

Syllabus: Uncommon Reads Spring 2022

Course Title:

IDH2930: "Empire of Pain; The Secret History of the Sackler Dynasty"

Meeting Time:

W, 4

Room:

Little, 119

Instructor:

Dr. Craig Smith

Email:

csmith@arts.ufl.edu

Office Hours: W, 2-3, Zoom (Please make an appointment.)

Course Description/Faculty Experience:

In this Uncommon course, students will have the opportunity to engage in-depth depictions of the opioid epidemic in the United States and the ethics of pain management and mental healthcare in the United States. The book has recently been published, though much of its contents have appeared in full or in part on NPR, in the New Yorker, and in multiple publications including major newspapers like the New York Times and the Miami Herald. The author of the text is an investigative journalist who has doggedly followed the opioid epidemic in the United States with a particular focus on the role of the Sackler Family and Purdue Family in the manufacturing and marketing of opiate-derived pain medications including Oxycontin. This book was completed prior to the 2021 federal court decisions regarding the Sackler family and their liability concerns for the impact of their products on the opioid epidemic.

This Uncommon Reads course will be taught by Dr. Craig Smith who has multiple years of experience teaching Uncommon courses. Dr. Smith is the Director of Culture for Column Health, LLC based in Boston, USA and a senior faculty member at the University of Florida. With this experience, Dr. Smith will share additional contexts for students in relation to 'start-up culture' and humane engagements with mental health and pain management in the United States, with a particular focus on opiate use disorder and M.A.T. or medication-assisted treatment models.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Develop multiple approaches to an analytical engagement with non-fiction texts.
2. Develop a dynamic understanding of the opioid epidemic in the United States, including a rich overview of the very recent history of this epidemic and the systemic responses to pain, pain management, and mental health in the US Healthcare system .
3. Develop a critical consciousness in relation to systemic bias and stigma in relation to addiction and addiction medicine as articulated in state-by-state litigation against the Sackler family (and big pharma).
4. Learn how startup culture is involved in creating new forms of addiction medicine.
5. Learn of the pitfalls to access humane treatment for substance use disorders.

Grading/Examination/Attendance

This course will meet for one hour weekly. Chapters assigned per week will be outlined on the syllabus schedule. Students are expected to attend the weekly meeting and to provide a short verbal presentation/ response to the content of that week's assigned chapters. There are no examinations for this course, however weekly commitments to the reading will include 2-3 hours weekly (meaning that each student needs 2-3 hours of time to read the assigned chapters weekly).

Grading will be based on weekly participation in the class meeting including providing a short verbal presentation. Therefore attendance weekly and preparation by reading the assigned chapters is essential for a successful completion of the course. Missing class will result in losing points for that date. Excused absences, meeting the DSO requirements, will be honored.

A gradebook is available on the course canvas page. All grading will follow the UF grading guidelines available here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Content Warning:

In this course, we will cover content and materials that some may find difficult. It is important that in a studio art or humanities course we do not shy away from engaging with materials that may be controversial or challenging. I encourage you to reach out to me if you are struggling with the course materials. In class, if you need to step away for a period of time as we are covering particular content, you may do so without penalty, but I ask that you remember that you are responsible for any information covered in your absence.

Accommodations:

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center.](#) It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Online Course Evaluations:

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

In-Class Recording:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code.

Schedule (with participation grade weights):

1/12: Prologue, Book 1, Chapters 1 and 2 (6 pts)

1/19: Book 1, Chapters 3 and 4 (6 pts)

1/26: Book 1, Chapters 5 and 6 (6 pts)

2/2: No Class Meeting

2/9: Book 1, Chapters 7-10 (8 pts)

2/16: Book 2, Chapters 11-12 (8 pts)

2/23: Book 2, Chapters 13-14 (8 pts)

3/2: Book 2, Chapters 15, 16 (8 pts)

3/9: No Class Meeting

3/16: Book 2, Chapters 17-20 (8 pts)

3/23: Book 3, Chapters 21-22 (8 pts)

3/30: Book 3, Chapters 23-24 (8 pts)

4/6: Book 3, Chapters 25-26 (8 pts)

4/13: Book 3, Chapters 27-28 (10 pts)

4/20: Book 3, Chapter 29 + Afterword (10 pts)