



SYLLABUS

URBAN POLICE PROBLEMS FALL SEMESTER 2009

COURSE INFORMATION:

Subject-Catalog#: JUST A385
CRN#: 88347 Section#: 601
Day – Time: Tuesday - 6:00pm-8:45pm
Building/Room#: ESH 204

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Instructor: Dr. Brad Myrstol
Office: LIB 213
Telephone#: (907) 786-1833
Dr. Myrstol's e-mail: bmyrstol@uaa.alaska.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday (2:00pm-4:00pm) or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores a number of issues – both historical and contemporary – surrounding what is one of society's most visible and consequential institutions – the police. Many of the questions explored are intended to be foundational (What is the demographic composition of police organizations?), some are more controversial (Does the racial composition of police departments impact their legitimacy within minority communities?), and others are more pragmatic (What can police departments do to make their personnel compositions demographically representative of the populations they serve?). Although the course is not a senior-level seminar, class time will be interactive and collaborative. Students are expected to fully participate in class discussions, group work, and occasional presentations of student research.

*PRE-REQUISITES: JUST A110.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Urban Police Problems is a course designed to advance the critical thinking and writing skills of students by building upon those skills already developed in the University's core curriculum and students' own areas of substantive focus. As part of the *Justice* curriculum, this course builds on the conceptual foundation laid in JUST A110 *Introduction to Justice*, providing students with an advanced theoretical and empirical introduction to the most pressing issues facing contemporary American policing. In line with these course objectives, students can expect a rigorous reading and writing workload. Students will also be expected to challenge their own thinking and that of their peers by actively participating in discussions and group assignments. Those who successfully complete this course will be able to demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the history, social organization, practices and contemporary problems facing American policing, as well as the ability to formulate critical analyses of the key issues facing this most important of social institutions.

REQUIRED READINGS: TEXTS

Walker and Katz. (2008). "The Police In America: An Introduction." 6th Ed.

Weisheit et al. (2006). "Crime and Policing in Rural and Small-Town America." 3rd Ed.

Kappeler (2006). "The Police and Society: Touchstone Readings." 3rd Ed.

All texts available for purchase from UAA Bookstore.

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS/TEXTS:

*** To be determined.***

BLACKBOARD:

This course will make extensive use of the Blackboard learning environment. All course communications will take place via Blackboard. I will post announcements, homework assignments, and grades on Blackboard. I will use Blackboard course mail to contact students individually. Every once in a while I will hold on-line office hours via Blackboards chat feature. Students will use course mail to contact me, and each other. Quite often, students will be required to submit homework via Blackboard. All this and much, much more will take place on Blackboard. It is each students' responsibility to ensure they have access to Blackboard, and to familiarize themselves with its operation and functionality.

Every student must maintain an active Blackboard account and check it regularly. (I recommend checking Blackboard daily.) To log-in to your account, go to:

<http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/classes/uaaclasses8.cfm>.

EVALUATION

Reading Assignments

Typically, for each topic covered in class students can expect to read one textbook chapter, one chapter out of the course reader, and one empirical research article examining that particular issue. Examinations and writing assignments will be used to evaluate students' comprehension, synthesis, and application of reading materials.

Quizzes

Quizzes will be a primary form of student evaluation in this course. Students can anticipate one quiz per week, on average. Typically, though not always, quizzes will be open-source (notes, book, etc.). Sometimes quizzes will be given in class, other times they will be posted on Blackboard. Sometimes quizzes will be announced, sometimes not. The number of quizzes is not pre-determined.

Exams

There will be three "standard" exams and one "final" (i.e. comprehensive) exam for this course. Exams will be interactive. Rather than simply memorizing and then regurgitating course material, students will be required to *demonstrate* their understanding of conceptual material and computational methods. The content and structure of particular exams will vary. Each exam will be worth 100 points. The final exam will be comprehensive, and worth 150 points. The dates for exams are not predetermined. Exams will be administered after determination by the instructor that course materials have been adequately covered and discussed, and students are sufficiently prepared to sit for the exam. Exams will be announced in class and on Blackboard at least one week prior to administration. Exams will be given during regularly scheduled class time, in the same room class meets. All exams are required.

Writing/Homework Assignments

Students will not write a final paper for this course. However, there is a substantial writing component, primarily in the form of analytic memos. The instructor will assign analytic memos periodically throughout the semester. Each analytic memo will be worth 10 points. Each student's two lowest scores will be dropped when calculating their final grade. Analytic memos will be 250 words in length (roughly one double-spaced page). In each memo students will be expected to perform four inter-related tasks: *summarize*, *synthesize*, *analyze*, and *discuss*. Assignments will be submitted electronically via Blackboard, not email.

