**Policing, Crime, Evidence, and Legitimacy**

**SUP-710**

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:15 to 11:30am

Weil Town Hall, Belfer building

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Policing in the United States is in the midst of an intense period of external criticism, internal self-reflection, challenge, and change. Homicides have increased 22% in the past two years after decades of steady declines. Aggressive use of police force, frequently captured on video and publicized via social media, has generated civil unrest in many cities and has spurred an intense national debate concerning the appropriate nature and role of law enforcement in society. To date, this public conversation has been dominated mostly by political ideology and advocacy, with scientific inquiry receiving relatively short shrift. Arguments, not evidence, have generally carried the day.

In this course, students will examine contemporary policing practices in the context of two major public policy objectives: the maintenance of public safety, primarily through the reduction of violent crime, and the promotion of legitimacy, mostly as a matter of building community trust and confidence. The course will approach these issues primarily through the lens of evidence-informed policymaking. Using the best and most rigorous research available, students will be encouraged to consider concrete solutions to the myriad problems confronting policing today.

Timely topics such as proactive policing, police use of force, racial profiling, and others will be addressed. Essential questions of perceived and actual police legitimacy will be identified and explored. Students will be trained to approach these issues from the perspective of a senior policymaker interested in concrete change and measureable results. Students will exit the course with a sophisticated understanding of the current state of practice in this crucial policy area.

**Course Requirements**

Course requirements are intended to mimic the often-crude policymaking processes that take place in the real world, where there may be little time to prepare, and where clear communication, both verbally and in writing, is at a premium.

Papers and Presentations. During the semester, students will produce a short (2 page) policy paper, with little time or notice, on a subject of the instructor’s choosing. This exercise is intended to simulate a frequent real-world policy scenario where senior decision makers, often reacting to emerging events and needing to act quickly, seek guidance at the last minute. These papers will account for 20% of a student’s final grade.

At the end of the semester, students will also produce a longer (12-15 page) policy paper proposing a course of action related to policing of their own choosing (after consulting with the instructors). This exercise is intended to simulate another real-world scenario where senior decision makers look for guidance at prescribed points in their administration, e.g. a mayoral transition process. Papers will be graded on their mastery of the material, the quality of the ideas presented, and the strength and clarity of the writing. Students should also follow the [HKS Academic Code](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/content/download/66734/1239746/version/1/file/academic_code.pdf). This paper will account for 35% of the final grade.

In addition, students will be expected to make a short (8-10 minute) presentation of their draft policy paper to the class. As with papers, presentations will be graded on their mastery of the material, the quality of the ideas presented, and the strength and clarity of the presentation. Presentations will account for 10% of the final grade.

Class Reading, Attendance, and Participation. Students should complete all required readings prior to class. Optional readings may be provided.

Students are expected to be present and on time for every class. If a student cannot be present or will be late, advance notice with an explanation should be provided in advance. Please follow the [HKS classroom rules of conduct](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/content/download/66756/1239834/version/1/file/classroom-code-of-conduct.pdf).

Every student has an obligation to be an informed, active, and constructive participant in class discussions. Class discussions are critical to the success of this course and should be exercises in group learning and problem-solving. As might be expected from a course concerning evidence-informed policy, students should be prepared to set ideology and advocacy aside and follow wherever their understanding of the facts, evidence, and data may take them. As with papers and presentations, participation will be graded on mastery of the material, quality of the ideas presented, and the strength and clarity of communication. Class participation will account for 35% of the final grade.

Speakers and readings: This syllabus is a work in progress, with final selections and page assignments to follow. Prominent speakers from academia and the policy world will join the class to share their perspectives on policing and the challenges facing the profession today, and the syllabus may shift according to their availability.

