NOTE: Most of the questions you need answers to about this Module are in this handbook. Please read it fully and carefully before your first seminar.

NOTE: This document concerns the structure and content of the Module. If you have questions about procedures, please consult the School of Psychology Administration Office in Pev1 2A13 or via psychology@sussex.ac.uk.
Module content

The module will cover the following topics: Basic pharmacology of addictive drugs; History of recreational drug use; Drug-induced neuroplasticity; Major theories of drug reward and drug addiction; Drug harm; Treatment of drug addiction. Thus, the scope of the module will range from basic pharmacology to clinical intervention. Particular emphasis will be placed on real-life aspects of drug abuse and drug addiction.

Module objectives

By the end of the module successful students should be able to:
1) Understand the mechanisms of action of addictive drugs;
2) Understand how addictive drugs can induce enduring changes in brain and behaviour;
3) Critically discuss and analyse major concepts and theoretical models of drug addiction;
4) Critically discuss and analyse the concept of drug harm and harm reduction;
5) Discuss the therapeutic options for the treatment of drug abuse and addiction.

Module Contact Information

Convenor: Prof. Aldo Badiani
Location: Pevensey I, Room 2B19
E-mail: aldo.badiani@sussex.ac.uk
Office hours: Thursdays, 14:00-16:00, or by appointment (via email).
Seminars & Workshops

Seminars (location: Arts C-C133)
The 12 seminars will last 2 hours each, with a short break in the middle. Each seminar will include a formal presentation (lecture) but there will be plenty of time to discuss key articles from the literature and for students to present additional material.

Workshops (location: Arts A-A04)
The 4 workshops will last 1 hour each.

Reading material

No single text covers all topics relevant to this module. The most important course material is represented by the journal articles listed in the next sections.

However, the following two books are required reading


Students who have strong interest in the clinical aspects of drug addiction may consider the following texts:


Assessment

Literature Review (due: Wk 12)
A 3000-word literature review concerning a topic to be chosen from those that will be made available at the end of Wk 2. The review is due at the end of the term and will be worth 30% of your final mark. More information about this assignment will be provided in class and/or via Study Direct.

Unseen Examination (date: Summer)
The unseen examination will consist of multiple choice questions and short-answer questions, and will be worth 70% of your final mark. More information about this assignment will be provided in class and/or via Study Direct.

Submission deadlines, late penalties, and misconduct

Important note: Appropriately completing and submitting formally assessed work is your responsibility. If you are in any doubt about the rules concerning submissions check with the departmental office. Two copies of your review must be submitted to the Psychology Departmental office, Pevensey 1, Room 2A13 before the deadline.

Please access Sussex Direct for submission deadlines: https://direct.sussex.ac.uk

What happens if I miss an assessment deadline?

Where applicable you may still submit the assessment within 7 days of the published deadline. This will incur a penalty, as follows:

- Work submitted up to 24 hours late shall incur a penalty deduction of 5 percentage points (not 5% of the actual mark).
• Work submitted after 24 hours and up to 7 days late shall incur a penalty deduction of 10 percentage points (not 10% of the actual mark)
• No work shall be accepted after the 7 day penalty period has elapsed

For any work where the student wishes to claim mitigating circumstances or impairment a MEC claim needs to be completed and submitted to the Student Life Centre.

Please access the links for further information.

• http://www.sussex.ac.uk/studentlifecentre/mitigation
• http://www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/documentsandpolicies/examinationandassessmenthandbooks

V&E students should ensure that they discuss with the module convenor any alternative assessment submission deadlines.

**Plagiarism and Collusion**

Plagiarism is the use, without acknowledgement, of the intellectual work of other people and the act of representing the ideas or discoveries of another as one’s own written work submitted for assessment.

Collusion is the preparation or production of work for assessment jointly with another person or persons unless explicitly permitted by the examiners. An act of collusion is understood to encompass those who actively assist others as well as those who derive benefit from others.

