

A Cultural History of Alcohol

History 531—Online

Hello! Welcome the online version of “A Cultural History of Alcohol,” sometimes known as “The Beer Class.” Unlike the “live” version of this course, the online offering won’t feature brewing or tasting. What we will do is study the history of the west, focusing eventually on British America and the United States.

Despite the title of this class, this is not a simple history of alcohol. Instead we will use the subject of alcohol as a lens through which to examine history. The goal by the end of this is for you to understand history through a different framework. So instead of examining politics during the American Revolution, we will examine the ways that the tavern and alcohol influenced the course of the American Revolution.

This means that you must already have a working familiarity with the generalities of western civilization. Additionally, because we will spend most of the semester on American history you should be well-versed in that subject as well. If you think it would help you should get basic textbooks on Western Civ before 1700 and American history up through the 1920s.

This class uses readings as a basis for online discussions and short essays. As opposed to previous classes that I have taught, this class requires online discussions each and every week, with essays due every other week. Your grade for this class depends on full participation in the discussions as well as excellent written essays.

Essays (700 points):

There will be several essays of not more than seven pages each due over the course of the semester. The essay topics will ask you to analyze some idea related to the readings.

These essays are the main vehicle by which you can demonstrate that you have read, absorbed, and are able to analyze the readings for each week and for the semester, so I could expect to see you discuss the various authors’ ideas in support of the topic.

Online Discussion (1400 points):

For those of you who have taken classes from me before, please read this section carefully. I have changed these guidelines from previous semesters.

There will be discussion each and every week of this semester. Every week, by Monday morning, I will post a discussion question (or questions) in the Blackboard Discussion Board forum. The questions will be related to the readings for that week. This means that in order to intelligently and analytically engage your classmates, you will need to have already completed the readings for that week. The questions will usually also incorporate readings from the previous weeks.

You will have three days to respond to my original question. By Friday of that week you must also post two thoughtful, provocative responses to two student responses, for three total posts. This is the minimum, “C”-level, requirement. You should post more than three times, of course, because your grade will be based not simply on posting something, but on the ways in which you offer insight, analysis, and help move the discussion forward. So, I will grade you on the quality of your postings rather than the quantity.

The discussion period runs from when I post the question on Monday through 11pm Friday. However, I consider this to be a week-long discussion. A response to my initial question late on Wednesday and two more responses late on Friday will be considered minimalist, “C”-level work. Given that this is supposed to be a critical, analytical discussion, you will be graded using the following guidelines:

I will consider the following when scoring student replies to instructor’s initial post:

- Are all questions answered thoroughly and thoughtfully?
- Were resources or references from course work/readings included when relevant?
- Did student's response reflect critical analysis and/or insight?
- Did the response challenge or critique, or simply agree?

I will consider the following when scoring student replies to all follow-up posts:

- Was the response clear and indicative of thoughtful reflection?
- Did the response show understanding of the topic under discussion and address specific points or questions raised in post to which student is responding?
- Is there evidence of constructive feedback or insightful critique?
- Did the response challenge or critique, or simply agree?
- Did the response move the discussion in a new direction?

Second Life:

One of the discussion sections will take place in Second Life (SL), a virtual reality-based community sometimes known as a Massively Multiplayer Online Social Game (MMOSG). To engage in this meeting you will need to download and install the Second Life client from <http://www.secondlife.com>. The program is free. You will also need to spend some time getting familiar with the SL world, how to navigate your virtual-reality character (avatar), and how to get from place to place. We will meet on WKU’s “island” March 2, at 8pm Central Time.

That week’s discussion will occur in real-time in this virtual world. More detailed instructions are found on Blackboard.