Attendance

Attendance is strongly encouraged, but not required. Because I know students' primary focus is on grades, I am providing a modest incentive for attendance and participation beyond appealing to your desire to learn and fear of missing important material: each class period will be worth 1 point. I will take attendance randomly, giving each student the opportunity to earn points for doing nothing other than showing up for class.

Office Hours

I do not require students to attend office hours, but I strongly encourage each of you to take advantage of the opportunity. As a reward for your efforts, you will be given 5 extra-credit points for each office hours session you attend, up to three sessions. However, you cannot simply show up and receive credit. You must bring a thoughtful, contemplative course-related question and be prepared to discuss it. (maximum 15 points)

Assignment of Grades

Assignment of grades for this course will be according to an A-B-C-D-F scale; there are no “plus” (e.g. “A+”) or “minus” (e.g. “A-”) grades. Students will receive an “A” for earning 90 to 100 percent of the total points possible for the semester, a “B” for acquiring 80 to 89 percent of the total points possible for the semester, a “C” for accumulating 70 to 79 percent of the total points possible for the semester, a “D” for totaling 60 to 69 percent of the total points possible for the semester, and an “F” for earning less than 60 percent of the total points possible. Grade distributions for assignments and exams will not be “curved.”

Consistent with UAA guidelines (see Chapter 7 of Catalog), an “A” represents an Honor grade, indicating comprehensive mastery of required work. A “B” indicates a high level of performance in meeting course requirements. A “C” indicates a satisfactory level of performance. A “D” represents the lowest passing grade. Finally, an “F” indicates failure.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

A grade of “I” (incomplete) is assigned only at the discretion of the instructor. Typically, awarding of the grade of “I” will be limited to extraordinary circumstances beyond a student’s control (e.g. unavoidable absences). In all cases, students must demonstrate satisfactory progress in the majority of the work in the course prior to requesting a grade of “I”. The *Incomplete Grade Contract* must be completed and filed with the Justice Center office prior to an “I” grade being assigned.

COURSE POLICIES

Each student should review the Code of Conduct (Chapter 5 of Catalog) for University policies regarding student rights and responsibilities. Please pay particular attention to the topics of cheating, plagiarism, and academic dishonesty.

Make-up Work

Arrangements for make-up work will be made only in those cases where the student has an absence approved by the University (for example: unexpected illness; religious holiday observance; official University activities).

Except in the case of emergencies, all make-up exams must be taken before the regularly scheduled exam administration. Make-up exams will not be given if a student could have made prior arrangements but failed to do so.

Students With Disabilities

It is the responsibility of students to inform the professor of any disabilities that require special accommodations. If a student requires special accommodations, arrangements must be made prior to the assigned due date for any coursework, particularly in the case of examinations. Disability Support Services coordinates academic support services for students who experience disabilities. If you require assistance, contact DSS at 786-4530 or 786-4536 (ITY).

COURSE TOPIC SCHEDULE

Tentative Course Schedule

Topic Number	Topic Description	Chapter/Reading
1	The Police: An Institution of Social Control	WK Ch. 1 Bittner Reading
2	History of American Policing	WK Ch. 2 K Ch. 1, 2, 5
	Exam #1	
3	The Contours of Contemporary American Policing	WK Ch. 3 K Ch. 10, 11
4	The Structure of Police Organizations	WK Ch. 4 K Ch. 27 Katz reading
5	Police Culture	WK Ch. 5, Ch.6 K Ch. 15, 17
	Exam #2	
6	The Empirical Reality of Patrol Work	WK Ch. 7 Parks et. al. reading
7	Contemporary Issues: Discretion	WK Ch. 11 Reading TBD
8	Peacekeeping and Order Maintenance	WK Ch. 8 K Ch. 21, 22
9	The Police and Crime	WK Ch. 9, 10 Langworthy reading
	Exam #3	
10	Rural and Small Town Police – An Overview	WFW Ch. 4
11	Rural Policing, Alaska Style	Readings TBD
12	The Future of American Policing	WK. Ch 15

WK = Walker & Katz K = Kappeler WFW = Weisheit, Falcone and Wells

NOTE: This is a **topic syllabus**. Notice that there are no pre-determined dates listed for readings/assignments. That is not an omission; it is intentional. Progress through the course schedule will be determined by **student learning**, not arbitrary dates. Topics requiring more attention will receive it. Conversely, topics that students master quickly will permit accelerated progress through the schedule.

REMINDER: This course schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.