FALL 2017
Revised 04/27/17

Lina Britto
History 300-0-26
MAKING DRUGS IN THE AMERICAS
Day/Time: TTH 11:00-12:20
Discussion Sections: Every other week
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Maximum Enrollment: 45

COURSE DESCRIPTION: To understand how and why the drug trade became one of the most profitable and violent industries in the hemisphere, this course examines the history of production, commercialization, consumption, and criminalization of mind-altering drugs in the Americas. We consider the late colonial history of the export of tropical commodities as stimulants; the repression of domestic consumption and its connection to the formation of national identities; the correlation between liberal reforms and the emergence of transnational illegal networks; the construction of the “drug problem” during the period after World War II; the rise of the cartels along circuits of immigration; the implementation of the “war on drugs” as an essential component of Cold War in Latin America; the role of violence and masculinity in the drug trade; and the most recent debates on decriminalization and legalization in North and South America. We address these topics in an interdisciplinary manner, reading history, anthropology, sociology, political science, and journalism; and watching and analyzing critically featured films and documentaries.

AREA OF CONCENTRATION: Americas

TEACHING METHOD: Lecture and discussion sessions

EVALUATION METHOD: Attendance and participation, in-class quizzes, response papers, and final paper.

GRADING BASIS: ANC

TENTATIVE READING LIST:
Peter Andreas, Smuggler Nation: How Illicit Trade Made America (2013), 9780199360987.
Suzanna Reiss, We Sell Drugs. The Alchemy of US Empire (2014), 9780520280786.

NOTES: Attendance and participation are evaluated. Attendance at first class is mandatory. No lap-top use in classroom. Special cases will be considered. Electronic devices should be silenced or turned off.

INSTRUCTOR PROFILE: Professor Lina Britto is a Colombian historian and journalist. She received her Ph.D. in Latin American and Caribbean History from New York University. She has been a fellow at the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies, Harvard University. While still residing in Latin America, she studied a M.A. in Anthropology, a B.A. in Journalism, and reported on various social and political issues for Colombian, Bolivian, Spanish, and American newspapers, magazines, and online journals. The use of multiple formats during lectures—such as photographs, maps, movie clips, newspaper clippings, drawings, etc.—makes the class dynamic, and fast-paced, while helps students to grasp the complexity of this transnational history. The goal is to keep students engaged so they can more easily develop their own critical reasoning skills, analytical abilities, and organizational capacities.