Final Paper: To be determined

Readings:

Books:

1. Conroy, David. *In Public Houses: Drink and The Revolution of Authority in Colonial*

- Massachusetts. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995. ISBN 0-8078-4521-3.
2. Martin, Scott C. *Devil Of The Domestic Sphere: Temperance, Gender, and Middle-class Ideology, 1800-1860*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010. ISBN 0-87580-639-2
 3. McGovern, Patrick. *Uncorking The Past: The Quest for Wine, Beer, and Other Alcoholic Beverages*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. ISBN 0-520-26798-2.
 4. Powers, Madelon. *Faces Along The Bar: Lore and Order in the Workingman's Saloon, 1870 – 1920*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998. ISBN 0-226-67769-9
 5. Salinger, Sharon. *Taverns And Drinking In Early America*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1994. ISBN 0-8018-7899-3.
 6. Thursty, Ann. *Bacchus And Civic Order: The Culture of Drink in Early Modern Germany*. Charlotte: University of Virginia Press, 2001. ISBN 0-8139-2045-0.

Articles and Chapters (Found on Blackboard):

1. Baker, R.A. "Wine in the Ancient World." Accessed 1/14/2011, www.churchhistory101.com/docs/Wine-Ancient-World.pdf
2. Cornell, Martyn, "A Short History of Hops." Accessed 1/14/2011, <http://zythophile.wordpress.com/2009/11/20/a-short-history-of-hops/>
3. Dupre, Daniel. "Barbecues and Pledges: Electioneering and the Rise of Democratic Politics in Antebellum Alabama," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 60, No. 3. (Aug., 1994), pp. 479-512
4. Gately, Iain. Chapters Two through Eight, in *Drink: A Cultural History of Alcohol*. New York: Gotham Books, 2008.
5. Hamilakis, Yannis. "Food Technologies/Technologies of the Body: The Social Context of Wine and Oil Production and Consumption in Bronze Age Crete," *World Archaeology*, Vol. 31, No. 1, Food Technology in Its Social Context: Production, Processing and Storage (Jun., 1999), pp. 38-54
6. Homan, Michael. "Beer and Its Drinkers: An Ancient Near Eastern Love Story," *Near Eastern Archaeology*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (Jun., 2004), pp. 84-95.
7. Kingsdale, Jon. "The 'Poor Man's Club': Social Functions of the Urban Working-Class Saloon," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 4. (Oct., 1973), pp. 472-489
8. Kopperman, Paul. "'The Cheapest Pay': Alcohol Abuse in the Eighteenth-Century British Army," *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 60, No. 3. (Jul., 1996), pp. 445-470.
9. McCusker, John. "The Rum Trade and the Balance of Payments of the Thirteen Continental Colonies, 1650-1775," *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 30, No. 1, The Tasks of Economic History. (Mar., 1970), pp. 244-247
10. Melendy, Royal L., "The Saloon in Chicago," *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 6, No. 3. (Nov., 1900), pp. 289-306
11. Murphy, Mary. "Bootlegging Mothers and Drinking Daughters: Gender and Prohibition in Butte, Montana," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 46, No. 2. (Jun., 1994), pp. 174-194
12. Thomas R. Pegram and Loyola College, "Hoodwinked: The Anti-Saloon League and the Ku Klux Klan in 1920s Prohibition Enforcement," *Journal of Gilded Age and Progressive Era*. January 2008
13. Thorp, Daniel. "Taverns and Tavern Culture on the Southern Colonial Frontier," *The*

- Journal of Southern History*, vol. LXII (1996), 661-688
14. Wallace, Daniel B. "The Bible and Alcohol." Accessed 1/14/2011,
<http://bible.org/article/bible-and-alcohol>

Grade:

1. Online Discussion (1400 points)
2. Short Essays (700 points)
3. Final Essay (500 points)

Weekly Business

Week 1—Jan 24 – Jan 28

Topic: Introductions, and the Meaning of Alcohol in Western Culture

Readings (found on Blackboard): Hamilakis, Yannis. "Food Technologies/Technologies of the Body: The Social Context of Wine and Oil Production and Consumption in Bronze Age Crete"; Homan, "Beer and Its Drinkers: An Ancient Near Eastern Love Story"

