



Rutgers University
Graduate School of Applied & Professional Psychology (GSAPP)
Department of Applied Psychology
New Brunswick, New Jersey
Fall 2025

Course Title: Foundations in Alcohol Studies: Biology, Psychology, and Sociology
Course No: 18:844:680
Meeting Times: Tuesdays 3:35-6:05 PM
Location: Smithers Hall 219
Instructor: Alexandria Bauer, PhD
Email: alexandria.bauer@rutgers.edu
Office: Busch Campus, Smithers Hall 217B
Office Hours: By appointment (in person or Zoom)

Rutgers University Mission

As one of the leading comprehensive public research universities in the nation, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, has the threefold mission of:

1. Providing for the educational needs of New Jersey through our undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs;
2. Conducting cutting-edge research that contributes to the health, environmental, social, and cultural well-being of the state, nation, and world, as well as strengthening the economy and supporting businesses and industries; and
3. Performing public service in support of the needs of the people of the state and their local, county, and state governments.

GSAPP Mission

We prepare exceptional practitioners, scholars, and leaders in applied and professional psychology to serve diverse populations by translating scientific knowledge into innovative practices that promote social justice and create lasting positive impact.

MAP Statement

The program embraces the mission of the school by offering instruction that has an emphasis on civic and global citizenship, social justice, and cultural diversity. This course of study provides students with knowledge needed to understand individual and collective behaviors; develop quantitative and qualitative statistical analysis and research design needed to analyze the corresponding physical and environmental contributors to human behavior; and a beginning understanding of the analysis and treatment of behavior problems and disorders.

Course Description

This course is designed for those who are interested in learning the latest science about the nature and treatment of alcohol use, alcohol use disorder (AUD), and addiction. Although we primarily focus on alcohol, we will also cover other substances throughout the course. This psychology course will integrate biological, emotional, behavioral, social, cultural, environmental, and cognitive factors that contribute to

problematic alcohol use and the development of AUD. We will also focus on how multiple aspects of human diversity (e.g., race, ethnicity, age, gender) contribute to patterns of alcohol use, diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. You will also learn about the history of alcohol use and AUD and different prevention and treatment approaches for AUD. In addition to discussing how recovery from a substance problem can occur through natural mechanisms, we'll also discuss intervention strategies ranging from individual-level prevention and treatment to macro-level public-health and policy programs.

Required Text

No textbook is required. Assigned materials will include review articles, edited book chapters, and videos that will all be made available on Canvas.

Course Objectives

1. To increase recognition of the symptoms associated with alcohol misuse and alcohol use disorder (AUD), with understanding that symptoms exist on a continuum with multiple contributing factors.
2. To promote consideration of the ways in which culture and history have shaped the field of alcohol and substance use disorders.
3. To synthesize and think critically about the empirical basis for prevention and treatment of AUD.
4. To identify specific evidence-based treatments for effectively treating AUD, with consideration given to patient diversity and intersectional identities.

Expectations for the Class

- Review this syllabus in detail to fully understand the expectations, policies, and assignments associated with this course.
- Read the assigned material prior to class and attend class each week ready to actively participate. You will get the most out of this class by attending and taking part in class lectures and discussions.
- Please silence or turn off your cell phones before class begins. Please be on time and let me know in advance if you have to leave early.
- Check your email account frequently, as email is the primary means I use to communicate with students. Announcements will also be posted on Canvas.

Attendance, Participation, and Conduct

Attendance is expected at all class sessions, particularly given the timing of the course and that much of the class is based on discussion and interaction. Missing more than two total class sessions will lead to a 5-point reduction (per additional day absent) in your final grade. Please speak to me in advance if you need to miss class unexpectedly or have extenuating circumstances. You may also report absences using the University's [Self-Reporting Absence System](#), which will automatically notify me.

Some of our class meeting dates coincide with holidays that are not observed by the University. Please let me know about any of these dates that you observe, and I am happy to discuss alternate arrangements with you. It is University policy (University Regulation on Attendance, Book 2, 2.47B, formerly 60.14f) to excuse, without penalty, students who are absent from class because of religious observance and to allow the makeup of work missed because of such absence. Examinations and special required out-of-class activities shall ordinarily not be scheduled on those days when religiously observant students refrain from participating in secular activities. Absences for reasons of religious obligation shall not be counted for purposes of reporting. Students are advised to provide timely notification to instructors about necessary

absences for religious observances and are responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule.

When you're in class, please be respectful of others' identities, views, and lived experiences as we discuss the course material. Please speak to me if you feel uncomfortable or excluded due to an aspect of your cultural background. Some of our class discussions may involve socially sensitive topics. Although you may certainly disagree with a classmate (or me), please show respect for others—including using preferred pronouns and inclusive, person-centered language in discussions and written assignments. For more information, please review the [American Psychological Association's Inclusive Language Guidelines](#). It is possible that some people in the course may have experienced alcohol-related problems personally or know someone who challenges related to alcohol use. Please be judicious about discussing personal examples, to limit revealing any personal health information. If you have any questions or concerns at any time, or find the content of this course distressing, please contact Dr. Bauer.

