

In 2019 the Ann Arbor City Council passed an ordinance establishing a new “Independent Community Police Oversight Commission”. You can find the text of the ordinance itself [here](#) (sections 1:210 through 1:220) and a useful news article about the motivations and expectations for the commission [here](#).

Although it has four years of experience under its belt, some observers have argued that the Oversight Commission still seems to be struggling with its role. More than two years after it began its work, Ann Arbor’s Mayor [introduced a resolution](#) about police oversight that seemed to reflect a basic misunderstanding of what the commission does. During the four years it has been active, members of the Commission have complained that they have repeatedly encountered “roadblocks and hurdles” in conducting core aspects of their work. A series of council resolutions have sought to clarify and expand the Commission’s authority to do its work. In short, this young oversight agency remains a work-in-progress in need of clarity about its mission and role going forward.

Imagine that City Council and the Commission’s leaders have asked you—a newly minted expert in police oversight—for advice about how they can maximize the Oversight Commission’s ability to improve policing in Ann Arbor. They would like you to write a memo does four things:

1. Succinctly describe the preexisting landscape of police oversight in Ann Arbor (i.e., before the Council established the Commission in 2019), including an explanation of what important aspects of policing that landscape could and could not adequately address. (You do not need to do any outside research here: Assume that the oversight landscape in Ann Arbor resembles that of the average American police department as we discussed in the first long part of this course.)
2. Explain what the Independent Community Oversight Commission might add to that existing oversight landscape. What are the most important contributions to police oversight that the Commission can potentially make?
3. Discuss the main challenges the Commissioners and the City Council need to be aware of as they strive to ensure the Commission will be successful. What problems have undermined similar bodies in other cities, and how can Ann Arbor guard against them?
4. Briefly discuss the limits of the Commission’s role and the other forms of oversight that will need to supplement its work.

Although you should read the ordinance and news article about the commission linked above, you do not need to spend a lot of time studying the details of the Oversight Commission’s work over the past four years. Treat the Commission as a blank slate on which you can inscribe a new vision of police oversight (subject only to the constraints on the Commission’s authority contained in the ordinance that created it—though if you believe it is important, you are free to propose modest changes to the ordinance itself to alter the Commission’s powers).

#### General ground rules

- The memo should be **3-4 pages long**, double-spaced, with a type size comparable to 12-point Times New Roman, and one-inch margins all around.
- Turn in the memo by 11:59 PM on **Friday, December 8** by uploading it on Canvas.
- Your memo should focus on the public management considerations and themes we have covered in this class, rather than, for example, political strategy.
- You do not need to follow the same memo format you use in other classes (such as 510). Organize your memo in whatever way allows you to address the questions posed most successfully.

- Grammar, punctuation, word choice, spelling, and clarity matter. Dramatic flair is not important, but clear, concise, organized prose is.
- As in all university classes, use proper citation in all your written work. If you have any questions about what plagiarism is (in brief: acknowledge all your sources and enclose all words that aren't yours in quotation marks), see <http://www.lib.umich.edu/academic-integrity>. Please ask Scott or David if you have questions about what's appropriate. As you embark on a career in public service, it's important to learn to avoid using sources in a way that others will view as plagiarism. You may use any reference style you prefer.
- We encourage you to take advantage of the excellent resources available at the Ford School Writing Center: <https://fordschool.umich.edu/intranet/writing-center>.