

[Online Presentation—David Guba, Taming Cannabis: Drugs and Empire in Nineteenth-Century France; June 25, 2020, Kremers Seminar in the History of Pharmacy & Drugs](#)

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The American Institute of the History of Pharmacy and the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Pharmacy are pleased to announce the inaugural [Edward Kremers Seminar in the History of Pharmacy & Drugs](#). The 2020 Summer “Kreminar” will explore the theme of Cannabis, and the fifth and final presentation will be by Dr. David Guba speaking about, “Taming Cannabis: Drugs and Empire in Nineteenth-Century France.” Dr. Guba's online virtual presentation will be June 25, 2020, from 1:00–2:30 p.m. Eastern time (12 noon–1:30 p.m. Central time). Preregistration is required.

David A. Guba, Jr., earned his doctorate at Temple University and currently is Assistant Professor of History at Bard Early College in Baltimore City and Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Maryland Global Campus. His first book, *Taming Cannabis: Drugs and Empire in Nineteenth-Century France* (McGill-Queen’s University Press) examines France’s first foray into medical cannabis during the 1800s and the ways in which the country’s imperial ventures in North Africa shaped popular and official perceptions of the drug both then and now. His work on the colonial history of intoxicants in France has also appeared in *Salon*, *Slate*, *The Conversation*, *Quartz*, *Religion News Service*, and the *Washington Post*.

Taming Cannabis Presentation Abstract: Throughout the nineteenth century, dozens of French pharmacists and physicians developed and prescribed cannabis-based medicines, generally in the form of tinctures but also as pills, edibles, lozenges, and even cigarettes, to treat maladies ranging from the plague and insanity to asthma and migraines. They published numerous dissertations and articles on their research into and the use of these drugs in peer-reviewed medical journals in France and across the West. A close examination of these publications reveals that cannabis-based medicines figured prominently in the early professional development of French medicine during the middle nineteenth century. Most pharmacists at this time believed that cannabis, though a dangerous exotic substance, could be “tamed” by the developing chemistry-based pharmaceutical sciences and—once refined—could be used by physicians to treat a variety of ailments both physical and mental in nature.

After cannabis tincture proved ineffective against cholera during an outbreak in Paris in 1848, many medical practitioners in France published articles condemning the drug as more dangerous than effective. And by the 1860s doctors and especially psychiatrists working in French Algeria increasingly published articles on cases of “hashish poisoning” and “hashish-induced insanity” among

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Muslim North Africans, further adding to the negative swing in perceptions of cannabis as medicine. This paper charts this rise and fall of cannabis as medicine in France across the nineteenth century and argues that, with greater engagement with their colonial history, the French might again play a major role in the medical marijuana movement currently unfolding across the globe.

[Click here to register for Dr. Guba's presentation.](#)

The 2020 Summer Kreminar will be a virtual seminar with five streaming online presentations. Each presentation will run from 1:00-2:30 Eastern time (12:00-1:30 Central time) on a Thursday in May or June. Participants will be required to preregister for each presentation.

Dr. Lucas Richert, the George Urdang Chair in the History of Pharmacy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Pharmacy and the AIHP Historical Director, will host the Kreminar.

[Learn more about the 2020 Summer Kreminar.](#)

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<https://aihp.org/2020-summer-kreminar-5-guba/>