

THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY PRESENTS

# The Politics of Marijuana in Minnesota: Learning Historical Lessons and Imagining Alternatives to the War on Drugs

FRIDAY, APRIL 7 | 11 AM-12:15 PM | VIA ZOOM



The laws and politics around marijuana in Minnesota are rapidly shifting. To understand the current state of marijuana politics and legislation in Minnesota, it is necessary to take a look back at the history of marijuana criminalization, the emergence and limitations of Minnesota's medical cannabis program, and the recent history of attempts to reform marijuana laws. Drawing on over four years of in-depth research into Minnesota's medical cannabis program and marijuana politics, Dr. Ryan Steel will take a critical examination of contemporary debates and legislative proposals for marijuana reform in Minnesota, with a particular focus on the ways in which drug laws directly govern the bodies and lives of Minnesotans. From this examination, he will present a framework for imagining alternatives to the War on Drugs and the current proposals in Minnesota that are more just and equitable, and consider how the lessons from the War on Drugs can help us to more broadly transform a variety of institutions that govern the lives and wellbeing of people in Minnesota and across the United States.

*Dr. Steel completed his Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, in 2022. He is currently a visiting instructor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Richmond.*



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