Course Description:
Illegal drug trafficking is one of the greatest threats to security and peace in the Americas. The objective of this course is to provide a panoramic view of this phenomenon: its extent, origins, actors, victims, social effects, political challenges, transnational nature and domestic expressions.

The course will cover nine themes, which together should help us answer four main questions:

- Why are drugs declared illegal and how prohibition affects the nature of the business?
- What is the structure of this business: its products, markets, trade routes and actors?
- How does this business affect the societies and governments of the Americas?
- What policy alternatives have been proposed and tried?

Due to time and space restrictions, the course will leave aside, for the most part, the case of Canada. While regrettable, this absence is not grave: the protagonists of the illegal drug drama in the Americas are the United States and several Latin American countries. And, with due adaptation, much of what is said about these protagonists can be extended to the case of Canada.

Grading:
1) Attendance and in-class participation: 20%
2) Oral presentation: 20%
3) Mid-term exam: 20%
4) Final essay: 40%

Assignment Descriptions:
1. Attendance and participation: A typical class will start with a brief presentation of the assigned reading or with a short lecture on the relevant theme. This will be followed by a discussion in which all students are expected to participate. Students are required to read the assigned text before coming to class. Some sessions have no required reading: they are reserved for general discussion about the topics analyzed in the previous 2 or 3 meetings. A 5% from the attendance and participation grade will be subtracted for each unexcused absence after the first.
2. Every student will be asked to present one of the readings. The presenter should summarize the main points of the text and discuss them critically. A typical presentation should last
between 10 and 15 minutes. Rigor is required and creativity is encouraged for these presentations.

3. Midterm Exam: You will choose one question from a list that will be handed out the day of the exam. Short analytical and critical answers are expected (3-5 paragraphs).

4. Final essay: a concise (about 10 pages), well-thought, original discussion of one of the topics covered in the course. A list of suggested topics, as well as specific guidelines for the essay, will be distributed by the end of April.

**Expectations:**

1. Communication.
   a. If you have a question, don’t hesitate to raise your hand and ask or contact me privately. If you have a problem or an emergency arises, let me know as soon as possible and I will be very willing to work with you.
   b. If you need an accommodation for any type of physical or learning disability, medical needs, or any other reason, you should meet with the student disability services office and then meet with me privately to discuss the modifications necessary to ensure your full participation in the course.

2. Proper Academic Conduct. It is your responsibility to know and understand the provisions of the College of Arts and Science’s Academic Conduct Code, available at: [http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/](http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/). Cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Dean’s Office.

3. Punctuality. Turn in your assignments on time—there will be a penalty of 5% for each day that an assignment is late. You will only be allowed to turn in an assignment late without penalty if you have a documented emergency.

**Required Reading:**

- In addition, there are a number of articles and book chapters assigned for specific classes.
- News coverage of current events related to drugs and security in the Americas. We will briefly review current events during our general discussion sessions.

The above book is available for purchase at BU’s Barnes and Noble bookstore. Copies of all the required readings are on reserve at Mugar Library. You can access the reading list by clicking on either of these links: [HI331], [IR290]

**Classes, Topics and Reading Assignments**

**Introduction**

W, Jan 23

- Course Overview
1. The Prohibition Regime

F, Jan 25


M, Jan 28


2. The War on Drugs

W, Jan 30


F, Feb 1


M, Feb 4

- General discussion

3. Drug Demand

W, Feb 6


F, Feb 8


M, Feb 11

- General discussion
4. **Inter-American Traffic**

W, Feb 13


F, Feb 15


T, Feb 19


W, Feb 20

General discussion

5. **Traffickers**

F, Feb 22


M, Feb 25


W, Feb 27


F, Ma 1

- Mid-term exam

6. **Inter-American Drug Politics**

M, Ma 4

W, Ma 6

• Juan Gabriel Tokatlian. “The War on Drugs and the Role of SOUTHCOM.” In Bagley and Rosen, eds. 2015.

F, Ma 8

• General discussion

M, Ma 18


W, Ma 20


F, Ma 22

• General discussion

M, Ma 25


W, Ma 27

• Alberto Lozano-Vázquez and Jorge Rebolledo Flores “In Search of the Merida Initiative: From Antecedents to Practical Results.” In Bagley and Rosen, eds. 2015.

F, Ma 29

• General discussion

7. Social Consequences in the U.S.

M, Apr 1


W, Apr 3

F, Apr 5
• General discussion

8. Drug Violence in Latin America

M, Apr 8

W, Apr 10

F, Apr 12
• General discussion

W, Apr 17

F, Apr 19

M, Apr 22
• General discussion

9. Alternatives

W, Apr 24

F, Apr 26
• Bruce M. Bagley and Jonathan D. Rosen. “Analytical Conclusions: The Search for Alternative Drug Policies in the Americas.” In Bagley and Rosen, eds. 2015.
M, Apr 29

• General discussion

W, May 1

• Conclusion

W, May 8

• Final essay due