Module Descriptor

Title	The Politics of Drug & Alcohol Policy		
Session	2026/27	**Status**	
Code	CDAS11004	**SCQF Level**	11
Credit Points	20	**ECTS (European Credit Transfer Scheme)**	10
School	**Education and Social Sciences**		
Module Co-ordinator	Aileen O'Gorman		

Summary of Module

The Politics of Drug and Alcohol Policy examines the origins and development of policies relating to drug, alcohol and other substances in Scotland, the UK and internationally. The module aims to understand the complex world of drug and alcohol policy development by exploring the influence of politics and ideology, evidence, advocacy, lobbying, and stakeholders' interests. Lectures will draw on theoretical models and concepts on policy change and the policy process such as policy framing; multiple streams analysis; advocacy coalition framework; policy diffusion; and governance. Attention is given to how drug and alcohol issues are defined, constructed, and problematised; the role of policy communities and networks; political discourses; and ideas and values.

Key contemporary debates on new approaches to drug and alcohol policies; on the impact of drug and broader social policies on users and on special populations (such as injecting drug users, families and communities affected by drugs) will be critically examined. The overall aim is to provide participants with a framework for assessing policy formulation at local, national and international levels.

Module Delivery Method	**On-Campus**[1] ☐	**Hybrid**[2] ☐	**Online**[3] ☒	**Work -Based Learning**[4] ☐
Campuses for Module Delivery	☐ Ayr ☐ Dumfries	☐ Lanarkshire ☐ London	☒ Online / Distance Learning ☐ Other (specify)	

[1] Where contact hours are synchronous/ live and take place fully on campus. Campus-based learning is focused on providing an interactive learning experience supported by a range of digitally-enabled asynchronous learning opportunities including learning materials, resources, and opportunities provided via the virtual learning environment. On-campus contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[2] The module includes a combination of synchronous/ live on-campus and online learning events. These will be supported by a range of digitally-enabled asynchronous learning opportunities including learning materials, resources, and opportunities provided via the virtual learning environment. On-campus and online contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[3] Where all learning is solely delivered by web-based or internet-based technologies and the participants can engage in all learning activities through these means. All required contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[4] Learning activities where the main location for the learning experience is in the workplace. All required contact hours, whether online or on campus, will be clearly articulated to students

			☐ Paisley			
Terms for Module Delivery	Term 1	☐	Term 2	☒	Term 3	☐
Long-thin Delivery over more than one Term	Term 1 – Term 2	☐	Term 2 – Term 3	☐	Term 3 – Term 1	☐

Learning Outcomes	
L1	Demonstrate extensive, detailed and critical knowledge and understanding of current policy issues (relating to drugs, alcohol and other substances).
L2	Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis to assessing governance and the policy-making processes in relating to drugs, alcohol and other substances.
L3	Demonstrate effective communication, ICT skills and subject knowledge by presenting complex ideas and analysis in an innovative format to peers and specialists.
L4	Develop innovative and evidence based responses to problems and issues relating to substance use.
L5	

Employability Skills and Personal Development Planning (PDP) Skills	
SCQF Headings	**During completion of this module, there will be an opportunity to achieve core skills in:**
Knowledge and Understanding (K and U)	**SCQF 11** A critical awareness of current issues and the range of perspectives on drug and alcohol (and other substances) policy. A critical understanding of the theoretical concepts and frameworks for analysing policy change and development. Extensive detailed and critical knowledge of the interactions and influences between policy stakeholders at local national and global level.
Practice: Applied Knowledge and Understanding	**SCQF 11** Apply concepts to interpret and evaluate competing positions on drug and alcohol policy. Apply evidence to develop policy briefings and submissions. Be able to retrieve, interpret and critically analyse information from a range of sources (primary, secondary and grey).
Generic Cognitive skills	**SCQF 11** 1Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesise to the development of policies relating to drugs, alcohol and other substances. Developing original and creative thinking and options for responding to current problems and issues relating to the use of alcohol and drugs. Critically review research-based evidence from a variety of sources.1
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	**SCQF 11**

	Communicate effectively and appropriately in speech, online and through academic writing. Ability to disseminate findings using social media and IT skills in an innovative way. Presentation of ideas and concepts to peers and colleagues in a poster style presentation.
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	**SCQF 11** The ability to undertake independent, self-directed study to achieve agreed goals. Working with peers in groups and developing own independent working skills. Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in conducting a range of tasks and activities

