Psychedelic Medicine: Past, Present, and Future

Directors: William Prueitt, M.D. (william.prueitt@yale.edu) and Jordan Sloshower, M.D., M.Sc.

Dates: 8 sessions held weekly from October – December 2020

Time: Wednesdays from 5:30 – 7:00pm

Location: Zoom video conference

Maximum Number: 12

Recommended Years: Open to all healthcare professionals, trainees, and students

Course Description:

The fields of psychedelic science and medicine are rapidly expanding with increasing numbers of pre-clinical and clinical investigations being initiated each year. Research studies conducted to date have shown that psychedelics hold promise as therapeutics for a range of mental health conditions and also have the ability to alter brain circuitry, induce positive changes in attitudes and values, facilitate personality changes, and affect political views and mindfulness, among other constructs. Accordingly, increasing numbers of researchers, clinicians, and mental health professional trainees are becoming interested in the field and seeking training and education in this area. This elective seminar serves both as an introduction to core topics in this field and as an opportunity to critically explore the scientific, political, and ethical issues that permeate its past, present, and future.

This elective is primarily a reading seminar focused on participatory group discussions of 2-3 assigned readings per class. Short introductions to the week’s topic will generally be provided and materials may also include short videos. The course will begin with a discussion of indigenous uses of psychedelic plants and early Western research with psychedelic substances. We will then explore modern therapeutic applications and proposed mechanisms of action and change. Finally, we will examine issues important to the future of the field, including medicalization, equity and access for diverse populations, and potential models for clinical treatment.

Learning Objectives:

1. Synthesize scholarship from across the biological, psychological, and social sciences into an interdisciplinary understanding of psychedelic substances and their potential therapeutic applications.
2. Describe the historical context for current psychedelic research, including early research and indigenous uses.
3. Identify neurobiological, psychological, and spiritual mechanisms by which psychedelics may function as therapeutics for mental health disorders.
4. Analyze the complex set of political, commercial, and ethical issues facing the field of psychedelic medicine as it moves towards medicalization.
# Weekly Syllabus

## Past

### Week 1

**Indigenous uses of psychedelic plants**

**Required readings:**


### Week 2

**Early Western research and experimentation**

**Required readings:**


- Video (Watch from 0:00 – 8:00 min): *LSD’s Long Strange Trip*. Retro Report, The New York Times. 2016. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WouOr579mfY&has_verified=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WouOr579mfY&has_verified=1)

## Present

### Week 3

**How do psychedelics work? Part 1: Behavioral and clinical neurobiology**

**Required readings:**
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>How do psychedelics work? Part 2: Healing and mystical-type experiences</th>
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<td>Required readings:</td>
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<th>Week 5</th>
<th>How do psychedelics work? Part 3: Drug-assisted psychotherapy</th>
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<td>Required Readings:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Video: Magic Mushrooms and the Healing Trip. The New Yorker. 2015. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=am12fHnOhXQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=am12fHnOhXQ</a></td>
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Suggested Overview:  
**Week 6**

**Frontiers and controversial topics in psychedelic research**

**Required readings:**

- **Kaelen, M., Giribaldi, B., Raine, J., Evans, L., Timmerman, C., Rodriguez, N., ... & Carhart-Harris, R. (2018).** *The hidden therapist: evidence for a central role of music in psychedelic therapy.* *Psychopharmacology,* 235(2), 505-519. [https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s00213-017-4820-5](https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s00213-017-4820-5)

- **Lyons, T., Carhart-Harris, R. (2018).** *Increased nature relatedness and decreased authoritarian political views after psilocybin for treatment-resistant depression.* *Journal of Psychopharmacology* 32(7), 811-819. [https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/026988117748902](https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/026988117748902)


**Future**

**Week 7**

**Diversity, equity, and inclusion in psychedelic medicine**

**Required readings:**

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<th>Models of psychedelic science and treatment</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Required readings:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>● Sloshower, J. (2018). <em>Integrating Psychedelic Medicines and Psychiatry: Theory and Methods of a Model Clinic</em>. In <em>Plant Medicines, Healing and Psychedelic Science</em> (pp. 113-132). Springer, Cham. <a href="https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-76720-8">https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-76720-8</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● McGaughey, Dave (2019). <em>We Will Call It PALA</em>. Aurynproject.org/pala</td>
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**Additional resources for further study:**

Other Recommended Readings:

Topic Overview:

- *Nichols, D.* (2016). *Psychedelics.* Pharmacological Reviews 68(2), 264 - 355. [https://dx.doi.org/10.1124/pr.115.011478](https://dx.doi.org/10.1124/pr.115.011478)


Safety and Regulatory Considerations:


Therapist Competencies: