

WINTER

2021

Policing and Militarization Today



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Course Description

When it comes to policing and militarization, scholarship conceives of force as being spread across a continuum. This broadly encompasses the physical presence of the beat cop to the global force of military occupation. For a long time, scholars of policing have thought that the police continuum of force ceases where the military one starts (with lethal force involving a growing number of casualties). This shift along the continuum of force has also been thought to entail an accompanying shift in disposition. The police have long been presumed to abide by an ethos of minimum force, while military officers understand that any means may be necessary to destroy an enemy's powerbase. Yet, in the wake of Ferguson, contemporary forms of civil unrest serve to question old theories. The threat of uprisings have transformed some non-war zones into battle zones where police resemble the military—helmets, flak jackets, armored tanks, and tactical force.

Given this contemporary climate, in this class we will pose the following questions:

- What are current national and transnational issues in policing?
- In what ways do police strategies for enforcing law affect local and national communities?
- How do we understand the relationship between militarization and policing globally?

YOUR PROFESSOR

DR. LAURENCE RALPH

EMAIL: LRALPH@PRINCETON.EDU

TEACHING ASSISTANT

PURBASHA MAZUMDAR

EMAIL:

purbasha.mazumdar@graduateinstitute.ch



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By embarking upon this class, we want you to explore these questions, with the understanding that these questions are particularly important because there is currently no consensus among scholars with regards to how to answer them. To this day, scholars often lament the fact that typical social science methods are highly inefficient at capturing use of force incidents because, oftentimes, no one is around when these violations take place (except for other police officers). Drawing heavily upon anthropological methods and theory, our aim in this class is not to either vindicate or contest the police's right to use force (i.e. to examine whether a particular instance was actually a violation of law), but instead, to contribute to the understanding of force (its forms, its justifications, its interpretations). The innovative transnational approach to policing that we will develop throughout the course of the semester will allow for a cross-cultural comparative analysis that explores larger rubrics of policing in a comprehensive social scientific framework. We hope that you are ready to explore these exciting and urgent issues with us.

Course Requirements

Final Paper: Students will be presented with essay questions one-week prior to due date. The paper should challenge claims the writers have made to illuminate some perspective the student has developed, while digesting the argument. The paper is not a summary, rather it is a chance to explore some issue the writer has not discussed to your satisfaction. The paper will be **DUE ON _____**.

Weekly Discussion Board: All students must provide commentary on the class discussion board no later than 10 pm on the day before class. These comments should demonstrate a critical engagement with the readings and with your classmates.

Discussion Opener: Each student will open discussion at least one time. This may include questions, critiques, provocations, or activities to get the class engaged with the material.



Grading Scale

Attendance/Participation:	25
Final Paper:	40
Weekly Discussion:	20
Discussion Opener	15



Reading Schedule

CLASS 1: Introduction

CLASS 2: Police as Institution

Fassin, Didier. *Enforcing Order: An Ethnography of Urban Policing*. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2013. [Selected Chapters]

CLASS 3: Police, Race, and the Law

Kafka, Franz. 1948. "The Penal Colony." In *The Penal Colony: Short Stories and Pieces*. New York: Schocken Books.

Muhammad, Khalil Gibran. 2010. "Introduction: The Mismeasure of Crime." In *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime and the Making of Modern Urban America*. 1-14.

CLASS 4: Injuries of a Militarized Border

Jusionyte, Ieva. 2018. "Called to Ankle Alley: Tactical Infrastructure, Migrant Injuries and Emergency Medical Services on the US-Mexico Border," *American Anthropologist* 120 (1): 89-101.

Takei, George. *They Called Us Enemy*

CLASS 5: The Experience of Police Violence

Lewis, John, *March*, Book One.

Coates, TaNehisi. *Between the World and Me* [selected chapters].

Smith, Christen. 2016. "Facing the Dragon: Black Mothering, Sequelae, and Gendered Necropolitics in the Americas" *Transforming Anthropology* 24(1):31-48.

CLASS 6: Militarization and Torture

Slahi, Mohamedou Ould. *Guantanamo diary*. Hachette UK, 2015. [Selected Chapters].

Ralph, Laurence. *The Torture Letters*. [Selected Chapters].



Tips for Papers

The thesis statement is the most important part of your response paper. The quality of the thesis is CRUCIAL for the success of the paper, so please ask yourself the following questions while writing: Does the thesis clearly and succinctly state the essay's central claim and outline the main points that the paper will cover? Does the scope of the paper [what it promises to address] seem manageable? Is it too narrow, or too large?

Supporting paragraphs are also crucial to any essay. The topic sentences should serve as a roadmap; the reader should be able to discern the outline of the entire argument by reading only the topic sentences. In your paper, does the topic sentence of each paragraph clearly articulate the central argument of the paragraph?

In addition, ask yourself: Have I arranged the evidence contained in each paragraph in a logical manner? Does each paragraph contain sufficient textual evidence to support its central claim? Does each paragraph contain analysis rather than mere summary? Do I sufficiently set up each quote that I use? Do I sufficiently unpack each quote? What specific details can I add support to my argument? And finally: What specific details would contradict or complicate my argument?

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Your papers should provide a close-reading analysis of selected themes related to the topics covered in class. Rather than pursuing an extended summary, your paper should be organized to address the following 3 sets of discussion questions:

1. In your opinion, what is the most significant contribution that the topic you have selected offers for the study of policing and militarization? What did you find especially illuminating about the historical, social, political, and economic context out of which the populations you have identified emerge.
2. How does your understanding of the topic compare or contrast with others we have discussed or with the theoretical frameworks that we've discussed in the course? Make use of specific quotes or passages from books and articles covered in class to explain how.
3. While acknowledging the selected a given book or article's contributions to the study of policing and militarization, what did you find least satisfying about the text? Why?

This assignment does not require you to do additional research about your selected book or film. Developing your critical analysis through discussion of the book or film's theoretical orientation, historical and ethnographic context, methodology and/or rhetorical structure will be the basis upon which your paper will be evaluated.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR DISCUSSION COMMUNITY

Address one of the prompts below by responding to a classmate's entry

PROMPTS:

- 1) What was the muddiest [least clear] point in the reading? Explain what made it unclear to you.
- 2) What is the most important thing you learned from the reading?
- 3) What important question remains unanswered?
- 4) What do you understand now that you didn't before?
- 5) How has your thinking about _____ [pick a concept that we've examined in class] changed?
- 6) Paraphrase a part of the reading for an audience unfamiliar with this topic (i.e. family members, roommate).
- 7) Develop a real-world application for what you learned in the reading.
- 8) Comment on another person's post.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION:

- 1) Your comment shows that you have engaged the reading and/or are interested in what your classmates have said.
- 2) Your comment makes a link between the reading and your classmates' contributions.