

A Cultural History of Alcohol

HIST 341-970

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Welcome to “A Cultural History of Alcohol,” colloquially known as “The Beer Class” at WKU. We are going to follow the course of history from the ancient world up through the 20th century. However, instead of following history as it is usually told, we will instead look at how alcohol shaped, and was shaped by, world history. The intent of this course is not to study the history of beer or bourbon or any kind of liquor, but rather to ask a series of interrelated questions. How was history affected and effected by alcohol? How did alcohol serve as a social, cultural, and economic lubricant? How were drinking places centers of social and economic activity, and how was that activity managed? To answer these questions we’re going to read a great deal of literature on the subject, discuss it in class, look at primary sources related to the subject, and write about the topic.

IMPORTANT: A note about the readings and how an On Demand course functions. An On Demand course requires you to make up for the lost face-to-face class time, as well as do the outside work you would normally do for a face-to-face class. So, in a normal, face-to-face course we would spend three hours of time in class each week, with me doing some lectures and students engaging in some classroom learning activities. My classroom lectures would normally be a distillation [get it?] of a variety of readings that I have done, with me discussing some highlights of current research on different topics. That three-hour class time would be accompanied by some reading outside of class to help put the class time in context, as well as the various assignments any normal class would have. In an On Demand course, obviously, there is no class time. To make up for this lost three hours of face-to-face time, there are more readings for each topic. In some units the number of readings is significant—two or three journal articles. Because of this extra reading you will need to plan your time carefully in order to get all that work done.

Because this is a 300-level (upper-division) class, the structure of this course takes for granted that students have a basic, college-level understanding of United States and world history. If you think you do not have the basic knowledge, I would recommend finding one or (even better) two recently-published, college-level world history and U.S. history textbooks. There are many such textbooks out there, and if you cannot find one at a local library, most can be purchased online, in used condition, for just a few dollars. Any college-level text, any edition, will do. What follows are a few that have been used at Western Kentucky University:

1. Faragher, et al., *Out of Many: A History of the American People, Combined Volume*. Pearson Publishing, 2010
2. Roark, et al., *The American Promise, Combined Volume*. Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2011
3. Duiker & Spielvogel, *World History, Combined Volume*, Wadsworth, 2006
4. McKay, et. al., *A History of World Societies, Combined Volume*, Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2012

Colonnade-Specific Learning Outcomes

This is a Colonnade Connections—Social and Cultural” [K-SC] course. This means that the course must have “meta-objectives” that match the objectives of the Colonnade program. To that end we will use the history of alcohol to:

1. Analyze the development of self in relation to others in society.

2. Examine diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society.
3. Evaluate solutions to real-world social and cultural problems.

Course-Specific Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. understand the role alcohol plays in connecting individuals to their larger society;
2. describe the role of alcohol in the formation of historic cultures and societies;
3. analyze the way in which alcohol shaped social and cultural expectations for different groups (ie. religious, gendered, &c.);
4. analyze social and cultural factors that influenced attitudes towards alcohol consumption; and,
5. analyze the intersection of politics and economics with culture in various societies across time, using alcohol as a comparative framework.

IMPORTANT: For information on university policies regarding ADA, Title IX/ Discrimination & Harassment, Student Code of Conduct, Academic Integrity, Student Complaint/Student Grievance, Safe Space, Active Shooter, and other helpful information, please go to this link:

<https://www.wku.edu/syllabusinfo/>. The policies outlined there are the policies of this course.

Readings:

There are three required books for this course:

- Ogle, Maureen. *Ambitious Brew: The Story of American Beer*. Mariner Books, 2007. ISBN: 0156033593. (<http://a.co/cNktjRF>)
- Pegram, Thomas. *Battling Demon Rum: The Struggle for a Dry America, 1800 – 1933*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998. ISBN: 1566632099 (<http://a.co/jkKWwtq>)
- Rorabaugh, W.J. *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981. ISBN: 0195029909 (<http://a.co/2rov2Xc>)

You can purchase these books used on Amazon fairly cheaply. There will also be articles in each unit. These are listed in each unit below and will be available through Blackboard.