Prerequisites	**Module Code**	**Module Title**
	Other	
Co-requisites	**Module Code**	**Module Title**

Learning and Teaching	
In line with current learning and teaching principles, a 20-credit module includes 200 learning hours, normally including a minimum of 36 contact hours and maximum of 48 contact hours.	
Learning Activities During completion of this module, the learning activities undertaken to achieve the module learning outcomes are stated below:	**Student Learning Hours** (Note: Learning hours include both contact hours and hours spent on other learning activities)
Lecture / Core Content Delivery	0 hours, online delivery
Tutorial / Synchronous Support Activity	24
Personal Development Plan	20
Asynchronous Class Activity	12
Independent Study	144
Please select	
TOTAL	200

Indicative Resources
The following materials form essential underpinning for the module content and ultimately for the learning outcomes:

Babor. T. et al., (2010/2022) Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Babor. T. et al., (2010). Drug Policy and the Public Good. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bacchi, Carol (2012) Introducing the 'What's the Problem Represented to be?' IN A. Bletsas and C. Beasley (Eds.) Engaging with Carol Bacchi: Strategic Interventions and Exchanges, Adelaide, University of Adelaide Press (2012, pp. 21-24). [https://www.adelaide.edu.au/press/].

Hart, C. (2013) High Price: A Neuroscientist's Journey of Self-Discovery That Challenges Everything You Know about Drugs and Society New York: HarperCollins.

Kingdon, J. Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Politics, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1995).

MacGregor, S. (2017) The Politics of drugs perceptions, power and policies. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK

Seddon, T. (2023). Rethinking Drug Laws: Theory, History, Politics. Oxford University Press.

Stevens, A. (2024). Drug policy constellations: The role of power and morality in the making of drug policy in the UK. Policy Press.

(N.B. Although reading lists should include current publications, students are advised (particularly for material marked with an asterisk*) to wait until the start of session for confirmation of the most up-to-date material)

Attendance and Engagement Requirements

In line with the Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure, all students are required to attend all scheduled classes and participate with all delivered elements of each module as part of their engagement with their programme of study. However, it is recognised that from time-to-time students will have justifiable reasons for periods of lack of engagement. Students who are unable to attend timetabled classes for any reason should report their absence to their programme leader or personal tutor.

Consideration will be given to students who have protection under the appropriate equality law. Please refer to UWS Equality Diversity and Human Rights Code Feb 2023.

Equality and Diversity

The University's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Procedure can be accessed at the following link: UWS Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Code.

Aligned with the overall commitment to equality and diversity, learning materials will be presented electronically in formats that allow flexible access and manipulation of content (students should check with their programme leader for any queries). The CDAS programme complies with UWS regulations and guidance on inclusive learning and teaching practice. Specialist assistive equipment, support provision and adjustment to assessment practice will be made in accordance with UWS policy and regulations.

(N.B. Every effort will be made by the University to accommodate any equality and diversity issues brought to the attention of the School)

Supplemental Information

Divisional Programme Board	**Social Sciences**
Overall Assessment Results	☐ **Pass / Fail** ☒ **Graded**
Module Eligible for Compensation	☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** **If this module is eligible for compensation, there may be cases where compensation is not permitted due to programme accreditation requirements. Please check the associated programme specification for details.**
School Assessment Board	PG Social Sciences
Moderator	April Shaw
External Examiner	Fay Dennis
Accreditation Details	
Module Appears in CPD catalogue	☒ **Yes** ☐ **No**
Changes / Version Number	1. **Module Coordinator updated** 2. **Module Moderator updated** 3. **External examiner updated** 4. **In CPD catalogue** 5. **Online only 26/27**

Assessment (also refer to Assessment Outcomes Grids below)
Assessment 1
Policy briefing on a specific (drug, alcohol, or other substance) policy issue. Max 1,500 words (50%)
Assessment 2
Assessment 2 Essay on a specific policy in the field of alcohol or drugs. 2,500 (50%)
Assessment 3
(N.B. (i) Assessment Outcomes Grids for the module (one for each component) can be found below which clearly demonstrate how the learning outcomes of the module will be assessed. (ii) An indicative schedule listing approximate times within the academic calendar when assessment is likely to feature will be provided within the Student Module Handbook.)

Component 1							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
Policy Brief	☒	☒	☒	☒	☐	50	

Component 2							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**

Essay	☒	☒	☒	☐	☐	50%	

Component 3							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Combined total for all components						100%	hours

Change Control

What	**When**	**Who**