



From left to right: a tunnel connecting Tijuana, Mexico with San Diego, California for smuggling drugs in the US; Pablo Escobar's mug shot; coca leaves before being processed

## HIST 290: History of Drugs in Latin America Spring 2014

This course is designed to introduce students to the history of drugs in Latin America. So often in the United States, we hear about only the U.S. side of the story. The "War on Drugs" is widely discussed in the media, but rarely are the causes and consequences within Latin America ever examined. In this class we will begin by looking at pre-conquest indigenous ideas about drugs and drug usage and how these ideas interact with contemporary policies about defining and proscribing illicit drug use. We will examine coca production in the Andes and how that became an enormous cocaine industry. What are the economics of cocaine production? Why do people of different race, gender, and class backgrounds participate in this economy? How has the presence of drug cartels impacted the politics of Latin American nations, such as Colombia, Peru, and Mexico? How have historical processes such as urbanization, Cold War polarization, emigration to the U.S., and economic globalization impacted drug production, distribution, and consumption in Latin America? By examining these questions, we can hopefully understand the many ways in which U.S. drug policy is often working at odds with the socio-economic conditions in Latin America, and why the U.S. Government is therefore not succeeding in achieving its goals.