

Psychology of Alcohol and Culture - Psychology 347 - 3 credits **Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany**

Extended Summer Session - May 8 - May 27, 2022

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Course description:

The students in Psych 347 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, 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, physical and mental health outcomes, and the physiology of taste perception. We will also examine the role of culture and genetics in the psychology of taste perception, prevention and treatment of alcohol use disorders, and examine how consumer psychology and marketing relate to attitudes toward alcohol use.

This course is offered in May 2022 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. The course is open to students of all majors and fulfills one of the Psychology Major's 300-level electives.

Alcohol throughout history has been the most widely used means of altering human consciousness. As a legal drug for those above drinking age, responsible alcohol use in moderation is widely accepted in many social contexts throughout most of the world. However, alcoholism and binge drinking can lead to a host of serious negative individual, group, and societal consequences. About a quarter of college students report academic consequences related to alcohol, evidence suggests that excessive alcohol use in young adulthood may impair brain development, and almost two-thousand U.S. college students die from alcohol-related accidents each year. College is one of the last opportunities to educate young people about alcohol's risks and help them learn to make wise choices about drinking behavior. Because of alcohol's prevalence, a rigorous examination of the social-psychological processes that motivate drinking behavior and the cultural context of alcohol consumption is warranted. This course addresses these topics from an evidence-based perspective.

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 students in Europe to research, compare, and contrast cultural aspects of alcohol use.
- Students will be able to describe characteristics of 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.

- 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 taste and olfactory perception and how this is related to culture and genetics.
- Students will understand the processes involved in alcohol use disorders and addiction, and approaches to treatment in the U.S. and Europe.

*Return date of May 27 is planned, however it may be adjusted by a day plus depending on logistics.

This study abroad course will involve readings, lecture, videos, discussion, visits to historical sites, museums, and treatment centers, and a cultural exchange seminar with European students. The list of activities below is planned, however specific activities may be subject to change due to host availability or other logistics.

Belgium - Bruges and Brussels (7 nights in Bruges)

- Cultural exchange activities with Belgian high school students.
- A meeting with AA members who serve as public information officers in Belgium-Netherlands.
- Visit to the Halve Moon Brouwerij in Brugge, Cantillon Museum of Gueuze in Brussels, and/or other historic or culturally significant Belgian breweries.
- Classroom lecture on alcohol research and theory.

The Netherlands (4 nights in Amsterdam)

- A tour of The Rijksmuseum highlighting themes of alcohol and culture in Dutch art.
- A bicycle tour with lecture on Dutch culture and social norms related to alcohol and other ‘vices.’
- A visit to a nonprofit brewery that provides supportive employment to people with mental health 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.
- Visits to the Van Gogh Museum and the Anne Frank House.

Germany – Bamberg (7 nights in Bamberg)

- Visit to the Franconian Brewery Museum, in a former monastery cellar.
- Visits to historic breweries and beer-kellers, including Aecht Schlenkerla.
- Classroom lectures on alcohol research and theory.
- Tour of the historic Bamberg Cathedral and Diocesan Museum.
- Guided tour of Weyermann’s Specialty Malt-house.
- Visit to Altenberg Castle.



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 provided in class.

Grading:

Quizzes = 15%

Application/Reflection papers/Journal = 40%

Discussion, participation, cultural exchange contributions = 15%

Final Exam = 30%

Application Papers/Journal Reflection – Students will keep a daily journal reflecting on experiences and learning about alcohol and culture through the lens of 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. Students will be provided with a small blank journal-notebook to record observations and applications. Based on experiences and journal reflections, students will write four "application papers." Each of the four application papers should *apply concepts from course readings* to observations and experiences abroad. Application papers should be between three and four pages each, typed doublespaced. These are due within 15 days of our return to the US.

Quizzes - Quizzes will relate to required readings and classroom lecture/discussion. Students will be expected to do assigned readings prior to departure.

Discussion, participation, cultural exchange contributions - We will meet with local students and other 'cultural ambassadors' to explore cultural similarities and differences. Active involvement and level of participation and leadership at predeparture meetings, with our own group, during lectures, and during 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. The exam will be multiple choice, with possible inclusion of open-ended or essay-style questions and will be given online soon after our return.

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. The 'buddy system' of having at least one other student with you when out of your lodging is required except when explicit permission is granted by the professor.
- 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:

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

Note: The top 2 points in each grade range is a 'plus' and the bottom 2 points in each grader range is a 'minus.'

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 meet with Dr. Catanzaro or Dr. Stone 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 carrying/rolling your luggage and personal items at a moderate pace.
- Carry your luggage and personal items up and down *narrow, steep flights of stairs*.
- Walk distances of up to 3 miles on uneven terrain such as cobblestones and pavement, at a moderately brisk pace.
- Ride a bicycle.
- Pack light. ☺
- Share sleeping accommodations with other same-gender students.

Cautions:

-Students who have had 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.
-Students who have moderate to severe mental health conditions that might flare up while traveling are urged to consider how this could impact their experiences. Our course involves a busy schedule with some days that have little 'down time.' You'll be living in close quarters with other students and experiencing a different culture which means unfamiliar foods and social customs. This study abroad course is not a good fit for you if you are easily stressed, are uncomfortable being around people 24/7, and/or find it difficult to regulate mood, emotions, or anxiety. There are other study abroad courses that may better suit your needs. Please talk with one of the professors or Mandi Pierce at the Study Abroad Office for assistance in choosing a study abroad course that will be a better fit for you.

Other:

- Students will be expected to attend three class pre-departure meetings on campus and to read assigned readings in advance of the trip. These are required course meetings.
- Students may be asked to view some lecture content online either prior to or during the trip.
- Students will need to bring a laptop or tablet on the trip to access course materials. If this poses a problem, please let Dr. Catanzaro know at least one month in advance of the trip.
- The professor may need to revise aspects of the syllabus and/or planned activities if the situation warrants.

- Students are required to bring comfortable footwear that will allow a brisk walking pace on uneven surfaces and cobblestones. Flip flops will not provide the support or wet-traction that you will need.
- Students must bring with them a mobile phone that is able to receive and send text messages while abroad, using cellular service. *This is for your safety and is a firm requirement.*

COVID-19 Statement: As the state of the COVID-19 pandemic in May 2022 is hard to predict from current data, it is understood that Psychology 347 plans may be altered and/or the trip and course canceled if conditions are not safe for travel. Guidance from CNU and the Study Abroad Office will be provided should the need to cancel Psychology 347 arise.