

Politics of Crime and Policing
Take-Home Final Exam
Due: December 18 at 1pm

The task at hand is to respond to two of the following prompts, with an essay of three to four pages for each response. You may also choose three prompts and write essays of two or three pages. Ultimately, your delivered final should be between six and nine pages long. The prompts need not be treated as formal essay questions that require that each sub-question be duly addressed and given ample weight. Rather the prompts are simply offered to spur thought and reflection. The essay tasks may be viewed as simply centering on a single word or phrase. You must take the particular concepts you have chosen and offer some argumentation and analysis surrounding those concepts by employing lecture material, and above all else, multiple readings from the course.

Fear

How has fear shaped the dynamics of crime and policing in the United States? Has it driven criminal acts? Has it shaped public policy? How is fear transmitted and magnified? What are the sources of fear with relation to crime and policing? How has fear of crime and criminality intersected with broader sets of fears within the political discourse? What types of fears have proved to be the most salient and consequential in relation to crime and policing?

Due Process

Across the many books and articles we have read, we have seen significant struggle over the meaning of due process. When and under what conditions has due process been restricted or denied? When, and under what conditions has it expanded. Who has been denied due process, and who has accessed due process to their advantage? What elements of due process have proved fundamental and immutable? What elements of due process have proved mutable or inconsistent? What are the elements of due process that have proved most controversial?

Morality, Values, Norms and the Law

During the period we have considered what has been the relationship between the law on the one hand and morality, values, and norms on the other? To what extent has the law proved capable of shaping values and norms? What have been the consequences when the law and social norms have been misaligned? How has the law related to those whose behavior has broken with prevailing norms and values? How have the values of different groups related to the law and related to broadly embraced norms, and how have the values of particular groups been related to life under the law for other groups?

Policing as Work

Characterize the key historical trends in the nature of policing as work. How has the job of police work fit in with broader political, economic, social and demographic conditions? What has been the nature of police occupational identity and how has this identity shaped police practice and authority? How have police as workers related to politics, both in a practical and symbolic sense?

The Nature and Practice of Police Authority

What has been the nature of police authority in the United States? What has shaped and driven the exercise of this authority? What has been the extent of police efficacy? What have been the obstacles to policing and what has set the boundaries of police authority? How has police authority been challenged, and what has produced such challenges? What other sources and forms of authority have emerged? How has police authority been abused, and how can we explain the origins of such abuse?

Violence

How has violence been employed in American life during the period we have examined? How has it been legitimated, or de-legitimated? Who has employed it? To what ends and to what effect? What have been its sources? What have been its consequences? What has been the historical relationship between violence and the law? Violence and authority? Violence and norms? Violence and Order?

Order

What has been the relationship between order and the law in American life? How has order been defined? Who has defined it? How has it been established, preserved, broken, and restored? How has order been challenged? What have been the uses of disorder? How has the arrangement of public order intersected with other areas of life in America such as politics, economics, and morality?

Space, Boundaries and Borders

How have spatial relations shaped crime and policing? What have been the organizing principles and delineating categories for organizing crime along spatial boundaries? What tools and methods have been employed for enforcing boundaries and borders? Beyond physical boundaries and borders, what sorts of symbolic and social boundaries and borders have been policed and how?

New York City

Across many readings, we have encountered New York City as a central arena for the exploration of issues of crime and policing. What does the history of New York have to offer for a greater understanding of crime and policing? What does an examination of New York City, through the lens of crime and policing, offer to our greater understanding of New York History?

Federalism, Levels of Government, Jurisdiction

Many issues we have examined have involved tensions between levels of governance within the American system. What has been the evolution of federalism with relation to the issue of crime policing? What sorts of practices and problems have raised challenges to the balance of federalism? What sorts of conflicts and confusions have arisen? How have different groups related to different levels of government?