

Seminar in Criminology and Criminal Justice
Police-Community Relations – CCJS 418K
Fall 2021
Tuesdays 4:00-6:30pm (EST)

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Virtual Office Hours: available by arrangement

Course Overview

Policing urban communities typically involves achieving a delicate balance between responding to calls for service and proactive crime control efforts. On one hand, research suggests that the police benefit from citizens' willingness to cooperate (e.g., reporting crimes, identifying suspects, assisting in investigations, and addressing ecological conditions that might facilitate crime). Conversely, effective policing routinely involves tactics that bring the police into close and regular contact with citizens. Furthermore, unwelcome police encounters are often viewed by neighborhood residents, particularly people of color, as intrusive, dehumanizing and unwarranted, leading citizens to invariably question whether officers respect their constitutional rights and recognize their humanity.

Over the past few years, there have been fervent calls for police reform. In over a relatively short time period, police agencies have been compelled to reimagine their fundamental mission. In this class, we will examine major police innovations and analyze critical issues that persist for the profession. In particular, law enforcement agencies are being held accountable for addressing longstanding societal issues such as racial discrimination, excessive use of force, and other forms of police malfeasance.

The primary objective of this seminar is to facilitate students' understanding of well-established issues in the delivery of police services. Further, it is my hope that this class will guide students' development of their own intellectual curiosities pertaining to crime and justice policy. Thus, the class is designed so that students will gain considerable experience critiquing, developing, and presenting scholarly works. Students are strongly encouraged to take full advantage of this opportunity to enhance their own budding professional careers by setting goals beyond getting a "good" grade.

Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate understanding of how crime and criminal justice are products of political, economic, and social structures and examine how they might intersect with systems of oppression.

1. Students will demonstrate understanding of the three pillars of our criminal justice system courts, policing, and corrections
2. Students will demonstrate understanding of the major theories that are used to explain criminal behavior

3. Students will demonstrate understanding of how crime and criminal justice are products of political, economic, and social structures and examine how they might intersect with systems of oppression
4. Students will demonstrate competency in the ability to read, interpret, and synthesize (in writing) important research related to criminological theory and the criminal justice system
5. Students will demonstrate understanding of the research methods used in the study of criminology and criminal justice
6. Students will demonstrate competency in applying qualitative and quantitative skills to criminological concepts

Required Course Hardware and Materials

Unless otherwise stated, we will be meeting over Zoom at the scheduled time (Tuesdays 4:00-6:30pm / EST) via ELMS-Canvas.

- Reliable internet connection
- A computer device and headset
- Understanding how to mute your microphone (and camera) on Zoom
- Knowledge of whom to contact at UMD for technology-related help (e.g., ELMS Support Desk at 301.405.1500)

Time Requirements and Class Engagement

Here are some helpful things to do before each class meeting:

- To the extent possible, find a location free from distractions.
- To the best of your ability, ensure that you have adequate internet capacity to complete assigned tasks, retrieve materials, and participate online.
- Gather materials (headset, pens, paper, readings).
- Login early to test your camera and microphone.
- Adhere to my guidelines for online etiquette and class participation.
- I will advise whether a class is being recorded. Recording of classes, in whole or in part, is at my discretion only and with students' permission.

Accessibility and Disability Services (ADS)

The university's ADS Office works with students and faculty to provide students who qualify under the Americans With Disabilities Act with accommodations that allow them to participate fully in the activities at the university. Ordinarily, students receiving such accommodations will deliver instructor notification letters at the beginning of the semester. Students have the right to choose whether to disclose their specific disabilities but must provide a letter to receive accommodations.

Electronic Devices

I must approve the in-class use of all recording devices – including but not limited to smart phones, laptops, video/voice recorders, tablets etc. Only students who have arranged an accommodation with ADS may use mechanical or electronic transcribing, recording, or communication devices during class. Students with disabilities who believe they may need such an accommodation may contact the ADS Office.

Assignments, Grading and Guidelines:

All written assignments must be submitted through ELMS-Canvas.

Examinations

There will be no examinations.