**Schedule and Readings**

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| Tuesday, January 23rd | 1. A Crisis in Confidence (Winship) Students will discuss the recent crisis in police legitimacy, exploring the differences between arguments based on ideology and evidence.    * [Black Lives Matter: Eliminating Racial Inequity in the Criminal Justice System](http://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/black-lives-matter-eliminating-racial-inequity-in-the-criminal-justice-system/)    * [Department of Justice: Investigation into Shooting Death of Michael Brown: Report Summary](https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/opa/press-releases/attachments/2015/03/04/doj_report_on_shooting_of_michael_brown_1.pdf)    * [Department of Justice: Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department: Report Summary](https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/opa/press-releases/attachments/2015/03/04/ferguson_police_department_report_1.pdf)    * [Manny Fernandez et al., Five Dallas Officers Killed as Payback](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/09/us/dallas-police-shooting.html)    * [Video: Shooting of Walter Scott [WARNING: graphic violence]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ym4tE0SQCZY)    * [Alan Blinder, Officer in Walter Scott Shooting Gets 20-Year Sentence](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/07/us/michael-slager-sentence-walter-scott.html) |
| Thursday,  January 25th | 1. A New Nationwide Crime Wave? (Abt) Students will continue their discussion from the previous class with an exploration of the recent rise in violent crime and homicide, the alleged “Ferguson Effect.”    * [Heather MacDonald, Hard Data, Hollow Protests](https://www.city-journal.org/html/hard-data-hollow-protests-15458.html)    * [Thomas Abt, How Not to Respond to the Rising Murder Rate](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/26/opinion/murder-rate-crime.html)    * [Richard Rosenfeld et al., Assessing and Responding to the Recent Homicide Rise in the U.S.](https://www.scribd.com/document/366310719/Assessing-and-Responding-to-the-Recent-Homicide-Rise-in-the-United-States) |
| Tuesday, January 30th | 1. Introduction to Evidence-informed policymaking (Abt and Winship) Students will explore the basic concepts of evidence-informed policymaking, i.e. the crafting of policy using the best scientific evidence and data currently available.    * Cynthia Lum and Christopher Koper, Evidence-Based Policing    * Alfred Blumstein, Linking Evidence and Criminal Justice Policy    * Robert Sampson, Christopher Winship, and Carly Knight, Translating Causal Claims: Principles and Strategies for Policy-Relevant Criminology |
| Thursday,  February 1st | 1. Traditional Policing (Abt) Students will be introduced to the traditional elements of policing – patrol, call response, and investigations – and will explore the evidence concerning their effectiveness.    * National Research Council, Fairness and Effectiveness in Policing    * Anthony Braga, Crime and Policing Revisited    * Jill Leovy, Ghettoside |
| Tuesday, February 6 | 1. Proactive Policing I (Abt) Students will explore modern methods of policing – hot spots, broken windows, and stop-question-frisk, among others – along with evidence of their effectiveness and potential collateral consequences.    * National Research Council, Proactive Policing: Effects on Crime and Communities    * Campbell Collaboration, The Effect of Hot Spots Policing on Crime    * Campbell Collaboration, The Effects of Problem-Oriented Policing on Crime and Disorder |
| Thursday,  February 8th | 1. Proactive Policing II (Abt) Students will continue their discussion from the previous class regarding modern methods of policing.    * Same as above |
| Tuesday, February 13th | 1. Proactive policing III (Abt) Students will explore the evidence supporting focused deterrence policing strategies.    * National Research Council, Proactive Policing: Effects on Crime and Communities    * David Kennedy, God, It’s Got to Stop    * Campbell Collaboration, The Effects of "Pulling Levers" Focused Deterrence Strategies on Crime |
| Thursday,  February 15th | No class |
| Tuesday, February 20th | 1. Police and Streetworkers (Abt and Winship) Students will be introduced to the principles and evidence concerning the use of streetworkers to reduce urban violence, with a focus on Boston’s StreetSafe evaluation.    * Gary Slutkin, Violence is a Contagious Disease    * Andrew Papachristos, Too Big to Fail: The Science and Politics of Violence Prevention    * Anthony Braga and Christopher Winship, Evaluating StreetSafe Boston: Final Report |
