

# CRCJ 8040: Police & Society

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## Course Description

In this course, we will explore the function of the police in American society – all the while considering the challenges associated with balancing civil liberties on the one hand with the goal of controlling crime on the other. I will push you to think critically about the scientific methods used to answer various research questions, as well as reflect on policing’s contributions to the larger CJ system and society, more generally.

## Required Readings

I expect you to read critically and come prepared to discuss how the material relates to contemporary policing and society. Most of the required readings are available on Canvas. In addition, you will need access to the following books:

Kelling, George L. and Catherine M. Coles (1997). *Fixing broken windows: Restoring order and reducing crime in our communities*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Zimring, Franklin E. (2012). *The city that became safe: New York’s lessons for urban crime and its control*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Stoughton, Seth W., Jeffrey J. Noble, and Geoffrey P. Alpert (2020). *Evaluating police uses of force*. New York University Press.

Deuchar, Ross, Vaughn J. Crichlow, and Seth W. Fallik (2021). *Police–Community Relations in Times of Crisis: Decay and Reform in the Post-Ferguson Era*. Bristol University Press.

## Journals

Each week at the end of class, I’ll ask you to take approximately 10 minutes to reflect on a question or issue and write your thoughts down in a “journal.” Then as you do the readings for the following week on your own time, you’ll update your journal. *Do you still feel the same way? Why or why not? Did the readings change your mind or make you to think about the issue in a different way? What questions do you still have?* At the beginning of the next class, we’ll break the ice by discussing what you wrote in your journals.

## Research Proposal and Presentation

Each student will select a topic on which to write a research proposal and make an oral presentation to the class based upon its content. The written proposal should be 10 – 15 pages (double-spaced) and the

oral presentation should be 10 – 15 minutes (or 20 including Q&A). The written proposal is due no later than **December 1st**, and oral presentations will take place during our last two classes. We will discuss this assignment in more detail later in the semester. Topics must be approved by me, and should be submitted in writing (approx. one page) no later than **October 6th**.

## Grades

- Attendance and participation: 30%
- Journal: 25%
- Research proposal: 25%
- Research presentation: 20%

These weighted scores will be added up at the end of the semester to generate your overall grade in the course:

Letter Grade	Score
A	90 - 100
B	80 - 89
C	70 - 79
D	60 - 69
F	0 - 59

## Academic Integrity

*Don't cheat.* Students should familiarize themselves with the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities and the [policy on academic integrity](#). Any form of academic dishonesty is unacceptable. Instances of academic dishonesty will, at a minimum, result in a failing grade for that assignment, and a record of academic dishonesty will be placed in the student's academic file that is maintained by the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice. Instances of academic dishonesty may also be subject to disciplinary action by the University.

## Students with Accessibility Issues

Reasonable accommodations are provided for students who are registered with the Accessibility Services Center and make their requests sufficiently in advance. For more information, contact the Accessibility Services Center (MBSC 126, Phone 554-2872, TTY 554-3799, or visit their [website](#)).

## Tentative Class Schedule

### Week 1, 08/25 | Introduction

Packer, Herbert L. (1964). "Two models of the criminal process". In: *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 113, pp. 1-68.

Schwartz, Martin A. (2008). "The importance of stupidity in scientific research". In: *Journal of Cell Science* 121, p. 1771.

**Week 2, 09/01 | Function of Police**

President's Commission on Law Enforcement & Administration of Justice (1967). *The challenge of crime in a free society*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, pp. 1–16, 91–124. <https://www.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh241/files/archives/ncjrs/42.pdf>.

Bittner, Egon (1970). *The functions of the police in modern society: A review of background factors, current practices, and possible role models*. National Institute of Mental Health, Center for Studies of Crime and Delinquency, pp. 6–35. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/147822NCJRS.pdf>.

Brantingham, Paul J and Frederic L Faust (1976). "A conceptual model of crime prevention". In: *Crime & Delinquency* 22.3, pp. 284–296.

