

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Department of Sociology | Spring 2023 | SOC 327
California State University, San Marcos

“Well, if one really wishes to know how justice is administered in a country, one does not question the policemen, the lawyers, the judges, or the protected members of the middle class. One goes to the unprotected – those, precisely, who need the law’s protection most! – and listens to their testimony. Ask any Mexican, any Puerto Rican, any black man, any poor person – ask the wretched how they fare in the halls of justice, and then you will know, not whether or not the country is just, but whether or not it has any love for justice, or any concept of it. It is certain, in any case, that ignorance, allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have.”
~James Baldwin



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COURSE OVERVIEW

INSTRUCTOR AND COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor

Jordan C. Grasso, M.A. (they, them, theirs)

please allow 48 hours for a response

Course Information

In-Person Monday 10:30-1:20pm

San Marcos Campus,

Office Hours

Monday 9:00am-12:00pm, or by appointment via Zoom

San Marcos Campus

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog Description

Sociological analysis of law enforcement systems and the role of police. Problems affecting the control of crime and the relation of police to the community.

More Specifically...

This is an upper-division undergraduate elective course geared specifically toward students majoring in Criminology and Justice Studies or Sociology. Students will learn to examine policing in the United States from a critical sociological perspective. The historical practices of the police will be intersected with contemporary issues, including police use of force and violence, militarization, and the defunding of police. How did policing begin? What is the purpose of the police? How does socialization impact their practices, procedures, and outcomes? What is the relationship between the police and the military? Who is affected by policing practices and violence? Are police ever held accountable for mis-conduct? And, where do we go from here?



LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Sociology Department has a set of student learning outcomes for our undergraduate major in Criminology and Justice Studies. This class reinforces student understanding of the following PSLOs:

Learning Objective	How Students Will Achieve the Outcome
<u>PSLO #1:</u> Analyze and interpret the diversity of social experience using a sociological and/or criminology and justice studies perspective especially in relation to race, class, gender, sexualities, religion, and nationality.	Student will articulate the relationships that exist between police and different communities, particularly low income and communities of color through reading reflections and in class discussions during Unit 3.
<u>PSLO #2:</u> Assess competing theoretical approaches to societal problems of publics with differing and multiple interests; specify structural or institutional sources of these social problems; and propose and assess policies, interventions and/or modes of advocacy that will enact positive change.	Students will assess the historical, structural, and institutional sources of police culture, practices, and violence. Students will assess policy and law, including various reforms and potential for change, increases to police training, and defunding/abolishing the police. Students will reflect on scholarly research on police reform through reading reflections, class discussions and the completion of their final project in which they will debate between reform and abolition.
<u>PSLO #3:</u> Locate, analyze, assess, and communicate sociological and/or criminology and justice studies scholarship.	Students will describe and analyze scholarship related to policing and law enforcement each week in reading reflections and class discussions. They will analyze and write about criminology, sociology, socio-legal, and justice studies scholarship related to policing and law enforcement. Additionally, students will locate additional scholarship while completing their final project.
<u>PSLO #5:</u> Articulate the ethical and social justice implications of sociological or criminology and justice studies inquiry.	Students will Communicate about contemporary issues related to policing in the U.S. through class discussions and participation activities. Students will also facilitate a class discussion once during the semester. They will apply theories and concepts from class to modern-day issues in policing. Students will apply what they have learned throughout the semester and how it relates to social justice through a final project.



LEARNING FORMAT



This class is structured to produce **significant learning** through consistent, active, and engaged participation rather than passive learning that relies on memorization and regurgitation. Although gaining foundational knowledge related to the topic is indeed an aspect of the learning process in this class, you will also be expected to practice **applying** and **integrating** new information to other facets of your life while simultaneously considering the **human dimension** of what you are learning. If we are successful, we will all learn from each other and develop a **deeper care** about the topic at hand while improving ourselves as self-directed **lifelong learners**.

Because students are expected to actively engage during class sessions, I utilize a **flipped-classroom** approach in which students are expected to independently gain a general understanding of the topic at hand prior to coming to class. Students are expected to have a **baseline understanding** of the required course materials **prior** to coming to class.