| Thursday, February 22nd | 1. Evidence-Informed Policing: Guest Lecturer Lawrence Sherman (Abt) Professor Lawrence Sherman will discuss his research and vision for evidence-informed policing in the United States.  * Readings TBD |
| Tuesday, February 27th | 1. Community Policing I (Winship) Students will examine the evidence concerning community policing.  * Excerpts from the NRC report, Proactive Policing: Effects on Crime and Communities * Campbell Collaboration report on community policing * Winship and Berrien, Boston Cops and Black Ministers |
| Thursday, March 1st | 1. Community Policing II: Guest Speaker William Evans (Winship) Boston Police Commissioner William Evans will discuss the Boston model of community policing.  * Christopher Winship, The End of a Miracle? * Anthony Braga et al., Losing Faith |
| Tuesday, March 6th | 1. Non-Police Approaches to Public Safety (Abt) Students will study non-police approaches for the reduction of crime and violence, including crime prevention and intervention.    * Peter Greenwood, Prevention and Intervention Programs for Juvenile Offenders    * Mark Lipsey, The Primary Factors that Characterize Effective Interventions with Juvenile Offenders: A Meta-Analytic Overview    * Nadine Burke-Harris, How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime |
| Thursday,  March 8th | No Class |
| Tuesday, March 20th | 1. Police Legitimacy (Winship) Students will be introduced to the major theoretical components that underlie notions of police legitimacy.  * Excerpts from Beetham, The Legitimation of Power * Justice Tankebe, Police Legitimacy * Christopher Winship and Jenny Berrien, An Umbrella of Legitimacy |
| Thursday, March 22th | 1. Race and the Police: Guest Speaker John McDonald (Winship) Students will examine evidence concerning the current debates about racial discrimination in policing.  * Jeffrey and Garth Davies, Street Stops and Broken Windows: Terry, Race, and Disorder in New York City * Beckett, K., Nyrop, K., & Pfingst, L., Race, Drugs, and Policing: Understanding Disparities in Drug Delivery Arrests * Goel, S., Rao, J. M., & Shroff, R., Precinct or Prejudice? Understanding Racial Disparities in New York City’s Stop-and-Frisk Policy * John McDonald and Greg Ridgeway, Methods for Assessing Racially Biased Policing |
| Tuesday, March 27nd | 1. Police Accountability: Guest Speakers Brian Corr and Larry Mayes (Winship) Students will be introduced to the different ways that citizen-based organizations are used to hold police accountable.  * Excerpts from Samuel Walker and Carol Archbold, The New World of Police Accountability * Anthony Braga and Christopher Winship, Partnership, Accountability and Innovation * Jennifer Lerner and Phillip Tetlock, Accounting for the Effects of Accountability |
| Thursday, March 29th | 1. Police shootings (Winship) Students will examine when, why, and how police shootings are justified.  * Excerpts from Frank Zimring, When Police Kill * Lawrence Sherman, Reducing Fatal Police Shootings as System Crashes: Research, Theory, and Practice * Jay Jennings and Meghan Rubado, Preventing the Use of Deadly Force * Ronald Weitzer, Race and Policing in Different Ecological Contexts |
| Tuesday,  April 3rd | 1. Police Training: Guest Speaker Lisa Holmes (Winship)  * Readings TBA |
| Thursday, April 5th | 1. Police and Communities: Guest Speaker Rev. Jeffrey Brown (Winship) Students will explore the potential role of faith-based organizations in co-producing police legitimacy.    * Excerpts from the NRC report, Proactive Policing: Effects on Crime and Communities    * Winship et al. Religion and the Boston Miracle    * Thomas Tyler and Jeffrey Fagan, Legitimacy and Cooperation    * John Van Maanen, The Asshole in Policing: A View from the Street |
| Tuesday,  April 10th | 1. National Policy Change: Guest Speaker Laurie Robinson (Abt and Winship) Professor Laurie Robinson will discuss her work heading President Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing.  * President Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, Final Report |
| Thursday, April 12th | 1. Student presentations |
| Tuesday,  April 17th | 1. Student presentations |
| Thursday, April 19th | 1. Police Unions: Guest Speaker Sean Smoot (Abt and Winship) Sean Smoot, Director and Chief Counsel for the Police Benevolent and Protective Association, will discuss the role of unions in addressing today’s policing challenges.  * Stephen Rushin, Police Union Contracts * Catherine Fisk and Song Richardson, Police Unions |
| Tuesday,  April 24th | 1. Student presentations – if necessary |
| Thursday, April 26th | 1. Student presentations – if necessary |