**Week 3, 09/08 | Function of Police**

President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015). *Final report of the President's Task force on 21st Century Policing*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. [https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/taskforce\\_finalreport.pdf](https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/taskforce_finalreport.pdf).

Kaba, Mariame (2020). "Yes, we mean literally abolish the police". In: *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html>.

Lum, Cynthia, Christopher S Koper, and Xiaoyun Wu (2021). "Can We Really Defund the Police? A Nine-Agency Study of Police Response to Calls for Service". In: *Police Quarterly*, pp. 1-26. DOI: 10986111211035002.

**Week 4, 09/15 | Discretion**

Goldstein, Joseph (1960). "Police discretion not to invoke the criminal process: Low-visibility decisions in the administration of justice". In: *The Yale Law Journal* 69, pp. 543-594.

Goldstein, Herman (1963). "Police discretion: The ideal versus the real". In: *Public Administration Review* 23, pp. 140-148.

Bittner, Egon (1967). "The police on Skid-Row: A study of peace keeping". In: *American Sociological Review* 32, pp. 699-715.

**Week 5, 09/22 | Policing Disorder**

Kelling, George L. and Catherine M. Coles (1997). *Fixing broken windows: Restoring order and reducing crime in our communities*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

**Week 6, 09/29 | Racial Disparities**

Goff, Phillip Atiba and Kimberly Barsamian Kahn (2012). "Racial bias in policing: Why we know less than we should". In: *Social Issues and Policy Review* 6.1, pp. 177–210.

Goff, Phillip Atiba (2016). "Identity traps: How to think about race & policing". In: *Behavioral Science & Policy* 2.2, pp. 10–22.

Epp, Charles R, Steven Maynard-Moody, and Donald Haider-Markel (2017). "Beyond profiling: The institutional sources of racial disparities in policing". In: *Public Administration Review* 77.2, pp. 168–178.

**Week 7, 10/06 | Racial Disparities**

Smith, Michael R and Geoffrey P Alpert (2007). “Explaining police bias: A theory of social conditioning and illusory correlation”. In: *Criminal justice and Behavior* 34.10, pp. 1262–1283.

Welsh, Megan, Joshua Chanin, and Stuart Henry (2021). “Complex Colorblindness in Police Processes and Practices”. In: *Social Problems* 68.2, pp. 374–392.

Spencer, Katherine B, Amanda K Charbonneau, and Jack Glaser (2016). “Implicit bias and policing”. In: *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 10.1, pp. 50–63.

**Week 8, 10/13 | Reducing Crime**

Zimring, Franklin E. (2012). *The city that became safe: New York’s lessons for urban crime and its control*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

**Week 9, 10/20 | Police Use of Force**

Stoughton, Seth W., Jeffrey J. Noble, and Geoffrey P. Alpert (2020). *Evaluating police uses of force*. New York University Press. (Chapters 1-2)

**Week 10, 10/27 | Police Use of Force**

Stoughton, Seth W., Jeffrey J. Noble, and Geoffrey P. Alpert (2020). *Evaluating police uses of force*. New York University Press. (Chapters 3-4)

**Week 11, 11/03 | Policing through a Legitimacy Crisis**

Deuchar, Ross, Vaughn J. Crichlow, and Seth W. Fallik (2021). *Police–Community Relations in Times of Crisis: Decay and Reform in the Post-Ferguson Era*. Bristol University Press. (Chapters 1-5)

**Week 12, 11/10 | Policing through a Legitimacy Crisis**

Deuchar, Ross, Vaughn J. Crichlow, and Seth W. Fallik (2021). *Police–Community Relations in Times of Crisis: Decay and Reform in the Post-Ferguson Era*. Bristol University Press. (Chapters 6-8 & Epilogue)

**Week 13, 11/17 | No class**

*ASC Conference*

**Week 14, 11/24 | No Class**

*Thanksgiving Break*

**Week 15, 12/01 | Student Presentations**

*Research proposals due*

**Week 16, 12/08 | Student Presentations**