

Psychology of Alcohol and Culture - Psychology 347 - 3 credits

Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany

Extended Summer Session - May 5 - May 25, 2019

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Course description:

Throughout history, alcohol has been the most widely used means of altering human consciousness. As a legal drug for those above the drinking age, responsible alcohol use in moderation is widely accepted in many contexts in western society. Alcohol often is an accompaniment to meals, celebrations, religious rituals, and recreational activities. Alcohol production and consumptions contributes to the economy and is a virtually recession-proof industry. Craft breweries have played a role in the economic growth and revival of many cities in the United States. However, alcohol abuse and binge drinking can lead to a host of serious negative individual, group, and societal consequences. Because of alcohol's prevalence, a rigorous examination of the psychology of alcohol and culture, the social-psychological processes that motivate drinking behavior, and the cultural context of alcohol consumption and is warranted.

This course will examine alcohol consumption at the cultural, psychological, and biological levels of analysis. The environmental/cultural level of analysis will examine the role of social and group processes, family, religion, marketing, and culture on alcohol-related cognitions, behavior, and outcomes. The psychological level of analysis will examine individual-level cognitive and decision making processes regarding use of alcohol, learning experiences, and the impact of alcohol on behavior and mental processes. The biological level of analysis will include an examination of the effects of alcohol on the central nervous system and health outcomes, and the physiology of taste perception.

This course is offered in May 2019 as part of CNU's International Studies program. We will visit cities in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany to examine the relationship of cultural norms and institutions to attitudes, beliefs, and behavior regarding alcohol. CNU students will meet students in Bruges, Belgium and Bamberg, Germany, for cultural exchange activities and collaborative research on alcohol and culture topics.

The course is open to all majors and fulfills one of the Psychology Major or Minor's 300-level electives. *Students must have the prerequisite of either Psychology 201 or 202 completed by the end of Spring 2019.*



The lowest register of a plaque used to decorate the sounding box of a large lyre for the Royal Cemetery of Ur. It shows a gazelle offering two beakers of beer to a scorpion man. The use of beakers as opposed to straws indicates filtered beer.
(Photo courtesy of Museum of Arch. and Anth., Univ. Penn. Phila. PA.)

Objectives:

- Students will be able to describe and/or identify major psychological theories of alcohol use, including sociocultural, developmental, learning theory, and biological perspectives.
- Students will have an increased understanding of the role of alcohol in the cultural history of Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States and how these cultural factors shape today's alcohol-related cognitions and behaviors.
- Students will collaborate with peers in Europe to research, compare, and contrast cultural aspects of alcohol use and treatment.
- Students will be able to describe characteristics of 'wet' and 'dry' drinking cultures and how these cultural factors shape alcohol-related cognitions and behaviors.
- Students will understand the social psychological processes that influence use of alcohol, the role that culture plays in these influence processes, and how these processes relate to alcohol cultures of the US, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and other nations.
- Students will be able to describe the processes through which alcohol reaches the brain and its effects on the central nervous system.
- Students will understand the processes involved in alcohol use disorders and addiction, and approaches to treatment in the U.S. and Europe.

This study course will involve readings, lecture, videos, discussion, visits to historical sites, museums, breweries, and treatment centers, and cultural exchange seminars with European students. The list of activities below is planned, however specifics may be subject to change due to logistics or need for flexibility.

Belgium - Bruges and Brussels

- Cultural exchange activities with Belgian students.
- Seminar on alcohol treatment at the St Janshospital.
- A meeting with AA public information officers.
- Visit to the Halve Moon Brouwerij in Brugge and/or other culturally significant Belgian breweries.
- Classroom lectures on alcohol research and theory.
- Visit the Groeninge Museum of Flemish Art and other Brugge historic-cultural sites.

The Netherlands- Amsterdam

- A tour of The Rijksmuseum highlighting themes of alcohol and culture in Dutch art.
- A bicycle tour with lecture on Dutch culture, history, and social norms related to alcohol and cannabis.
- A visit to the Red Light District.
- A visit to a Dutch brewery that provides supportive employment to people with psychiatric disorders.
- A visit to the Heineken Experience Museum to examine the psychology of marketing beer.
- Visit to House of Bols, to examine marketing and sensory perceptions.
- Visit to the Van Gogh Museum and the Anne Frank House.

