



The Wild West: Canada's Legalization of Marijuana

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9:00am – 4:30pm

Summary (Abstract)

In 1923, after thousands of years of use by humankind, Canada made the hasty decision to enact cannabis prohibition under a cloud of fear stemming from the ban on opium and other drugs. The unfortunate move was a catalyst that led to decades of criminal charges for Canadians who simply wanted to enjoy marijuana as a pastime or as a medicine.

Pot was then subjected to endless propaganda on behalf of domestic and international governments, who believed that it was just as dangerous as heroin, with no medicinal value whatsoever. Since that time, science has suggested that cannabis is an effective medicine and a safer alternative to other social drugs such as alcohol and tobacco.

Although marijuana prohibition was quick, its legalization was a decades-long struggle for empathy and understanding on behalf of those who made the decision to use it. Advocates, activists, patients, sympathetic lawmakers, and anyone else who knew the truth, fought tirelessly with the powers that be to reinstate the plant and bring it back into everyday society.

Canada is arguably the biggest impetus related to the end of cannabis prohibition both domestically and around the world. We were the first country to enact medical marijuana in 2001 and we have just become the first G7 nation to legalize recreational use on the federal level.

On October 19th, join cannabis journalist and author Jon Hiltz in a full-day workshop as he discusses the social, political, financial, and medical impacts of legal cannabis both in Canada and around the world. Take part in the dialogue and help create a framework that re-integrates marijuana back into society with a balanced and enlightened approach.



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Outline

- A brief history of cannabis in Canada (including)
 - Legislation over time and the effects of taking this approach
 - Society
 - The justice system
 - The economy
 - Cannabis use: myth busting (from all sides of the debate)
 - The pros of cannabis use
 - The cons of cannabis use
 - Medical marijuana around the world - how do we compare?
 - Medical uses
 - Making medical marijuana legal (trailblazing nation)
 - Attitudes
- Canada's decision on recreational cannabis
 - The process and path to legalization (including the Taskforce)
 - The big picture from the federal government – what policy directions were given?
 - Where we are

Lunch (12pm-1:30pm)

- Group work: Creating a framework for re-integration of marijuana
 - Students will break into groups in which they will pick one province. Each group will be assigned a province and will be tasked to review that province's approach to legalization. Groups will work together to answer the following questions and present their findings to the rest of the class:
 - Is my province unique compared to others?
 - What are some of the challenges of the federal government's directive for my province?
 - What must we consider which seems to be left out of my province's legalization laws (see CTV 2018 below) – how will we do it?
 - How will we determine success or failure of my province's implementation?
 - Student presentations of findings
- Guided discussion: The good and/or bad of marijuana re-integration
 - Debates across the provinces
 - Implementation and monitoring: what is possible, what is not?
 - Cannabis legalization: myth busting (from all sides of the debate)
 - The pros of cannabis legalization (social, political, financial, and medical)
 - The cons of cannabis use (social, political, financial, and medical)
 - What does this mean for legislation of medical marijuana?
 - Other considerations and concerns
 - Border security (international and provincial)
 - Business and taxation
 - Enforcement and detection
 - What changed as of October 17th?



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Required Readings

Participants are asked to review and familiarize themselves with the following sources:

CBC (2018) "Doctors' group wants to scrap Canada's medical cannabis program"

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/quirks/scrap-medical-weed-women-in-space-and-more-1.4636793/doctors-group-wants-to-scrap-canada-s-medical-cannabis-program-1.4636810>

CTV (2018) "A look at each province's rules for marijuana legalization". <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/a-look-at-each-province-s-rules-for-marijuana-legalization-1.3894944>

Hiltz, Jonathan (2018) *The Wild West: Canada's Legalization of Marijuana* London: INDIVA.

<http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll/plink?14EF309E>

Hodgetts, J.E. (1974) "Intergovernmental Relations in Canada". *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 416 (November): 170-180.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/1041791?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Senate of Canada (2018) "The Cannabis Act in the Senate" <https://sencanada.ca/en/sencaplus/news/cannabis-act/>

Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation (2016) "A Framework for the Legalization and Regulation of Cannabis in Canada". *Final Report of the Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation*. Health Canada.

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/healthy-canadians/migration/task-force-marijuana-groupe-etude/framework-cadre/alt/framework-cadre-eng.pdf>

Additional Resources

Brown, Drew (2018) "Everything you wanted to know about cannabis legalization...but forgot to ask". *The Guardian*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/06/canada-cannabis-legalization-questions-answered>

Veterans Affairs Canada (2016) "Review of Marijuana for Medical Purposes" <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-us/reports/departamental-audit-evaluation/2016-review-marijuana-medical-purposes>

Jon Hiltz Articles of Relevance:

- <https://www.marijuana.com/news/2018/10/canadian-legalization-how-far-weve-come-how-far-we-still-have-to-go/>
- <https://www.marijuana.com/news/2018/09/canadians-face-unjust-entry-bans-because-u-s-cant-get-its-marijuana-policies-in-order/>
- <https://www.marijuana.com/news/2018/08/toronto-stock-exchange-appears-to-have-come-down-with-reefer-madness/>
- <https://www.marijuana.com/news/2018/08/ontarios-new-premier-thinks-a-government-marijuana-monopoly-is-a-bad-idea-hes-right/>
- <https://www.marijuana.com/news/2018/04/canada-debates-law-to-determine-how-and-when-motorists-are-too-high-to-drive/>
- <https://www.marijuana.com/news/2018/01/canadian-licensed-producers-distance-themselves-from-united-states/>

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