

CRCJ 8040: Police & Society

Justin Nix

Fall 2023

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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

This semester, we'll read a mixture of seminal articles by police researchers and more contemporary work by journalists, psychologists, legal scholars, and other experts working in this area. 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 and/or linked in the course schedule below. The three assigned books are all available for fairly cheap as paperbacks or eBooks. You may also be able to borrow/request them from the [campus library](#) or [Omaha Public Library](#).

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.

Exams

There will be two in-class exams this semester: a midterm on October 11th and a final on December 13th. For each exam, you will choose one of three essay questions, using class time to respond to it.

Grades

- Attendance and participation: 25%
- Journal: 25%
- Midterm: 25%
- Final: 25%

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.

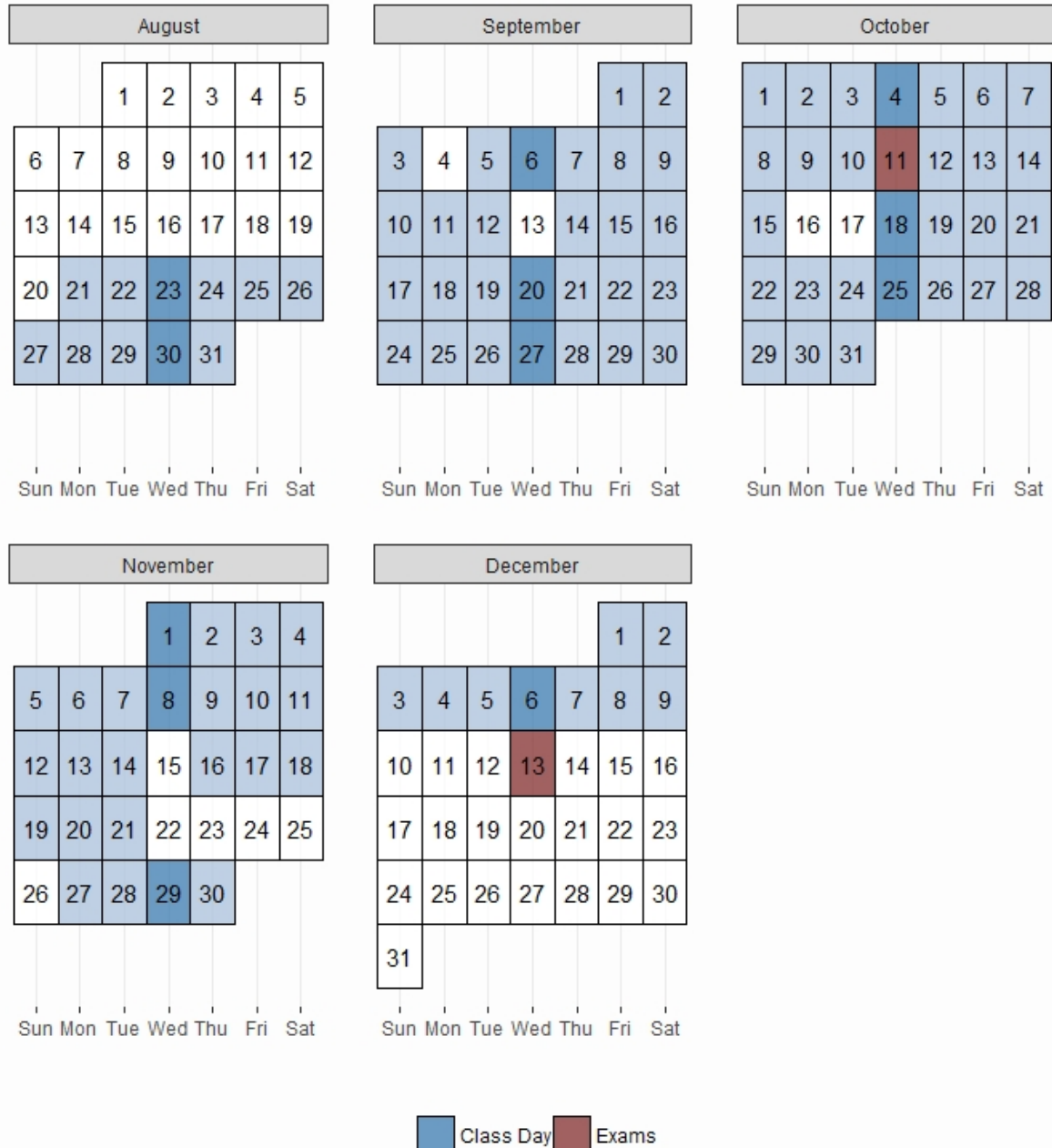
Students with Accessibility Needs

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

CRCJ 8040 - Fall 2023

Course Calendar



Notable dates: Labor Day (Sep 4), SCCJ Fundraising Event (Sep 13), Fall Break (Oct 16-17), ASC Conference (Nov 15-18), Thanksgiving Break (Nov 22-26)