Reaction Essays (worth up to 80 points)

Each student will be required to submit **up to five** (a minimum of two, single spaced, typewritten pages) essays (and at least three provocative discussion questions) in response to the assigned readings. I will accept only **one** reaction essay (and set of questions) per class meeting (September 7th thru November 2nd). These writings **must be submitted through ELMS-Canvas no less than an hour before (2:59PM / EST) each weekly class meeting** (and will be worth up to 16 points each). You **must** also be present on the Zoom call (or have previously obtained an exception from me) to receive credit. Late assignments will be accepted only in exigent circumstances where students can document (e.g., with a letter from a physician etc.) that they had no choice but to miss the established deadline or class meeting.

The aforementioned work will be assessed based on the following:

Writing Quality

Criteria

Spelling, Grammar, Punctuation (up to 4 points)
Organization of Information (up to 4 points)

Substance

Criteria

Integration of Course Material (up to 4 points)
Analytical Thinking (up to 4 points)

Engaged Class Participation

The success of this class depends heavily upon your consistent, thoughtful engagement. Therefore, an atmosphere where differences of opinion are welcomed and respected will be maintained. This does not mean, however, that there must always be consensus but discord will be communicated in a courteous manner and supported by empirical evidence. Again, my expectation is that we will have frequent, informed, and spirited dialogue among us.

Only by carefully examining the assigned readings **prior to class** will you be prepared to fully participate in class discussions. Thus, please consult the attached schedule of readings and plan your time carefully since some assigned readings are lengthier than others.

Discussion Board (worth up to 40 points)

On Discussion Board week's (as noted below), students will be required to post **and** respond to at least one classmate's post of recently published op-eds (within the past year) concerning police reform efforts or related topics. All posts and responses should be completed **by Tuesdays at 2:59pm (EST)**. Each (**of the five**) discussion assignment is worth up to **8 points** (for a semester total of 40 points). Merely posting a response to a classmate's observation does not guarantee that you will receive full credit. Specifically, in order to earn maximum points, students must demonstrate keen understanding of material and offer insightful commentary. Also, students who fail to post a thoughtful reply will at best only receive partial credit. Finally, please note that my expectations for civility also extends to discussion board communications.

Substance

<i>Criteria</i>	<u>Credit</u>
Content	4
Analytical Thinking	4

Policy Brief (worth up to 100 points)

Each student will prepare **an original** policy brief of 8-10 pages in length (excluding cover pages, charts, tables, figures, appendixes, and references). The document will be due (**submitted via ELMS-Canvas no later than 2:59PM / EST**) on **December 7th**. For guidance regarding how to prepare an effective policy brief see [Policy Briefs – The Writing Center University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill \(unc.edu\)](http://www.unc.edu/writing-center/policy-briefs). Late assignments will be accepted only in exigent circumstances where students can document (e.g., with a letter from a physician etc.) that they had no choice but to miss the established deadline.

Topics will be determined by individual students (in consultation with me) but **must** cover a particular aspect of strategies for improved public safety. The area of focus must be approved by

me during our **October 26th** class meeting. Students will be **required** to present problem statements and/or executive summaries in class (**November 9th, 23rd, and 30th**).

Listed below are two possible directions for student policy briefs:

1. A thoughtful summary of the state of knowledge concerning a specific facet of criminal justice system reform; or
2. A detailed analysis of a contemporary crime prevention effort/initiative/strategy and specific policy recommendations

This work will be assessed based on the following:

Writing Quality

<i>Criteria</i>	<u>Credit</u>
Length	5
Spelling, Grammar, Punctuation	15
Organization of Information	15
APA Style Format	15

Substance

<i>Criteria</i>	<u>Credit</u>
Content	20
Integration of Course Material	15
Analytical Thinking	15

UMD Writing Center

Student policy briefs must be reviewed by the UMD Writing Center prior to final submission. Proof of this consultation must be submitted with the final paper. The Writing Center offers free and friendly tutoring for any level of writer, including help with conceptualizing writing projects, the writing process, and using sources effectively. E-mail the Writing Center to request an appointment (writadmin@umd.edu).