Course Requirements

Unit Tests (Sixteen Tests @ 100 Points Each): The unit tests will consist of several essay questions that draw upon knowledge from this unit in relation to Colonnade and course objectives. The essays will ask you to demonstrate a critical understanding of the readings through an analytical essay which may be related to a primary source. Most tests will feature questions that require knowledge from earlier course units. There is an online guide to writing essays and a grading rubric under “Course Information.” You must follow those requirements. If you have questions, it is up to you to ask me.

Research Project (300 Points): Aside from the final exam, this is the major graded assignment for this course, and it is one that should occupy the majority of your effort in this course. You will select a topic related to the history of alcohol from the period covered by this course, and write an 8 – 10 page research paper. The thesis of the paper must relate to one of the Colonnade learning outcomes. The Blackboard site has detailed instructions about the project, specifications, and how to complete this

assignment under “Course Information.” A paper topic is due at the end of Section One, a Bibliography is due at the end of Section Two, and a rough draft of this paper is due at the end of Section Three. The final draft of the paper is due before the final exam can be accessed.

Final Exam (300 points): There will be a comprehensive final exam, consisting of five essay questions. One question will cover the material from Section Four, while the other questions will cross through the different units, asking you to analyze topics in a comparative fashion. They will use the course learning outcomes as the basis of their construction. There is an online guide to writing essays under “Course Information.” You must follow those requirements. If you have questions, it is up to you to ask me.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is academic theft, and consists of turning in work that is not your own. That can be anything from quoting material in a paper and not crediting the original author through a footnote, to copying from a book, to pasting in the text from web pages or some Internet paper mill. All assignments are submitted through a plagiarism detection feature in Blackboard. The consequences for plagiarism in this course are simple: If you are caught plagiarizing on any assignment, **you will receive an “F” for the course and a letter reporting your conduct will be sent to your college dean recommending appropriate disciplinary action.** No exceptions. There is an online guide to plagiarism under “Course Information.” It is *your responsibility* to ensure that you do not turn in plagiarized materials by being thoroughly familiar with all the information in that document.

Grading scale:

A: 1890 – 2100

B: 1680 – 1889

C: 1470 – 1679

D: 1260 – 1469

F: 1050 – 1259

Because WKU has no system to award pluses and minuses (B+, C+, A-, &c.), these scales are firm. That is, an 840 is a C, the same as a 959. There is no wiggle room for this and I do not revise grades upward.

All required work must be submitted in order to pass this class.

Section One: The Discovery of Alcohol

Unit 1—The Earliest Origins of Booze

Objective: Students will be able to identify the origins of human production and consumption of alcohol.

Readings: Phillips, Introduction & Chapter 1, “Alcohol in Ancient Worlds”; Andrew Curry, “Our 9,000-Year Love Affair With Booze.”

Unit 2—Ancient Societies and Alcohol

Objective: Students will be able to comparatively analyze alcohol production and consumption developed in Asia and Latin America.”

Readings: Homan, “Beer and Its Drinkers: An Ancient Near Eastern Love Story”; “Mu-Chou, “The Use and Abuse of Wine in Ancient China.”

Unit 3— Ancient Societies and Alcohol

Objective: Students will be able to analyze attitudes towards alcohol in different cultures in the Mediterranean.

Readings: Hornsey, Chapter 2 “Bacchanal,” ; Phillips, Chapter 2 “Greece and Rome”; Gately, Chapters 5 “Barbarians”; Nelson, “The Cultural Construction of Beer Among Greeks and Romans”; Nelson, “Did Ancient Greeks Drink Beer?”

Unit 4—The Development of Distillation

Objective: Students will be able to comparatively analyze the development and early evolution of distilling technology.

Readings: Phillips, Chapter 6 “Distilled Spirits”; Allchin, “India: The Ancient Home of Distillation?”; Zizumbo-Villereal, “Distillation in Western Mesoamerica before European Contact.”

