

Policing & Society
Sociology 354.001
Fall 2025
Military Sciences 115
TR 11am-12:15pm

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Using the Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing as a roadmap, this course will take on a research-informed approach to some of the qualities most important in effective policing today. These include police legitimacy, policy, technology, community policing, professionalization, and officer wellness. Overall, we will use empirical research to examine what "good" policing should look like.

Course Objectives

- Review and contextualize the recommendations that came from the Task Force report.
- Explore some of the theoretical and empirical literature on issues in policing and law enforcement.
- Learn and/or further develop the ability to read, interpret, and apply empirical research, with an emphasis on research methods.
- Craft and support theoretical arguments having to do with issues in policing and law enforcement, both orally and in writing.
- Develop policy recommendations to improve the functioning of policing and law enforcement, based on theoretical and empirical research findings.

Prerequisites

Students enrolled in this course are expected to have completed either SOC 100 or SOC 105 and SOC 253.

Required Reading

The following book is required for the course:

Kochel, T. R. (2022). *Policing Unrest: On the Front Lines of the Ferguson Protests*. NYU Press.

Sierra-Arevalo, M. (2024). *The Danger Imperative: Violence, Death, & the Soul of Policing*. Columbia University Press.

Optional Books:

Alpert, G. P., Dunham, R. G., & Stroschine, M. S. (2015). *Policing: Continuity & Change*. 2nd Edition. Waveland Press.

Deuchar, R., Crichlow, V.J., & Fallik, S. W. (2021). *Police-community relations in times of crisis: Decay and reform in the post-Ferguson era*. Bristol Press.

Lum, C. M., & Koper, C. S. (2017). *Evidence-based policing: Translating research into practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Provine, D. M., Varsanyi, M. W., Lewis, P. G., & Decker, S. H. (2016). *Policing immigrants: Local law enforcement on the front lines*. University of Chicago Press.

White, M. D., & Fradella, H. F. (2016). *Stop and frisk: The use and abuse of a controversial policing tactic*. NYU Press.

In addition, several articles will be placed online.

Assignments

Group Paper Assignment (60 pts)

In this course, you will be asked to complete a group assignment related to Policing. The topics available for this assignment are: 1) Police Legitimacy; 2) Policy & Oversight; 3) Technology; 4) Community Policing; 5) Training & Education; 6) Officer Wellness. Four other groups may choose topics in policing that are not explicitly covered in one of the pillars of the Task Force Report. Each Group Paper should have three parts. The first part will identify a problem facing police agencies related to the chosen area. The second part will review the relevant policing research. The third part will present a strategy that agencies could use to address the problem. As a very general guideline, each group paper should be around 10-pages double spaced, but some will be shorter, others may be longer.

Policing Presentation (20 pts)

In addition to submitting a Group Paper, each group will present their paper to the class. These presentations will occur during the week of December 1-5 (during class sessions on December 2 & 4).

Reading Quizzes (40 pts)

Most weeks in this course, we will have at least one quiz assignment. Each assignment will be worth four points. Quizzes will be posted on Canvas and due by the Friday night at 11:59pm. I will provide all students with an automatic 48 hour grace period on these assignments, but you should strive to submit your responses by Friday. The questions will generally take the form of a broad question regarding the reading material. There will be approximately twelve (12) quizzes throughout the semester, with the final two serving as extra credit. For this reason, late quizzes will not be accepted.

Exams (80 pts each, 240 pts total)

We will have three exams in this course. The exams will be short answer and/or essay format. You will generally have an option in the essay portion. Exams will be taken on Canvas and are due by the date specified in the syllabus.

Participation (40 pts)

You will also be assessed on your level of engagement and participation in the course. Participation will be assessed in two ways: 1) submitting small-group responses to in-class discussion questions and 2) a discretionary measure of your active participation in the course. Attending class is a necessary, but not sufficient condition to receive a high participation score. You are expected to ask questions, answer questions, and show overall engagement. Participation will also be used to make decisions in borderline cases. Please note that these are not “free” points – if you are not closely engaged and participating on a regular basis, you should expect a poor participation grade. Repeated class disruption will result in a 0 for your participation grade for the entire semester.