Academic Dishonesty

Students are required to complete their own work. If you have used the words or ideas of others, which is expected, you must give them proper recognition. If you do not give credit to a source, you may be committing plagiarism. Work that is plagiarized will result in the assignment of "F" (0 points) for the work and may result in the student receiving a failing grade for the course. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit <http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html>.

UMD Course Related Policies Website

<http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

There will be a total of **220 possible points** in the class and grades will be assigned as follows:

A	100%-94%	B+	89-87%	C+	79-77%	D+	69-67%
A-	93%-90%	B	86%-84%	C	76%-74%	D	66%-64%
		B-	83-80%	C-	73-70%	D-	63%-60%
						F	59% or below

Course Meeting Schedule

August 31st – Course Introduction

Discussion of urban policing, challenges, and opportunities.

Please access and read before class (through the **two** links pasted below).

[Protests focus on over-policing. But under-policing is also deadly](#)

<https://www.hfg.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/WhoGottheCamera.pdf>

September 7th – Policing Inner-city Youth

Required readings:

[Brunson, Rod K., and Kashea Pegram. 2018. “Kids do not so Much Make Trouble, they are Trouble’: Police-Youth Relations.” *The Future of Children*. 28:83-102.](#)

[Gau, Jacinta and Rod K. Brunson. 2010. “Procedural Justice and Order Maintenance Policing: A Study of Inner-City Young Men’s Perceptions of Police Legitimacy.” *Justice Quarterly*. 27:255-279.](#)

[Cobbina, Jennifer, Jody Miller, and Rod K. Brunson. 2008. “Gender, Neighborhood Danger and Risk Avoidance Strategies among Urban African American Youths.” *Criminology*. 46:501-538.](#)

September 14th – Race and Policing (Discussion Board Post/Response #1)

Required readings:

Gaston, Shytierra and Rod K. Brunson. 2020. “Reasonable Suspicion in the Eye of the Beholder: Routine Policing in Racially Different Disadvantaged Neighborhoods.” *Urban Affairs Review*. 56:188-227.

Braga, Anthony A., Rod K. Brunson, and Kevin Drakulich. 2019. “Race, Place, and Effective Policing.” *Annual Review of Sociology*. 45:535-555.

Brunson, Rod K. and Ronald Weitzer. 2009. “Police Relations with Black and White Youths in Different Urban Neighborhoods.” *Urban Affairs Review*. 44:858-885.

Ronald Weitzer. 2000. “Racialized Policing: Residents’ Perceptions in Three Neighborhoods.” *Law and Society Review*, 34: 129-155.

September 21st – Community Policing and Procedural Justice (Discussion Board Post/Response #2)

Required readings:

Brunson, Rod K. and Ronald Weitzer. 2011. “Negotiating Unwelcome Police Encounters: The Intergenerational Transmission of Conduct Norms.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. 40:425-456.

Gau, Jacinta and Rod K. Brunson. 2010. “Procedural Justice and Order Maintenance Policing: A Study of Inner-City Young Men’s Perceptions of Police Legitimacy.” *Justice Quarterly*. 27:255-279.

Brunson, Rod K. 2007. “‘Police Don’t Like Black People’: African American Young Men’s Accumulated Police Experiences.” *Criminology & Public Policy*. 6:71-102.

Rod K. Brunson and Jody Miller. 2006. “Young Black Men and Urban Policing in the United States.” *British Journal of Criminology*, 46: 613-640.

September 28th –Police Accountability (Discussion Board Post/Response #3)

D’Souza, Amanda, Ronald Weitzer, and Rod K. Brunson. 2019. “Federal Investigations of Police Misconduct: A Multi-City Comparison of Problems and Reforms.” *Crime, Law and Social Change*. 71:461-482.

Weitzer, Ronald and Rod K. Brunson. 2013. “African American Perceptions of Police Misconduct and Accountability.” *Journal of Qualitative Criminal Justice and Criminology*. 2:241-266.