Information on how to avoid plagiarism and collusion can be found here;

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/s3/?id=33
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/documentsandpolicies/examinationandassessmenthandbooks
Seminars and workshops schedule

**Seminars (location: C133; time: 11:00-13:00)**

- **Wk 1** – Thu, Jan 22  
  S01: Naturally occurring psychoactive substances
- **Wk 2** – Thu, Jan 29  
  S02: History of addictive drugs
- **Wk 3** – Thu, Feb 5  
  S03: Biopsychology of reward and motivation
- **Wk 4** – Thu, Feb 12  
  S04: Basic pharmacology II
- **Wk 5** – Thu, Feb 19  
  S05: Basic pharmacology II
- **Wk 6** – Thu, Feb 26  
  S06: Drug-induced neuroplasticity
- **Wk 7** – Thu, Mar 5  
  S07: Recreational drug use versus drug addiction
- **Wk 8** – Thu, Mar 12  
  S08: Theories of drug addiction
- **Wk 9** – Thu, Mar 19  
  S09: Drug Harm I
- **Wk 10** – Thu, Mar 26  
  S10: Drug Harm II
- **Wk 12** – Thu, Apr 9  
  S11: Treatment of drug addiction I
- **Wk 13** – Thu, Apr 16  
  S12: Treatment of drug addiction II

**Workshops (location: A04; time: 09:00-10:00)**

- **Wk 1** – Fri, Jan 23  
  W01: Drug, Set, and Setting
- **Wk 2** – Fri, Jan 30  
  W02: Why do humans use drugs?
- **Wk 3** – Fri, Feb 6  
  t.b.c.
- **Wk 4** – Fri, Feb 13  
  W04: Drug addiction: choice or disease?
Seminar 1 – Naturally occurring psychoactive substances

Virtually all psychoactive substances are produced by plants or are chemical analogs of substances contained in plants. Many of them (including caffeine, nicotine, delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, cocaine, and morphine) are neurotoxins. The rewarding effects of neurotoxins represent an evolutionary paradox.

Readings


Seminar 2 – History of recreational drug use

It is often assumed that the recreational use of psychoactive substances is in a simple relationship with their primary mechanism of action. For example, it is often stated that the recreational use of opiates originated over 3-4000 BCE. However, the history of recreational drug use is much more interesting and complex than that.

Readings


Seminar 3 – Biopsychology of reward and motivation

The motivation to take drugs is thought to depend on their ability to modulate directly or indirectly the reward systems of the brain.

Readings


Seminar 4 – Basic pharmacology of addictive drugs I

Pharmacodynamics

Readings


Seminar 5 – Basic pharmacology of addictive drugs II

Pharmacokinetics

Readings


Seminar 6 – Drug-induced neuroplasticity

It is thought that repeated exposure to addictive drugs produces both short-lived and long-lasting changes in neural connectivity as well changes in cognitive functions and behaviour. The exact nature of these alterations and their role in drug addiction is the subject of scholarly dispute.

Readings


Seminar 7 – Recreational drug use and drug addiction

Drug addiction is not an automatic outcome of drug use. Only approximately 20% of people who use drugs such as cocaine or heroin will switch from controlled to compulsive use. Thus, one of the aims of addiction research is to identify the mechanisms that are responsible for the transition from one stage of the disorder to the next: from initial drug use to chronic drug use and then to compulsive, relapsing drug abuse.

Readings

Seminar 8 – Theories of drug addiction

A unified view is at the core of current theories of drug addiction. These unified theories have led to many important discoveries, some of which are described below, but they have also diverted investigators’ attention away from psychological and neurobiological processes that characterize specific types of addiction.

Readings


Seminar 9 – Drug Harm I

Substance-specific harms

Readings


Seminar 10 – Drug Harm II

Harm reduction

Readings


**Seminar 11 & 12 – Treatment of drug abuse**

Readings


[KChapters 5-11]


Additional reading


[Section 6, with particular attention to chapters 28-30, 34, 37]
Workshop 1 – Drug, Set, and Setting

Vulnerability to addiction seems to be influenced not only by genes but also by environmental factors, including adverse life experiences, acute exposure to stressors, drug-associated contextual and discrete cues, and other, more subtle aspects of the environment. Thus, the behavioural and subjective effects of addictive drugs should be seen as the result of complex interactions among the drug, the user’s physiological and mental state (set), and the circumstances of drug taking (setting).

References


Workshop 2 – Why do humans use drugs?

Evolutionary aspects of drug use

References


Addiction, volume 97(4), 2002: Special issue on Evolutionary Psychobiological approaches to addiction.

Workshop 3 – Again, why do humans use drugs?

Readings

t.b.a.
Workshop 4 – Drug addiction: choice or disease?

Readings