Each weekly in-person class will follow a similar format that includes:

1. Announcements and brief review.
2. Mini lecture on course material and key topics.
3. Instructor-led activities and/or student-led facilitations
4. Follow-up engagement activities
5. Recommendations for the next week.

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COURSE MATERIALS

There are two required books for this class.

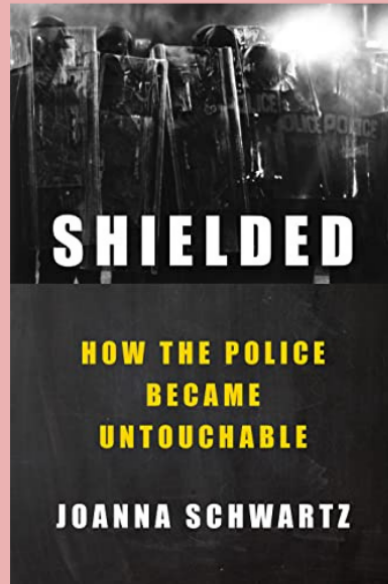
The problem is not police training, police diversity, or police methods. The problem is policing itself.

Alex S. Vitale

The End of Policing

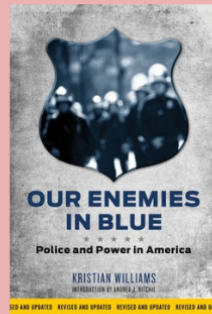
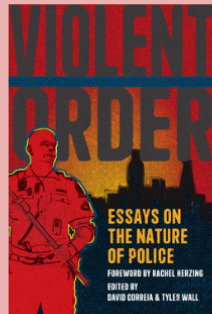
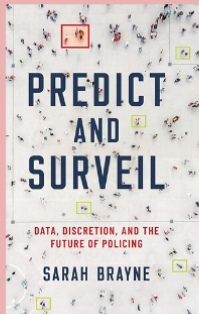
Updated edition

The End of Policing
by Alex Vitale
Publisher: Verso Books



Shielded: How the Police Became Untouchable
by Joanna Schwartz
Publisher: Viking Books

Other readings (all provided on Canvas) include selections from:



Other Materials

- You will need to bring a laptop, tablet, or other electronic device to class each week to complete in-class work. Additionally, to succeed in this course, you must have reliable access to a computer and internet connection outside of class.
- Other required readings, podcasts, and documentaries will be on Canvas their corresponding modules.
- Please bring a copy (hard-copy or electronic-copy) of the weekly required materials to class.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Grades are distributed between five different assignment types for a total of 400 possible points.

1

RR's: Reading Reflections (100 points)

Each week you are expected to write and submit a RR about the week's course materials by 4pm on Sunday. The point of the RRs is to prepare, critically think about, and synthesize the course material before class so that you are ready for in-class discussions and activities. RRs may be submitted after the Sunday deadline up to the start of class on Monday for an automatic 10% deduction. More information is provided on Canvas. I will automatically drop your four lowest (or missing) scores.

Weekly RRs (14 RRs @ 10 points each)

4 Weekly RRs Automatically Dropped = 100 points

2

Participation (100 points)

This is an intensive course that expects (and depends on) heavy class participation and involvement: be prepared to read, write, and engage with each other. You will be graded on your active, engaged, and thoughtful participation in discussions and activities. Please keep in mind; the "best" participators are not necessarily those who talk the most, but those who qualitatively have the most to say and most clearly and succinctly connects to course materials. Points will be allocated based on active participation and in-class assignments and personal reflections. I will automatically drop your two lowest (or missing) scores.

In Person Participation (12 Assignments @ 10 points each)

2 In Person Participation Assignments Dropped = 100 points

3

Discussion Facilitation (50 points)

Each student will be responsible for facilitating a discussion during a class meeting once during the semester with a small group of peers. To help you prepare, facilitation guides are provided on Canvas and facilitation groups will be determined by the end of week two. Leading up to the week of your facilitation, one member of your group will submit a copy of your facilitation slides on Canvas the day before the class you are set to facilitate.

