
Policing In America

OSHER 687-001

Dates: Wednesdays: September 2 – October 7

Time: 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

Location: Online via Zoom

Instructor: Paul Cunningham policypaul@gmail.com

Course Description:

This course will explore the role of police in America, particularly in the context of the focus of current events. We will examine how police officers are selected, trained, managed, and disciplined. We will look at issues including police use of force, racism and profiling, and “militarization”. We will also discuss improving police transparency and accountability. Each class will include a discussion of current police-related news. Caution: Video clips may be used to assist learning. Given the subject matter, the content may include graphic depictions of police and public activity, including profanity, use of force, and death.

Learning Objectives:

As a participant in this course, students will better understand the role of police in American society, discover the powers of and controls on police actions, and better be able to analyze police actions as reported in the media and proposals for change.

Participation: Questions, discussion, and debate are encouraged. I like to teach, asking, and being asked questions!

Course Overview:

Week 1: Role of Police

Police in the news; police use of force, police organizations and their jurisdiction, police authority, how many police, crime data.

- Week 2: Police Employment**
Police in the news; P.O.S.T. requirements, training, recruiting, pay and benefits, risks, Police Chief selection/retention.
- Week 3: Rules for Police**
Police in the news; laws and constitutional rights, policy, discipline, “qualified immunity”.
- Week 4: Police Issues 1**
Police in the news; police use of force, de-escalation tactics, racism, profiling
- Week 5: Police Issues 2**
Police in the news; who polices the police, body cameras, police shootings.
- Week 6: Changing the Police**
Police in the news; training, recruitment, transparency, accountability, organization, funding.