





Master of Arts Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS) 752

Special Topics Graduate Seminar—Psychedelics and Society: A Critical Overview (Revision 12)

Status: Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

Delivery mode: [Grouped study](#) 








Credits: 3

Area of study: Arts

Prerequisite: None

Precluded: None

Faculty: [Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) 

Notes: MAIS Focus areas: [Adult Education](#) , [Community Studies](#) , [Cultural Studies](#) , [Educational Studies](#) , [Equity Studies](#) , [Global Change](#) , [Heritage and Social History](#) , and [Work, Organization and](#)

Overview

Most psychedelics are derived from plants and fungi, and although they have a long history of Indigenous use, they have a dramatic and fraught history in the Western world. Their recreational and spiritual use was eclipsed by the War on Drugs, which became a global endeavour costing billions of dollars and countless lives. After decades of illegality, the vise-grip of prohibition has loosened, leading to what some authors refer to as the psychedelic renaissance—a flourishing of human potential with the help of psychedelics.

Psychedelics are predominantly cast as medicines in the psychedelic renaissance, which creates space for their application towards healing and well-being, while at the same time engenders certain exclusions.

Psychedelics and Society offers learners a critical overview of several domains that influence the contemporary unfolding of the so-called psychedelic renaissance. In this course, we will interrogate the historico-legal context, the role of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Knowledges, the notion of “plant teachers,” the importance of inclusion in the psychedelics space, the overwhelming emphasis on medicalization and commercialization, the ethical challenges associated with the psychedelic renaissance, and the various issues within the field of psychedelic-assisted therapy.

Outline

MAIS 752 consists of 14 units:

- Unit 1: Introduction to Psychedelics
- Unit 2: Overview of the Major and Minor Psychedelics
- Unit 3: Ethnobotany and Psychedelics
- Unit 4: Indigenous Peoples and Psychedelics
- Unit 5: Indigenous Perspectives on Psychedelics
- Unit 6: Psychedelics and Nature-Relatedness
- Unit 7: Plant Teachers



Unit 8: Break
Unit 9: Crisis of Inclusion in Psychedelic Science
Unit 10: Cognitive Liberty
Unit 11: Psychedelics and the Legal Context
Unit 12: Commercialization and Medicalization
Unit 13: Ethics
Unit 14: Psychedelic Assisted Therapy 1
Unit 15: Psychedelic Assisted Therapy 2

Learning outcomes

MAIS 752 has six major learning outcomes. After completing this course, students should be able to

1. Discuss the role of the War on Drugs, recent scientific findings, and the notion of cognitive liberty on the decriminalization and legalization of psychedelics.
2. Critically assess the role of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Knowledge in the psychedelic renaissance.
3. Discuss the importance of inclusion in the psychedelics field.
4. Appraise the contemporary emphasis on medicalization and commercialization of psychedelics.
5. Analyze the primary ethical issues in the contemporary psychedelics field.
6. Describe the key approaches and issues associated with psychedelic-assisted therapy (PAT), including integration.

Evaluation

To receive **credit**  for MAIS 752, students must complete and submit all of the assignments, and achieve a minimum grade of **C- (60 percent)**  for the course.





Students will be evaluated on their understanding of the concepts presented in the course and on their ability to apply those concepts. The final grade in the course will be based on the marks achieved for the following activities.

Activity	Weight
Participation	25%
Assignment 1: Summary and Critique of a Peer-Reviewed Paper	20%
Assignment 2: Critique the Work of a Psychedelic-Related Initiative	20%
Assignment 3: Major Essay	35%
Total	100%

Materials

All course materials are available online.

Important links

- › [Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies](#) 
- › [Focus Areas](#) 
- › [Courses](#) 
- › [Fees and Funding](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

Updated October 8, 2024

View [previous revision](#) 