Facilitation Slides = 15 points

Presentation & Facilitation = 30 points

Reflection = 5 points

4

Unit Learning Checks (100 points)

At the end of each unit, students will respond to questions about the previous unit via short-answer prompts. Learning checks will require application and analysis of real world events utilizing course content.

Learning Checks (4 Assignments @ 25 points each) = 100 points

5

Final Project (50 points)

At the end of the semester, students will complete a final creative and public-facing project that draws on course material and argues for either police reform or police abolition. Students will have a variety of options for their final project including the creation of informational pamphlets, videos, infographics, informational social media slides, TikTok videos, etc. Further details, requirements, and rubrics for the final project will be available on Cougar Courses and discussed in class.

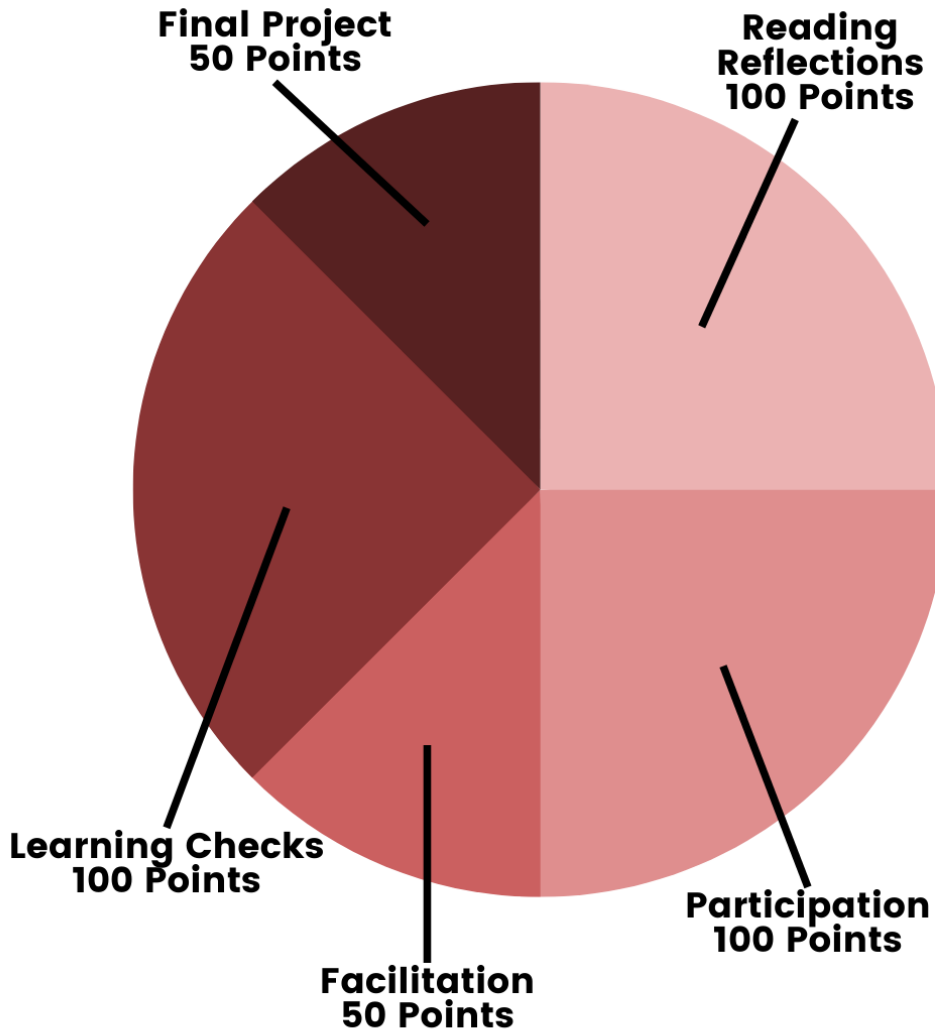
Mini Assignment #1 = 10 points

Mini Assignment #2 = 5 points

Rough Draft & Peer Review = 10 points

Final Draft = 25 points

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING



Percent → Letter Grade

Excellent	A plus = 97 to 100%	A = 93 to 96%	A minus = 90 to 92%
Above Average	B plus = 87 to 89%	B = 83 to 86%	B minus = 80 to 82%
Average	C plus = 77 to 79%	C = 77 to 76%	C minus = 70 to 72%
Below Average	D plus = 67 to 69%	D = 67 to 66%	D minus = 60 to 62%
Failing		F = 0 to 69%	