Online Discussion Topic: The role of alcohol in western society

Week 2—Jan 31 – Feb 4

Topic: Alcohol in the Ancient World

Reading: McGovern, Patrick. *Uncorking the Past*

Online Discussion Topic: How alcohol and archaeology help us understand history

Essay Topic: The role of alcohol in the development of civilization

Week 3—Feb 7 – Feb 11

Topic: Alcohol and Ancient Greece

Reading: Gately, Iain, Chapter 2, "Bacchanal"

Online Discussion Topic: Greek attitudes towards wine and beer

Friday—Final Essay Topic Due

Week 4—Feb 14 – Feb 18

Topic: Alcohol and the Romans

Reading: Gately, Iain, Chapter 3, "In Vino Veritas," and Chapter 4, "Wine, Blood, Salvation"; Baker, "Wine in the Ancient World"; Wallace, "The Bible and Alcohol"

Online Discussion Topic: Christianity and attitudes towards wine and beer

Essay Topic: Christianity and alcohol

Week 5—Feb 21 – Feb 25

Topic: The So-Called Dark Ages

Reading: Gately, Iain, Chapters 5 "Barbarians," & 6 "Islam" & 7 "Brews for Breakfast"; Cornell, Martyn, "A Short History of Hops"

Online Discussion Topic: Comparative attitudes towards alcohol

Week 6—Feb 28 – Mar 4—**Class Meets in Second Life!**

Topic: Germany in the Renaissance

Reading: Thursty, *Bacchus and Civic Order*

Online Discussion Topic: The culture of the tavern

Essay Topic: Social roles in the Middle Ages and Renaissance

Week 7—Mar 7 - Mar 11 (**Spring Break—No Assignments**)

Week 8—Mar 14 – Mar 18

Topic: Colonial America

Reading: Gately, Iain, Chapter 8, “A New World of Drinking”; Salinger, *Taverns and Drinking in Early America*

Online Discussion Topic: Comparing taverns in America and Germany.

Essay Topic: Volumes of consumption

Week 9—Mar 21 – Mar 25

Topic: The Economics of Alcohol

Reading: Kopperman, “The Cheapest Pay”; McCusker, “The Rum Trade and the Balance of Payments of the Thirteen Continental Colonies

Online Discussion Topic: Alcohol as part of the economy

Week 10—Mar 28 – Apr 1

Topic: Revolutionary America

Reading: Conroy, *The Public Houses*

Online Discussion Topic: Role of the tavern in the Revolution

Essay Topic: Role of the tavern in the Revolution

Week 11—Apr 4 – Apr 8

Topic: Politics and Alcohol in Early America

Reading: Dupre, “Barbecues and Pledges”

Online Discussion Topic: Politics and alcohol

Week 12—Apr 11 – Apr 15

Topic: The Birth of Temperance

Reading: Martin, *Devil of the Domestic Sphere*

Online Discussion Topic: Changing public roles

Essay Topic: Gender and alcohol

Week 13—Apr 18 – Apr 22

Topic: Saloon Culture

Reading: Melendy, “The Saloon in Chicago”; Kingsdale, “The ‘Poor Man's Club’”

Online Discussion Topic: The saloon as gendered and economic space

Week 14—Apr 25 – Apr 29

Topic: Saloon Culture

Reading: Powers, *Faces Along the Bar*

Online Discussion Topic: What is the saloon

Essay Topic: The “real” saloon versus the saloon in popular culture

Week 15—Apr 2 – Apr 6

Topic: Gender and Prohibition

Reading: Murphy, “Bootlegging Mothers and Drinking Daughters”; Pegram, “Hoodwinked”

Online Discussion Topic: Women, prohibition, morals, and the economy

Final Paper Due: 12:00 noon, Monday, May 9, 2010.