-1969." *Contemporary Drug Problems*. 41. 201-232. (moodle)

BREAK

Week 6 (March 1 and 4) Subcultures and Deviance

Becker, H. 1953. Becoming a Marihuana User. *American Journal of Sociology* 59(3): 235-242. (moodle)

Hathaway, A.D. 1997. "Marijuana and tolerance: Revisiting Becker's sources of control." *Deviant Behavior* 18 (2): 103 – 24. (moodle)

Hathaway, A.D., et al. 2018. " 'It's really no big deal': The role of social supply networks in normalizing use of cannabis by students at Canadian universities ." *Deviant Behavior* 39 (12): 1672 – 80 . (moodle)

Week 7: (March 8 and 11) LeDain Commission and the 1960s/1970s

Boudreau, M. 2012. "The Struggle for a Different World: The 1971 Gastown Riot in Vancouver". In Debating Dissent: The Sixties in Canada, edited by Campbell, Lara, Clement, Dominique & Kealey, Gregory, 46-63. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. (moodle)

Giffen, PJ et al. 1991. "The Marijuana Controversy", Chapter 16, in Panic and Indifference. (moodle)

CBC Radio Cannabis: from prohibition to legalization <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/cbc-podcasts/157-on-drugs/episode/15521363-s2-e2-cannabis-from-prohibition-to-legalization> (moodle)

CBC Radio The Long, Strange Story of Pot Prohibition in Canada <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/ondrugs/the-long-strange-story-of-pot-prohibition-in-canada-1.4541890> (moodle)

Week 8: (March 15 and 18) Politics and Legalization

Potter, A and Daniel Weinstock, "Introduction", High Time.

Vice, "Justin Trudeau Talked Weed Legalization with VICE Canada" <https://www.vice.com/en/article/4x949n/watch-justin-trudeau-talk-weed-legalization-at-vice-canada-tonight> (moodle)

Gecelovsky, P. 2009. "Canadian Cannabis: Marijuana as an Irritant/Problem in Canada-US Relations". *American Review of Canadian Studies*: 207-212. (moodle)

Haines-Saah, RJ et al. 2014. "The privileged normalization of marijuana use – an analysis of Canadian newspaper reporting, 1997–2007". *Critical Public Health* 24(1):47-61. (moodle)

Week 9: (March 22 and 25) Politics Continued.

Potter, A. "In Praise of Political Opportunism, or, How to Change a Policy in Only Fifty Years", High Time.

Bird, M G "Legalized Cannabis in Canada: Federalism, Policy, and Politics", High Time.

Crepault, J-F. 2019. Legalize it (But don't advertise it): The Public Health Case for Cannabis Legalization, High Time.

Week 10 (March 29 and April 1): Provincial Retail in Canada and Nova Scotia

Room, R, Ornberg, JC (2019) "Government monopoly as an instrument for public health and welfare: Lessons for cannabis from experience with alcohol monopolies". *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 74:223-228. (moodle)

Wesley, J J and Murray, K (2021) "To Market or Demarket? Public-Sector Branding of Cannabis in Canada", *Administration & Society* (online first): 1-28. (moodle)

Cormack, P. and Cosgrave, J. "'Enjoy your Experience': Symbolic violence and becoming a tasteful state cannabis consumer in Canada." *Journal of Consumer Studies*. (moodle)

Week 11 (April 5 and 8): Race and Legalization (ESSAY DUE – APRIL 5)

Owusu-Bempah, A, et al. "Unequal Justice: Race and Cannabis Arrests in the Post-Legal Landscape" in High Time.

Wesley, J. "Cannabis legalization and colonial legacies ." in High Time.

Crosby, A. "Contesting Cannabis: Indigenous jurisdiction and legalization" *Canadian Public Administration*, 62(4):634-655. (moodle)

Week 12: (April 12) Making New Criminals?

Stilman, J. "Is Legalization a War on Drugs by the Back Door?" in High Time.

Klein, A. "What Jurisdiction for Harm Reduction: Cannabis Policy Reform under Canadian Federalism" in High Time.

McAleese, S. 2019. "Suspension, not expungement: Rationalizing misguided policy decisions around cannabis amnesty in Canada", *Canadian Public Administration*, 62(4):612-633 (see Crosby link from above - moodle).

Weinstock, D. "Will Legalization Protect Our Kids?", High Time