Section Two: Consumption Patterns

Unit 5—Consumption Patterns in Europe

Objective: Students will be able to analyze the way in which religion and gender influenced European drinking culture.

Readings: Bennett, “New Markets, Lost Opportunities”; Holt, “Europe Divided”; White, “The ‘Slow but Sure Poyson’: The Representation of Gin and Its Drinkers, 1736–1751.”

Unit 6— Consumption Patterns in the Indigenous Americas

Objective: Students will be able to describe consumption patterns changed over time among Indigenous American populations.

Readings: Hayashida, “Ancient Beer and Modern Brewers”; Trenk, “Religious Uses of Alcohol Among the Woodland Indians of North America”

Unit 7—Consumption in Colonial Africa and the Caribbean

Objective: Students will be able to analyze the ways in which outside influences changed drinking patterns in Africa and the Caribbean.

Readings: Curto, “The Introduction of Bacchus into West Central Africa”; Smith, “Carib’s Use of Alcohol in the Early Colonial Period.”

Unit 8—Consumption Patterns in the U.S.

Objective: Students will be able to evaluate and analyze the reasons for excessive drinking in early America.

Readings: Rorabaugh, W.J. *The Alcoholic Republic* (chapters 1 - 6); **Re-read:** White, “The ‘Slow but Sure Poyson’: The Representation of Gin and Its Drinkers, 1736–1751.”

Section Three: Industrialization of Manufacture

Unit 9—Pasteur and Process

Objective: Students will be able to evaluate the effects of Louis Pasteur’s experiments on the alcohol industry.

Readings: Krasner, “Pasteur: High Priest of Microbiology”; Sigsworth, “Science and the Brewing Industry, 1850-1900”

Unit 10—The Emergence Beer Giants

Objective: Students will be able to describe and analyze how immigration into the United States affected the brewing industry.

Readings: Ogle, *Ambitious Brew* (whole book);

Unit 11—Changes in Technology and Techniques

Objectives: Students will analyze the changing role of technology in the production of alcohol.

Readings: Appel, “Artificial Refrigeration and the Architecture of 19th-century American Breweries”; Stack, “Local and Regional Breweries in America's Brewing Industry, 1865 to 1920.”

Unit 12—The Role of Disease; Wine as an Example

Objectives: Students will be able to analyze how disease shaped the wine industry in Europe and South America.

Readings: Macedo, “Port Wine Landscape: Railroads, Phylloxera, and Agricultural Science”;

Section Four: The 20th Century

Unit 13—The Roots of Prohibition in the United States

Objectives: Students will be able to evaluate the different factors that gave rise to the temperance and prohibition movements in the 19th century United States.

Readings: Rorabaugh, W.J. *The Alcoholic Republic* (remainder of book); Pegram, *Demon Rum* (whole book)

Unit 14— Comparative Prohibition

Objectives: Students will be able to comparatively evaluate the different motivations for Prohibition in Africa and the United States.

Readings: Heap, “‘We Think Prohibition Is a Farce’: Drinking in the Alcohol-Prohibited Zone of Colonial Northern Nigeria”; Nugent, “The Temperance Movement and Wine Farmers at the Cape”

Unit 15— Wartime Booze

Objectives: Students will be able to analyze the local, national, and international context of distilling during World War II.

Readings: Purcell, “Bourbon to Bullets: Louisville’s Distilling Industry During World War II, 1941 – 1945”; Howard, “The Advertising Industry and Alcohol in Interwar France”

Unit 16—From 1950s Budweiser to New Albion: The Rise of Craft Beer

Objectives: Students will be able to explain and identify the origins and development of the craft beer movement.

Readings: Web articles on background history; Baginski and Bell, “Under-Tapped?: An Analysis of Craft Brewing in the Southern United States”; Garavaglia and Swinnen, “The Craft Beer Revolution: An International Perspective”