POLICIES

COURSE SPECIFIC POLICIES

Social Justice and Human Rights

By nature of being a Criminology and Justice Studies course, we deal with complicated, heavy, and potentially disturbing material. Our material may include representations of sexual assault, abuse, violence, racism and racial slurs, sexism and misogyny, police brutality, transphobia and transmisogyny, homophobia and heterosexism, classism, hateful language, etc. Although this content notice is intended as a blanket trigger warning, please know that I am always here to dialogue with you in more depth about any of these topics and/or suggest additional resources. If, at anytime, you are concerned about the topics we will be discussing in class, please reach out to me. There are also a variety of counseling services that are provided on campus, including workshops, individual and group therapy, and couples counseling.



Disability

I am committed to creating a course that is inclusive in its design for all abilities. If you encounter barriers, please let me know. To formally ensure they receive the appropriate accommodations, please reach out to the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office. This office is located in Craven Hall 4300, and can be contacted by phone at (760) 750-4905, or TTY (760) 750-4909, and by email sent to dss@csusm.edu.

Name and Pronouns

I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronouns. Please advise me of changes I need to make to either as early as possible so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Religion

There may be times when an academic requirement conflicts with religious observances and practices. If that happens, you may request the reasonable accommodation for religious practices. In all cases, you must put your request in writing at least a week in advance. I will review the situation in an effort to provide a reasonable accommodation when possible to do so without fundamentally altering a course.

Counseling Services

Student Health and Counseling Services provides walk-in hours for first-time initial consults for students who have never been seen before on a first come, first served availability. Students can access services by walking into SHCS Monday - Friday. Students can call 760-750-4915 or walk-in to the center to set an appointment.



POLICIES

COURSE SPECIFIC POLICIES

Late/Missing Work

Late or missing work, and submissions via email will not be accepted. If you have circumstances requiring extra flexibility, please reach out to me via email, during office hours, or after class. Please do not wait until the last minute; if assignments are not accepted by Canvas because they are a few seconds/minutes past the official due date, they will be considered late/missing. Technical issues at the last minute are typical—plan accordingly.

Class Attendance

Attendance and participation is expected for this class as group discussions are an essential element of the course structure. Moreover, discussing material with your peers and learning how to verbally apply what you are learning outside of class facilitates a higher level of understanding. If you are facing a personal emergency or health concern, please reach out to me or drop by my office hours so we can create a plan to successfully move forward.

Recording Class Content

This class requires an inclusive and courageous classroom environment in which all participants are able to respect one another and the space we create. Therefore, audio and visual recording of class discussions (whether online via Zoom, on campus, or on Canvas, lectures, or online written discussions) is prohibited, except as necessary to provide reasonable auxiliary aids and academic adjustments according to formal DSS requests. If you wish to take a photograph or make an audio or video recording, you must get the prior written permission of the instructor. The instructor also may require the verbal and/or written permission of everyone present. Even if a student gets permission to record, the recordings are only for personal use and may not be distributed, posted, published, or shared in any manner. See [California Penal Code § 632](#) for more information about California's "two-party consent law."

Discussing material with your peers and learning how to verbally apply what you are learning outside of class facilitates a higher level of understanding.



POLICIES

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Honesty

The instructor is mandated by the University to report incidents of Academic Dishonesty to the Dean of Students. Students are responsible for honest completion and representation of their work. Additionally, students are expected to review and abide by the university's academic honesty policy. The course catalog details the ethical standards and penalties for infractions. The university gives instructors the right to discipline any student for academic dishonesty, in accordance with the general rules and regulations of the university. Disciplinary action will include growth meetings, the lowering of grades, and/or a failing grade for an exam, assignment, or the class as a whole.