October 5th – Officer Race and Policing (Discussion Board Post/Response #4)

Required readings:

Gaston, Shytierra, Rod K. Brunson, and Leigh S. Grossman. Forthcoming. “Are Minorities Subjected to, or Insulated from, Racialized Policing in Majority-Minority Community Contexts?” *British Journal of Criminology*.

John Shjarback, Scott H. Decker, Jeff Rojek, and Rod K. Brunson. 2017. “Minority Representation in Policing and Racial Profiling: A Test of Representative Bureaucracy.” *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*. 40:748-767.

Brunson, Rod K. and Jacinta Gau. 2015. “Officer Race vs. Macrolevel Context: A Test of Competing Hypotheses about Black Citizens’ Experiences with and Perceptions of Black Police Officers.” *Crime & Delinquency*. 61:213-242.

Gau, Jacinta M. and Rod K. Brunson. “Why More Diverse Police Forces may not Solve the Problems which Exist Between Police and Disadvantaged Communities of Color.” The London School of Economics and Political Science, May 18, 2015, USAPP.

October 12th – Police Legitimacy and Citizen Trust (Discussion Board Post/Response #5)

Required readings:

Hockin, Sara M. and Rod K. Brunson. 2018. “The Revolution might not be Televised (but it will be Lived-Streamed): Future Directions for Research on Police-Minority Relations.” *Journal of Race and Justice*. 8:199-215.

Brunson, Rod K., Anthony A. Braga, David Hureau, and Kashea Pegram. 2015. “We Trust You, But Not *That* Much: Examining Police-Black Clergy Partnerships to Reduce Youth Violence.” *Justice Quarterly*. 32:1006-1036.

Weitzer, Ronald and Rod K. Brunson. 2009. “Strategic Responses to the Police Among Inner-City Youth.” *Sociological Quarterly*. 50:235-256.

October 19th – Urban Crime and the Stop Snitching Campaign

Required readings:

Brunson, Rod K and Brian Wade. 2019. “‘Oh Hell No, We Don’t Talk to Police’: Improved Police Relations with High-Risk Shooting Victims and Perpetrators.” *Criminology & Public Policy*. 18:623-648.

Brunson, Rod K. and Eric A. Stewart. 2006. “Young African American Women, the Street Code, and Violence: An Exploratory Analysis.” *Journal of Crime & Justice*. 29:1-19.

Carr, Patrick, Laura Napolitano, and Jessica Keating. 2007. "We Never Call the Cops And Here is Why: A Qualitative Examination of Legal Cynicism in Three Philadelphia Neighborhoods." *Criminology*, 45 (2): 445 – 480.

Jeremy Kahn. 2007. "The Story of a Snitch." (April 1) *Atlantic Monthly*.

Richard Rosenfeld, Bruce Jacobs, and Richard Wright. 2003. "Snitching and the Code of the Street." *British Journal of Criminology*, 43 (2): 291 – 309.

October 26th – Student Presentations of Policy Brief Topics

November 2nd – Focused Deterrence Strategies

Required readings:

Pegram, Kashea, Rod K. Brunson, and Anthony A. Braga. 2016. "The Doors of the Church are now Open: Black Clergy, Collective Efficacy, and Neighborhood Violence." *City & Community*. 15:289-314.

Brunson, Rod K. 2015. "Focused Deterrence and Improved Police-Community Relations: Unpacking the Proverbial "Black Box." *Criminology & Public Policy*. 14:507-514.

Braga, Anthony A. and Rod K. Brunson. "The Police and Public Discourse on 'Black on Black' Violence." *New Perspectives on Policing*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 2015. NCJ 248588.

Corsaro, Nicholas, Rod K. Brunson, and Edmund McGarrell. 2010. "Evaluating a Policing Strategy Intended to Disrupt an Illicit Street-Level Drug Market." *Evaluation Review*. 34:513-548.

November 9th – Student Problem Statement / Executive Summary Discussions

November 16th – *NO CLASS MEETING*** Library Research Day**

November 23rd – Student Problem Statement / Executive Summary Discussions cont'd

November 30th – Student Problem Statement / Executive Summary Discussions cont'd

December 7th – WRAP-UP

Policy Briefs Due