Course Format and Use of Technology

Classes will be held in person, unless specified by the instructor. If needed, Zoom will be used as an alternate option. In the event that class will be held remotely, the instructor will communicate the change as soon as possible, via e-mail and Canvas announcement. Please inform the instructor if you do not have access to a computer or have other limitations in accessing Zoom.

All written assignments will be turned in through Canvas. Students agree that by taking this course, all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com (directly or via learning management system, i.e. Sakai, Blackboard, Canvas, Moodle) for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Academic Integrity

All Rutgers students should review and adhere to the University principles of academic integrity, available at: <https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/current.pdf>. It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism, even when it is unintentional. Please visit [Rutgers Student Affairs Academic Integrity page](#) for information about plagiarism, including University policies. If you are not sure whether something is plagiarism, please feel free to discuss with me. Repercussions for academic dishonesty can include academic penalties (e.g., resubmission of assignments, failing grade), educational sanctions, and disciplinary sanctions—the risk isn't worth it.

While artificial intelligence (AI) can be a useful tool, it is unacceptable for students to turn in work that has been fully or partially generated by AI. As noted in [Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy 10.2.13](#), the principles of academic integrity require that students make sure that all submitted coursework be “the student's own and created without the aid of impermissible technologies, materials, or collaborations.” AI can be used as a tool for your work (e.g., generating ideas, brainstorming writing topics), but cannot be used to complete the work itself. All assignments submitted for this course must represent the student's original writing.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

- **Article Critiques**

On designated weeks, you will be required to submit a brief critique and reflection on at least one of the assigned readings. (Note that you are still expected to come to class ready to discuss all readings). Articles will be available for you on Canvas, and critiques will be turned in through Canvas by the start of class on respective due dates. Each critique should follow the R-C-Q format described below. Responses can be written in bullet points or outline form, but they should be written out in full sentences so that I can clearly understand your thought process. You can use flex days for additional time on critiques if needed.

- *R = Revelations*. Identify 3 to 5 things that were revelations to you as you read them, noting where in the readings they occurred and how and why they were surprising or thought-provoking.
- *C = Critiques*. Identify 3 strengths and/or weaknesses of the article. When identifying weaknesses, do not repeat their limitations section. I also strongly encourage you to move past listing factors like sample size and generalizability in your critiques.
- *Q = Questions*. Write 3 to 5 questions that occurred to you as you were reading. These can include specific questions to which you would like answers, areas where you would like more information, and areas where you had disagreements. Make sure they are thoughtful questions, rather than simple factual questions that you could easily look up.

- **Student-Led Discussions**

For most weeks (with some exceptions), two (2) students will lead a discussion on the assigned readings. Each person will lead the discussion twice during the semester. Dates will be scheduled in advance at the beginning of the course. Please note that this is not intended to just be a presentation or summary of the article—you should expect that your classmates have done the assigned readings.

Discussion leaders should each come prepared with open-ended questions that can be used to stimulate conversation related to the course material and that week's assigned readings. You can use the questions from your critique, but *both* discussion leaders need to prepare questions for *all* readings for that week. You'll turn your questions in through Canvas, but you don't have to stick to them as they're written. Discussions should last 60-90 minutes, which may go beyond the questions that you have prepared. Rather than reading through a list of questions just to get an answer, I encourage you to be flexible and prompt your classmates for further elaboration, evaluation, and reflection. I will help move the discussion along if needed. Remember when you are not leading the discussion, you can help your classmates by being an active, engaged, and interested discussion participant.

- **In-class Activity**

There will be one in-class activity, completed in small groups around the middle of the semester. This activity will focus on proposing a prevention intervention to address an alcohol-related problem. Further information and grading criteria will be provided.

- **Exams**

There will be two non-cumulative exams over the course of the semester. Each exam will be primarily multiple-choice, although they may include some matching and short answer questions. I will let you know what to expect before each exam. You will have the entire class period to complete it. Each exam will be worth 75 points.

Late Work

In general, assignments are expected to be turned in by the start of class on their respective due dates. This allows for the most productive class participation, active discussion, and effective learning. However, I understand that lives and schedules can be unpredictable. Throughout the course, you have three (3) flex days to use, either separately or combined. Each flex day gives you 24 additional hours after the initial deadline to submit work before it is considered late—you can apply flex days for written assignments for any reason, without explanation or documentation. If you're planning to use one (or two, or three) of these days, please just email me and let me know so I can make a note of it. It's also helpful if you can make a note of it by adding a comment on Canvas when you upload your assignment. Due to their nature and timing, you cannot use flex days for student-led discussions.