Credit Hours Policy

The university states that students are expected to spend a minimum of two hours outside of class time each week for each unit of credit engaged in direct learning. Because this is a 4 Unit course, with four hours of "class time" each week, the university states you should complete an additional minimum of 8 hours of work outside of class each week. Although I do not anticipate the "homework" to take this long, please plan accordingly.

$$\begin{aligned} &4 \text{ Hours in Class} + 8 \text{ Hours Outside of Class} \\ &= 12 \text{ Hours Per Week} \end{aligned}$$

All-University Writing Requirement

Every course carrying degree credit at CSUSM must have a writing component that can be achieved in a variety of ways depending on the course. In this course, each student is required to write a minimum 2,500 words. Each student will meet this requirement by completing their reading reflections and participation assignments.

Drop Date

The last day to drop one or more classes online with a "W" is February 17th, 2022. If by then, you feel that this class is not for you, please take advantage of the drop date. If you have any concerns leading up to the drop date, please reach out or come to my office hours so we can discuss your options.



COMMUNICATION



Look at 3, Then Ask Me

Many questions about the course and expectations for students can be found in a variety of places. Before reaching out to me with questions about the course, please review at least three different sources including your peers, the syllabus, the Canvas page, or assignment instructions. If you still have questions, please email me directly and provide a thorough description of your question. Keep in mind that it can take up to 48 hours for me to respond. Please plan accordingly.

Professional Email Communication

This is an upper-division course. As such, you should have plenty of practice sending emails to your instructors. If not, I encourage you to use the following sample email format:

[Subject Line] SOC 327 Question about _____

[Email Body] Hi Professor Jordan,

[A line that recognizes our common humanity. For example, "I hope you are enjoying your weekend."] My name is _____ and I am in your SOC 327 course. I have a question regarding _____. [Ask your question using proper grammar and spelling, making sure you first consult your notes, the syllabus, and your classmates.] I have already looked for the answer to my question in _____. [Let me know where you have already looked for your question: syllabus, assignment instructions, which other classmates have you asked?] Can you please clarify?

Thank you for your time,
[Your full name]

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

1 January 23
Course Introductions and Overview
Due Sunday: RR on Public Perceptions of the Police

Unit 1. History, Background, and Public Views of the Police

2 January 30
Public Perceptions of the Police
Due Sunday: RR on The History of Police and Policing

3 February 6
The History of Police and Policing
Due Sunday: RR on The Three Eras of Policing

4 February 13
The Three Eras of Policing
Due Wednesday: Unit 1 Learning Check
Due Sunday: RR on The Culture of Policing Part I

Unit 2. Police Culture and Training

5 February 20
The Culture of Policing Part I
Due Sunday: RR on The Culture of Policing Part II

6 February 27
The Culture of Policing Part II
Due Sunday: RR on Police Militarization

7 March 6
Police Militarization
Due Sunday: RR on Training and Police Socialization

8 March 13
Training and Police Socialization
Due Wednesday: Unit 2 Learning Check

9 March 20
Spring Break, No Classes This Week!
Due Sunday: RR on Police Violence and Mis/Conduct

Unit 3. Inequality and Injustice In Policing

10 March 27
Police Violence and Mis/Conduct
Due Sunday: RR on Unequal Outcomes: Surveillance and Policing Race

11 April 3
Unequal Outcomes: Surveillance and Policing Race
Due Sunday: RR on Unequal Outcomes: Policing Gender and Class

12 April 10
Unequal Outcomes: Policing Gender and Class
Due Wednesday: Unit 3 Learning Check
Due Sunday: RR on Accountability and Legal Responses Part I

Unit 4. Accountability and Change in Policing?

13 April 17
Accountability and Legal Responses Part I
Due Sunday: RR on Accountability and Legal Responses Part II

14 April 24
Accountability and Legal Responses Part II
Due Sunday: RR on Abolition and Defunding the Police

15 May 1
Abolition and Defunding the Police
Due Sunday: RR on Imagining the Future of Policing

16 May 8
Imagining the Future of Policing
Due Wednesday: Unit 4 Learning Check

★ Finals Week | May 15
Final Project due on Cougar Courses by Monday at 12pm.