American policing is in crisis. Many demand change. Few know what to do, or how to do it. This course examines what we know, and how criminologists can help to put knowledge into practice. Our central focus is on innovations that can be shown to

- Increase police legitimacy
- Maintain or increase community safety
- Minimize the use of force deployed by police in proportion to its necessity

The general aim of this course is to help students develop systematic knowledge and skill about the design and testing of innovations in any domain of the public sector, from health to education and sustainable energy. Using policing as the case in point,

1) We examine the political, scientific and leadership factors leading to innovations: how good ideas strong evidence identify what can work.
2) We critically explore the planning and delivery of implementation of innovations, understanding both failures and successes in change that does work;
3) We analytically explore the measurement of both implementation of innovations and their outcomes so that they can work sustainably.

The course addresses these questions with an emphasis on where good ideas come from (Johnson, 2010), within the framework of Evidence-Based Policing and organizational change (Sherman, 1998, 2013, 2015).

**Requirements.** The course requires students to attend all seminars, to read all assigned materials before each seminar, to discuss the reading materials during the seminar at an advanced level of analysis, to write a paper, and to deliver a 15-minute, powerpoint slide-assisted presentation summarizing the paper in class.

**Grading.** Grades will be based on the following work elements in the indicated proportions:

- Class participation (50%)
- Written paper (25%)
- Oral Presentation (25%)

**Class Medium.** Class meetings will be held mostly face-to-face, with videos for discussion and a few video-linked seminars. All classes will meet in LeFrak Hall 2165E.
Paper. The paper should be a proposal for developing, testing or implementing an innovation in a police agency that will help address the post-Ferguson crisis in America. The innovation can be a refinement on current practices, the adoption of a well-tested but not widely used evidence-based policy, or an entirely new idea. The paper should not exceed 6,000 words (excluding references and graphics). It should have three parts: Targeting, Testing and Tracking (Sherman, 2013).

1. Targeting: What is the nature and distribution of the problem that you intend to address, with what “power few” concentrations? How would you focus police resources on the different dimensions or units of analysis of the problem? For the sake of discussion, identify one US police agency in which you would propose to develop and implement an evidence-based innovation.

2. Testing: What is the evidence on which your proposed innovation would be based?
   A. Existing Evidence. If the program has been tested, summarize the results of all of the tests, including some measures tracking the extent to which the program was implemented as planned.
   B. No Prior Evidence. If the program has not been tested, propose a detailed research design with which the police agency could test the program, measuring the cost-effectiveness of outcomes of the innovation compared to outcomes of business as usual.

3. Tracking: How would you plan to implement the innovation, with systematic measurement evidence about whether the program is being delivered as intended across the agency, feedback to those delivering the program with less than full implementation in either qualitative or quantitative terms, and corrections of implementation failures through better training, coaching, performance reviews and re-assignment of personnel.

Readings: Each student should have access to a copy of THINKING FAST AND SLOW, by Daniel Kahneman (2011), as well as WHERE DO GOOD IDEAS COME FROM (2010), by Steven B. Johnson. All students will receive a free copy of POLICING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (1992) and several reprints. All other assigned readings will be available by PDF, and are listed below for each class meetings.

Schedule and Readings

1. Tuesday, January 26: A Crisis of Police Legitimacy: What is to be Done?

2. Tuesday, February 2 Police Use of Force and Deadly Force
   Readings: Fyfe, 1980; Sherman, 1983;
Notes: Officers assigned to one-officer patrol cars suffered fewer injuries in citizen encounters than officers assigned to two-officer cars (Boydstun, et al., 1977). Referring officers who frequently use force against citizens to a peer-review panel with older officers who once had similar issues only served to increase their use of force relative to control officers (Pate, 1976). Policies restricting and regulating the powers of police to shoot at fleeing felony suspects substantially reduced police killings of citizens in US cities (Fyfe, 1980; Sherman, 1983; Tennenbaum, 1991). The Supreme Court is crucial, as is professional leadership.

3. Tuesday, February 9 Evidence-Based Policing: The Triple-T Framework
Johnson TED Talk video (17 minutes) at http://www.ted.com/talks/steven_johnson_where_good_ideas_come_from?language=en

Note: An “action-research” strategy can help any organization to adapt to its challenges and be more effective: a cycle of problem analysis, trying out new solutions, and studying whether the solutions work, such as Problem-Oriented Policing. But an absence of feedback on outcomes leaves decision-makers unable to learn from experience. Inventions are needed, based on “translations” of both theory and evidence, that can produce continuous improvement in outcomes. Sherman’s “Triple-T” for evidence-based policing builds an innovation and improvement framework specifically for policing. The role of Triple T is linked to the Johnson framework of “ideas having sex” that produces hybrid genetics in successive generations of any species or organizational strategy.

4. Tuesday, February 16
Implementing Tested v. Developing Innovations: Key Concepts
Slothower, M. Et al (2015)
Sherman 2011 “Offender-Desistance Policing”

Note: Implementation of policing innovations generally fails for lack of planning, training, tracking, feedback and correction. The political environments, internal and external, may encourage this failure. Is the T-T-T approach strong enough to break through inertia and opposition? Birmingham Turning Point as an Example. Translational criminology from Laub and Sampson to police charging decisions in four lockups.