Grading Scale

<u>Points</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
97%+	A+
93-96%	A
90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
77-79%	C+
70-76%	C
60-69%	D
60%>	F

Other Issues

The course will adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy of the Colorado State University General Catalog and the Student Conduct Code.

Be proactive. If you have a personal issue that is preventing you from doing well in the course, please come and talk to me as soon as possible. The longer you wait, the less I will be able to help you.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an important tool in many of our lives. There are many appropriate uses of AI, including in this course. However, you should think of AI as another source of information – not as way to generate the work that you would submit for assignments in the course. After all, my hope is that you are taking this course because you are genuinely interested in criminology – and more specifically, police and policing. Therefore, I expect that you will not turn in assignments or responses that are purely generated by AI.

Late assignments are strongly discouraged. I reserve the right to determine whether I will accept any late assignment at all, and if so, any penalty that I may assess.

For policies relevant to this and other CSU courses and resources to help with various challenges that you may encounter (e.g., Title IX, Case Management, Mental Health) please visit the link below.

<https://col.st/2FA2g>

Anyone caught cheating and/or plagiarizing will receive a zero on the assignment and will be turned over to university officials.

Course Calendar

Week 1: Syllabus & Welcome

August 26: Syllabus & Welcome

August 28: President's Task Force Report: Executive Summary & Introduction (pp. 1-8)
Complexities of 21st Century Policing (Bayley, 2016)

Week 2: Legitimacy & Trust

September 2: Task Force Report Pillar 1: Building Legitimacy & Trust (9-18)
Procedural Justice (Nagin & Telep, 2020)

September 4: Immigration Federalism (Varsanyi et al., 2012)

Week 3: Legitimacy & Trust

September 9: Competition & Hispanic Employment in Police Forces (Alozie & Ramirez, 1999)

September 11: Recruitment, Selection, Retention, and Policewomen (Cordner & Cordner, 2011)

Week 4: Policy & Oversight

- September 16: Task Force Report Pillar 2: Policy & Oversight (pp. 19-30)
De-Escalation (Todak & James, 2018)
September 18: Stop & Frisk (Fradella & White, 2017)

Week 5: Policy & Oversight

- September 23: Use of Force Policy (Terrill & Paoline, 2017)
September 25: Civilian Oversight (Keyes & Keyes, 2023)

Week 6: The Danger Imperative

- September 30: The Danger Imperative: Introduction – Ch. 2 (pp. 1-114)
October 2: The Danger Imperative: Ch. 3 – Conclusion (pp. 115-241)

Week 7: Exam #1

Exam #1 Due on Canvas by October 10 at 11:59pm

Week 8: Technology & Social Media

- October 14: Task Force Report Pillar 3: Technology & Social Media (pp. 31-40)
Body Worn Cameras (Lum et al., 2019)
October 16: License Plate Readers (Willis et al., 2017)

Week 9: Technology & Social Media

- October 21: Crisis Communication via Social Media (Steele & Blau, 2023)
October 23: Police Organizations & Social Media (Hu & Lovrich, 2019)

Week 10: Police-Community Relations

- October 28: Task Force Report Pillar 4: Community Policing & Crime Reduction (pp. 41-50)
Community Policing Meta-Analysis (Gill et al., 2014)
October 30: Community Policing: Least Effective Where Need is Greatest (Rukus et al., 2018)

Week 11: Exam #2

Exam #2 Due on Canvas by Friday November 7 at 11:59pm

Week 12: Training & Education

- November 11: Task Force Report Pillar 5: Training & Education (pp. 51-60)
Academy Training & Recruit Integrity (Blumberg et al., 2016)
November 13: Crisis Intervention Training (Hassell, 2020)*

* - No class meeting, but reading is still assigned and voiceover lectures will be posted on Canvas.

Week 13: Officer Wellness & Safety

November 18: Task Force Report Pillar 6: Officer Wellness & Safety (pp. 61-68)
Policing Unrest (Kochel Introduction & Ch. 1-2, pp. 1-135)

November 20: Policing Unrest (Kochel Ch. 3-5 pp. 136-224)

Week 14: Fall Recess

November 25: No Class

November 27: No Class

Week 15: Presentations

December 2: Presentations

December 4: Presentations

Week 16: The Future of Policing

December 9: Wrap-Up

December 11: No Class

Policing Papers Due (12/14)

Final Exam Due: Thursday, December 18 (On Canvas)