Week 1, 08/23 | Contemporary Discourse Re: Police Reform

- Vitale, A. (2017). [Police and the liberal fantasy](#). *Jacobin*.
- Cobbina-Dungy, J. E., & Jones-Brown, D. (2023). [Too much policing: Why calls are made to defund the police](#). *Punishment & Society*, 25(1), 3-20.
- Mangual, R. (2022). *Criminal (in)justice: What the push for decarceration and depolicing gets wrong and who it hurts most*. Center Street.
 - Chapter 5

Week 2, 08/30 | Function of Police

- Bittner, E. (1980). [The functions of the police in modern society: A review of background factors, current practices, and possible role models](#). Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain.
 - Chapters 1 & 2
- Klockars, C. (1985). [The idea of police](#). SAGE Publications, Inc.
 - Chapters 1-3

Week 3, 09/06 | Police Culture

- Van Maanen, J. (1973). [Observations on the making of policemen](#). *Human Organization*, 32(4), 407-418.
- Bittner, E. (1974). Florence Nightingale in pursuit of Willie Sutton: A theory of the police. In H. Jacob (Ed.), *The potential for reform of criminal justice*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Skolnick, J. (1966). *Justice without trial: Law enforcement in democratic society*. John Wiley.
 - Chapter 3

Week 4, 09/13 | SCCJ Fundraiser - No class

- *Get a head start on reading for next week!*

Week 5, 09/20 | Stop & Frisk

- Skogan, W. G. (2022). [Stop & frisk and the politics of crime in Chicago](#). Oxford University Press.

Week 6, 09/27 | Community and Problem-Oriented Policing

- Skogan, W. G. (2019). Community policing. In D. Weisburd & A. Braga (Eds.), *Policing Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mastrofski, S. (2019). Community policing: A skeptical view. In D. Weisburd & A. Braga (Eds.), *Policing Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.
- Eck, J. (2019). Why problem-oriented policing. In D. Weisburd & A. Braga (Eds.), *Policing Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.
- Braga, A. & Weisburd, D. (2019). Problem-oriented policing: The disconnect between principles and practice. In D. Weisburd & A. Braga (Eds.), *Policing Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.

Week 7, 10/04 | Broken Windows and Hot Spots Policing

- Sousa, W. & Kelling, G. (2019). Of 'broken windows' criminology and criminal justice. In D. Weisburd & A. Braga (Eds.), *Policing Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, R. (2019). Incivilities reduction policing, zero tolerance, and the retreat from coproduction: Even weaker foundations and stronger pressures. In D. Weisburd & A. Braga (Eds.), *Policing Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.
- Braga, A. & Weisburd, D. (2019). Hot spots policing as a model for police innovation. In D. Weisburd & A. Braga (Eds.), *Policing Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rosenbaum, D. (2019). The limits of hot spots policing. In D. Weisburd & A. Braga (Eds.), *Policing Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.

Week 8, 10/11 | Midterm Exam

- No readings

Week 9, 10/18 | Discretion

- Goldstein, H. (1963). [Police discretion: The ideal versus the real](#). *Public Administration Review*, 23(3), 140-148.
- Bittner, E. (1967). [The police on Skid-Row: A study of peace keeping](#). *American Sociological Review*, 32(5), 699-715.
- Walker, S. (1992). [Taming the system: The control of discretion in criminal justice 1950-1990](#). Oxford University Press.
– Chapter 2

Week 10, 10/25 | Use of Force

- Lowery, W. (2016). ["They can't kill us all": The story of the struggle for Black lives](#). Little, Brown and Company.
- Nix, J. (2020). [On the challenges associated with the study of police use of deadly force in the United States: A response to Schwartz & Jahn](#). *PLOS ONE*, 15(7), e0236158.

Week 11, 11/01 | Procedural Justice

- Tyler, T. & Meares, T. (2019). Procedural justice policing. In D. Weisburd & A. Braga (Eds.), *Policing Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.
- Thacher, D. (2019). The limits of procedural justice. In D. Weisburd & A. Braga (Eds.), *Policing Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.

Week 12, 11/08 | Police Misconduct & Accountability

- Chalfin, A., & Kaplan, J. (2021). [How many complaints against police officers can be abated by incapacitating a few "bad apples?"](#) *Criminology & Public Policy*, 20(2), 351-370.
- Sierra-Arévalo, M., & Papachristos, A. (2021). [Bad apples and incredible certitude](#). *Criminology & Public Policy*, 20(2), 371-381.
- Chalfin, A., & Kaplan, J. (2021). [Reply to Sierra-Arévalo and Papachristos \(2021\)](#).

Week 13, 11/15 | ASC Conference - No class

- *Get a head start on reading for Week 15!*

Week 14, 11/22 | Thanksgiving Break - No class

- *Keep reading for Week 15!*

Week 15, 11/29 | Militarization

- Balko, R. (2013). *Rise of the Warrior Cop: The Militarization of America's Police Forces*. PublicAffairs.
- Klinger, D. A., & Rojek, J. (2008). *Multi-method study of special weapons and tactics teams*. National Institute of Justice (Report No. 223855).

Week 16, 12/06 | Consent Decrees

- U.S. Department of Justice (2023). *Investigation of the City of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Police Department*.
- Savolainen, J. & Wright, J. P. (2023). *Maligning Minneapolis*. *City Journal*.

Week 17, 12/13 | Final Exam

- No readings