5. Tuesday, February 23: Policing Against Murder: Black Lives Matter
Readings: Sherman and Rogan (1995), KC Gun Experiment
Rosenfeld, et al (2014)
Sherman & Weisburd (1995), Minneapolis Hot Spots Experiment
Recommended:

Note: Proactive policing of illegal weapon-carrying has ample evidence of reducing violence and saving lives, often the lives of minority group members. The manner in which it is conducted is often disrespectful and combative, thus distorting the questions to be analyzed. The first question is whether increased contacts with potential gun-carriers can save lives. The second question is whether such contacts can be done in a way that does not undermine legitimacy by appearing unnecessarily harsh. The use of Random Breath Tests (RBTs) against drinking-driving in Australia can illuminate parallel issues to policing against gun-carrying, since the former were far more intrusive all across the population but widely accepted as a highly successful innovation.

6. Tuesday, March 1: Does Procedural Justice Work?

Note: The evidence that procedural justice training can improve police legitimacy is limited, with no RCT testing the claim that better policing can increase either voluntary compliance with law or macro-level legitimacy. Does that mean training on police encounters is a dead-end for developing policing innovations?

7. Tuesday, March 8: Taking Sides: Identity and Culture in Innovations

Note: Much of the struggle over police reform has always been about the identity of the police, or those who control the police, in conflict with other identities, all struggling for moral or cultural supremacy—just as Prohibitionists struggled against “wet” immigrants and police officers drawn from immigrant communities (see Gusfield, Symbolic Crusade). Police rejection of innovations featuring procedural justice, polite policing, or greater restraint in using deadly force may be seen as a form of identity politics. “Police Lives Matter” and other backlashes against innovations push audiences to take sides, excluding reconciliation or reasoned discourse as morally unacceptable options. How can innovations be built amidst such epic struggles?

Tuesday, March 15—Spring Break

8. Title: March 22: Policing Domestic Violence: Evidence and Innovations

Note: Evidence-based police reform has seen a staggering failure in domestic violence, which began with one experiment and immediately ceased to consider further evidence. Similar rejection of inconvenient truth has been seen in relation to climate change, but may have weakened due to an onslaught of further evidence—as well as extreme climate events. Is there a means of turning domestic homicides into a narrative of failure of evidence-free policy, especially if prior suicide attempts turn out to be the best predictor of such murders?


Sherman et al 2015 (JOEX)

Note: Restorative justice conferences led by police constitute a pure example of evidence-driven police reform, with randomized trials meeting medical standards for successful outcomes. This innovation has nonetheless received little rollout, anywhere on the planet. This seminar diagnoses the possible reasons of low traction in relation to policing identities and news media perceptions of dialogue as too “soft” when “tough” policing is the identity “we” need.

10. Tuesday April 5: **Body-Worn Videos and Policing: Why and How?**


Note: The spread of police BWV hit a tipping point with two events in rapid succession: a NY Times report on a Cambridge criminology experiment with cameras showing they reduced police use of force, and a New York Judge ordering NYPD officers to wear BWV. Subsequent developments include thirty more RCTs, but many decisions to adopt BWV being made in an evidence-free way. How can we learn from this example to promote closer links between innovation implementation and an ongoing research strategy?

11. Tuesday, April 12: **Bringing More Offenders to Justice**


Note: Innovations in investigation techniques have been found to raise detection rates, but have not been widely rolled out. This fact is not likely to be related to police identity. Does failure of medical innovation provide a better guide to understanding this case?
A test of covert surveillance of repeat offenders identified from police intelligence found substantial increases in arrests, convictions and incarceration compared to a control group (Martin and Sherman, 1986 a,b,c).

A test of post-arrest “case enhancement” investigations found no increase in convictions, but substantial increases in sentences to imprisonment relative to control cases (Abrahamse, et al, 1991).

A test of processing DNA samples from crime scenes where such samples were collected showed a 25% increase in the detection rate (Roman, et al, 2009).

Use of automatic license plate recognition (LPR) devices in auto crime hot spots over many hours failed to yield more than marginal increases in arrests for auto crime (Taylor et al 2011).

12. Tuesday April 19: **Nudging More Offenders to Desist**


Note: Police cultures can be oriented to a “hunting” framework in which the main objective is to make an arrest or a prosecution. Less value is often placed on preventing crime, least of all by promoting offender desistance, which may sound too much like social work. Yet each arrest is an opportunity to examine how desistance might be made more likely. The concept of offender-desistance policing has been applied in three police agencies in the UK and Australia, with political support. Its initial implementation was difficult but successful, with a Maryland grad student playing a key role. Its success in saving money may be reason alone for its adoption—or resistance to it.

Other evidence shows that

a. police proactively contacting crime “recruiters” to say they and their “recruits” are under surveillance reduced arrests, relative to controls, among the recruiters, their recruits, and their entire network of co-offenders (Ariel and Englefield, 2014).


13. Tuesday April 26: **Higher Education and Police Professionalization**


College of Policing (UK) Police Qualifications Framework (2016)

Note: Higher education remains an innovation with 100 years of failure to be adopted. Many authorities have agreed it should happen, but it is usually derailed along identity lines of competence: “educated people are sissies,” it is implied, “who are incapable of doing the physical labor required to restrain violent people. Working class people are used to violence, skilled at its management, and thus provide more safety for society. Attempts to require university degrees would also exclude minorities as well as working class whites.” This narrative has prevented the development of an evidence base that could actually confront it.
14. Tuesday May 3: Tipping Points for Police Reform

Note: The tipping point perspective on new social movements suggests that a clear adoption of an innovation across a large population can come all at once. The analytic question for that perspective is whether police “reform” can be aggregated, or whether it must come piecemeal—with each piece having a tipping point. Much depends on the view one takes of this question.

15. Tuesday, May 10: Student Paper Presentations
A Bibliography of Evidence-Based Policing


Washington, DC: Police Foundation.


Sherman, Lawrence W., and Heather M. Harris. (2014). "Increased death rates of domestic violence victims from arresting vs. warning suspects in the Milwaukee Domestic Violence