Late work (i.e., assignments turned in after the deadline, or after you've used all your flex days), will result in a 20% point-reduction for each assignment submitted late. I will only accept late work up to one week after the deadline—don't try to wait until the end of the semester to complete the assignments at once. If you have extenuating circumstances and are worried about completing assignments or keeping up with work, please speak to me as soon as possible. I am more than happy to work with you to identify solutions or create a plan to make sure you can be successful in this course.

The final grade will be determined and computed based on the following:

Article critiques (10 x 20 points)	200 points
Exams (2 x 75 points)	150 points
In-class group activity	100 points
Student-led discussion (2 x 25 points)	50 points
Total	500 points

Grades and Grading Policy

Grade	Description	Percentage	Numerical Equivalent
A	Outstanding	90-100%	450-500
B+	Intermediate Grade	86-89%	430-449
B	Good	80-85%	400-429
C	Average	70-79%	350-399
F	Failing	69% or below	≤ 349

Program requirement: All students must achieve a grade of B or better and maintain a GPA of 3.0, or academic remediation will be enforced.

Important Dates:

GSAPP: <https://gsapp.rutgers.edu/about/academic-administrative-calendar>

Rutgers: <https://scheduling.rutgers.edu/scheduling/academic-calendar>

Student Handbook

All students must adhere to the GSAPP Student Handbook of Policies and Procedures:

<https://gsapp.rutgers.edu/current-students/student-handbook-policies-and-procedures>

Student Resources

For more information visit: <https://gsapp.rutgers.edu/current-students/important-links>

- **Title IX:** <https://nbttitleix.rutgers.edu>
- **Counseling services:** Students often experience personal problems or difficulties during the term that may interfere with learning and their daily activities. If you or someone you know needs to talk to someone regarding such personal issues, the University provides free counseling services through the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and their information can be found at: <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/>. They also offer a number of useful workshops for general stress management and techniques for promoting mental health. If you have any questions about CAPS or other services, I am happy to speak with you privately.
- **Accommodations due to disability:** If you seek accommodations due to a documented disability, you may arrange for these through the Office of Disability Services, Kreeger Learning Center, 151 College Avenue; dfoffice@rci.rutgers.edu or you can visit: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>
- **Childcare needs:** <https://swc.rutgers.edu/resources/child-care>
- **Language support:** <https://reli.rutgers.edu/>

Course Schedule

NOTE: All articles will be posted to Canvas. The reading assignments in this Course Schedule are subject to change (any changes will be announced at least one week prior to the assigned class period).

Date	Topics/Activity	Required Readings
9/2	Introduction to the course	
9/9	Key concepts in epidemiology and clinical conceptualization	1. Schmidt et al. (2021) 2. White (2020) 3. Banks & Zapolski (2018) Due: Article critiques (#1)
9/16	Research methods <i>Class will meet remotely</i>	1. Strong et al. (2024) 2. Meadows et al. (2023) Due: Article critiques (#2)
9/23	Levels of influence and intervention	1. Sudhinaraset, Wigglesworth, & Takeuchi (2016) 2. Apostolopoulos et al. (2017) Due: Article critiques (#3)
9/30	EXAM #1	
10/7	Individual and interpersonal level factors and outcomes	1. Romo-Avilés et al. (2023) 2. Riordan et al. (2015) Due: Article critiques (#4)
10/14	Environmental, social, and community level factors and outcomes	1. Bryan, Kim, & Frederik-Goldsen (2017) 2. Perrotte & Zamboanga (2019) 3. Miller, Pederson, & Marshall (2017) Due: Article critiques (#5)
10/21	Policy level factors and macro-level outcomes	1. Golden et al. (2015) 2. De & Sun (2025) 3. Nicholls (2023) Due: Article critiques (#6)

10/28	IN-CLASS ACTIVITY <u>Optional readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stigler et al., (2011) – “School-based programs to prevent and reduce alcohol use among youth” • Stockings et al. (2016) – “Prevention, early intervention, harm reduction, and treatment of substance use in young people” • Lee & Sher (2018) – “‘Maturing out’ of binge and problem drinking” 	
11/4	Assessment, diagnosis, and treatment (Part I) Psychopathology and diagnostic criteria	1. Jordan & Andersen (2017) 2. Connor, Haber, & Hall (2015) Due: Article critiques (#7)
11/11	Assessment, diagnosis, and treatment (Part 2) Screening Tools and Assessment Measures	1. Dupont, Compton, & McLellan (2015) 2. Haber (2025) Due: Article critiques (#8)
11/18	Assessment, diagnosis, and treatment (Part 3) Evidence-Based Treatments	1. Witkiewitz, Litten, & Leggio (2019) 2. Morris et al. (2022) Due: Article critiques (#9)
11/25	NO CLASS	
12/2	Harm reduction and recovery-oriented approaches	1. Milet et al. (2021) 2. Eddie et al. (2019) Due: Article critiques (#10)
12/9	Bringing it all together	Two self-identified articles (include citations)
12/16	EXAM #2	

This course schedule is subject to revision. Any changes will be announced in class and on Canvas.