Germany - Bamberg

- Classroom research collaboration with students at the University of Bamberg.
- Visit historic breweries and beerkellers.
- Classroom lectures and presentations on alcohol research and theory.
- Tour of the historic Bamberg Dom Cathedral.

Readings/sources

Text: Jung, J. (2010) *Alcohol, Other Drugs, and Behavior: A Psychological Research Perspective* (2nd ed.). CA: Sage Publications.

Other articles to be provided by the instructor or placed on Blackboard Scholar (BBS). We'll have a BBS site for posted readings and a list of readings.

Grading:

Quizzes = 15%

Reflection papers/journal = 40%

Discussion, participation, cultural exchange contributions = 15%

Final Exam = 30%

Reflection Papers/Journal – Students will keep a daily journal reflecting on experiences and learning about alcohol and culture through the lens of course concepts from readings, lecture, and discussion. Comparison of US and German/Belgian/Dutch cultures, personal reflections and applications, and insights into the interaction of the three levels of analysis (biological, psychological, and cultural) should be emphasized. Based on your experiences and your journal reflections, you will write four "reflection papers." Four three-to-four page typed-doublespaced reflection papers will *apply concepts from course readings* to students' observations and experiences abroad. These are due within 15 days of our return to the US.

Quizzes - A minimum of three quizzes will be given, including at least one or two prior to departure.

Discussion, participation, cultural exchange contributions - We will meet with local students and other 'cultural ambassadors' to explore cultural similarities and differences. Student active involvement and level of participation and leadership in cultural exchange activities and collaboration are important aspects of this course. Verbal contributions, active listening skills, cultural sensitivity, and intellectual curiosity demonstrated through meaningful questions and discussion participation are indicators of student contributions and leadership.

Final exam – A comprehensive final exam will be given to assess student understanding of course material. The date will be announced. This exam will be given on-line through BBS.

Student personal discipline, group “citizenship” and adherence to instructor guidelines and policies is expected and required. These can be a 'plus factor' or a 'minus factor' in determining the course grade. These include but are not limited to:

- Student *'virtual collaboration behaviors'* such as responsiveness to faculty emails;
- Student *personal discipline* in terms of timeliness, preparedness, listening to/ following directions and communications, being well-rested and ready to learn each morning, eating properly prior to excursions and activities, and adhering to class policies;
- Avoiding inappropriate, disruptive, or unsafe behavior, and promoting a group norm that discourages others from these behaviors,
- Volunteering, assisting, contributing, or otherwise *being a good group 'citizen'*;
- Practicing *responsible safety behaviors* while traveling abroad - staying with the group, using the buddy-system, using common-sense caution and good judgment, maintaining communications, maintaining personal discipline, and so forth;
- Keeping the instructors informed* of any issues or concerns that we should be aware of.

Note: Students who violate rules of conduct may be asked to withdraw from the course and return home at their own expense.

Grading Scale: Note: The top 3 points in each grade range is a 'plus' and the bottom 3 points is a 'minus.'

100-88	= A
78-87	= B
68-77	= C
58-67	= D
<58	= F

Prerequisites: Psychology 201 or Psychology 202 with a grade of C- or better.

Academic Regulations Pertaining to Students with Disabilities

If you believe that you have a disability that may impact your ability to perform physical, psychosocial, or other activities that are part of this study abroad trip, make an appointment to see me to discuss your needs well in advance. In order to receive an accommodation, your disability must be on record in Disability Support Services (Telephone: 594-8852).

This course/trip requires the ability to:

- Walk distances of up to one mile while transporting one's luggage and personal items.
- Walk up and down *narrow, steep flights of stairs.*
- Walk up to 2 miles on uneven terrain such as cobblestones and pavement, at a moderate pace.
- Pack light.
- Share sleeping accommodations with other students.
- Not use one's mobile phone for periods of time while others are present, at meals, and during classroom cultural exchange activities.

Caution: Students who have undergone treatment for substance abuse problems or who meet criteria for an alcohol use disorder (ie. craving, loss of control, blackouts, binge drinking) are not a good fit for this course.

Other:

- Students will be expected to attend several (4-6) mandatory class meetings in Spring semester 2019 and to read textbook and assigned readings in advance of the trip.
- The professor may need to revise aspects of the syllabus and/or planned excursions if the situation warrants. Any such changes would be done in consultation with students.
- Students are required to bring comfortable footwear that will allow a moderately brisk walking pace on uneven surfaces and cobblestones.