

This course examines the origins and development of the wars—yes, wars—on drugs with a special focus on the opioid crisis. Key topics include: the history of U.S. regulation and punishment of legal and illegal drug use; mass incarceration and the wars on drugs; race-related factors in drug policy; how and why the criminal legal system treats crime in the streets and crime in the suites differently; U.S. drug policy in a comparative and international perspective; and policy prescriptions for the opioid crisis.

This is a book-centered, multi-disciplinary, discussion-based seminar designed for juniors and seniors. Sophomores require permission of the instructor to enroll.

Students are required to complete the assigned readings prior to class each week and to be prepared to discuss them. The class will likely have three written assignments, including two take-home essays and a book review essay. Students will be required to do one short class presentation based on the book review essay. There may be one or two field trips during the semester, as well as outside speakers invited to class.