

# Copwatch: Community Based Police Accountability

## Fall 2017

**Copwatch Primary Contact Email:** [copwatchdecal@gmail.com](mailto:copwatchdecal@gmail.com)

### Class Facilitators:

Peyton Provenzano: [peytonprov@berkeley.edu](mailto:peytonprov@berkeley.edu)

Alex Li: [alexli98@berkeley.edu](mailto:alexli98@berkeley.edu)

### Class meetings:

**Tuesdays 5:00-6:30pm**

**Location: TBA**

### Class Overview:

Through a combination of class presentations by leading activists in the alternative justice movement and direct field monitoring of police on duty, students will experience first hand the complex issues faced by residents caught between high crime in their neighborhoods and the dangers that racial profiling, civil and human rights abuses bring to the community. Students will be trained in basic criminal procedure, power analysis, and techniques for observing police activity. In addition, students will examine the history and origins of police, resistance movements, and community based alternatives to the justice system as we know it.

## Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this semester, students will:

- Know and be able to assert their rights when stopped by police
- Be able to identify constitutional police practices and procedures
- Be able to document police misconduct and know how to evaluate a potential case for civil rights violations
- Be able to interact with civil authorities in pursuit of individual complaints and learn how to file Public Records Act requests
- Analyze the causes of police misconduct and recommend possible solutions

## Student requirements

Attendance: Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Students may not have more than two unexcused absences in order to pass. Please notify us via email if you think you will need to miss class.

Homework/Readings: Students should come to class having read the assigned reading and prepared to

ask questions and discuss related topics.

Copwatch Shifts: Each student is required to participate in five (5) Copwatch shifts. Shifts can be spent Copwatching or participating in office, outreach or other work to contribute to and better understand community organizing. At least (3) street observations; copwatching at protests and rallies count as shifts.

Assignments:

- Each student will be required to write two 1-2 page reflections about their experience of observing police, research, case-work, an assigned reading, etc. Due dates are 10/17 & 11/7
- Students will be required to write a public records request for information from a public institution (university, police, nonprofits, etc).
- Students are expected to stay up-to-date on current events related to policing. Newspapers are a good resource. Students should spend about 1.5 hrs/week reading news. Other resources will be provided in class. We will open each class with a current events discussion. Due date is 11/28
- Final assignment based on students' individual interests. Project/presentation proposals need to be approved in advance.

Grading

- Shifts, class attendance, participation, and written work are required to receive a passing grade.

## **Fall 2017 Semester Schedule**

**August 29**

Reflection on Inaugural Weekend: Experiences, Events, Protest footage, etc.

- No Reading: Review Footage During Class (if the world is still spinning)

**September 5**

Introduction to Community Based Police Accountability

- Begin Know Your Rights Legal Training/Techniques
  - Reading: Copwatch Handbook

**September 12**

Monitoring Techniques and Documentation

- Writing PRAs in Class
- Reading: People's Investigation Handbook

**September 19**

History and Role of the Police

- Reading: Review timeline of policing and come to class with 3 dates and events from [http://criticalresistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/policing\\_timelinenew.pdf](http://criticalresistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/policing_timelinenew.pdf)
- Reading: "The Iron Fist and the Velvet Glove" to be distributed in class

- Reading: Washington Post findings on Police Shootings, also review the database
  - Link to reading: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/investigative/wp/2015/12/26/2015/12/26/a-year-of-reckoning-police-fatally-shoot-nearly-1000/>

### **September 26**

Police Review Commission: Overview of functions, updates on happenings

- Guest Speaker: Andrea Prichett
  - Public Records Act Request: Mechanism for demanding accountability
  - Reading: **Complete PRA Requests**

### **October 3**

Police and Mental Health: Case Study of the Death of Kayla Moore

- Reading: The People's Investigation of the Death of Kayla Moore
- [http://www.berkeleycopwatch.org/resources/Peoples\\_Investigation\\_Kayla\\_Moore\\_2013.pdf](http://www.berkeleycopwatch.org/resources/Peoples_Investigation_Kayla_Moore_2013.pdf)
- Guest Speaker: Maria Moore

### **October 10**

Policing of Mental Health and Alternative Models

- Reading: Boston Globe article: "Families failed by a broken mental health care system often have no one to call but police."
  - <https://apps.bostonglobe.com/spotlight/the-desperate-and-the-dead/series/police-confrontations/>
- Guest Speaker: Charlotte Halloran-Couch

### **October 17**

Militarization and Urban Shield

- Reading: Al Jazeera article:
  - <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/9/4/urban-shield-policemilitarizationoakland.htm>
- Assignment Due: **Reflection #1 due in class**

### **October 24**

Advanced Copwatch Footage Analysis & Discussion on Berkeley's Homeless Community

- People's Investigation of Police Response to December 2014 Protests
- Reading: Review timeline of Dec 6 & 7 protests and complete People's Investigation timeline scavenger hunt before class
- Timeline available here: <http://berkeleycopwatch.org/timeline/>
- Possible Guest Speaker: Jonathan Simon on Mass Incarceration and the State of California's prisons

### **October 31**

## Structures and Tactics of Resistance

- Anti Police Terror Project (AFTP)
- Guest Speaker: Nanci Armstrong-Temple
- \*\*Discuss Final Project requirements

### **November 7**

#### The Role of Police in Racial Profiling/ Gentrification & Structural Racism

- Reading: Summary of findings of Urban Displacement Project Study: [http://www.urbandisplacement.org/sites/default/files/images/urban\\_displacement\\_project\\_-\\_executive\\_summary.pdf](http://www.urbandisplacement.org/sites/default/files/images/urban_displacement_project_-_executive_summary.pdf) & explore Anti-Eviction Mapping Project website <http://www.antievictionmap.com>
- Guest Speaker: Marcel Jones
- Assignment Due: **Reflection #2 in class**

### **November 14**

#### Community Control and Making Police Obsolete

- Reading: Excerpt from The New Jim Crow, will be handed out in class.

### **November 21**

#### TBA: Guest Speaker

- Reading: Will be handed out in class and associated with Guest Speaker.

### **November 28**

#### Last Class: Evaluation and Presentations

- \*\*Assignment Due: Final Project

## Recommended Additional Readings:

Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis by Christian Parenti (1999)

The Iron Fist and The Velvet Glove by Institute for the Study of Labor and Economic Crisis (1973)

Police Brutality: An Anthology by Jill Nelson (2001)

Governing Through Crime by Jonathan Simon (2007)

Abolition Now! Ten Years of Strategy and Struggle Against the Prison Industrial Complex: Contributors Include:

Incite! Women of Color Against Violence, David Gilbert, Martha Escobar, Liz Samuels and David Stein, Dylan Rodriguez, and Eddy Zheng (2008)

The New Jim Crow: Michelle Alexander

Instructor of Record will supervise the student course facilitators by approving the syllabus and being available to answer questions, and connect us with resources related to the course (recommend recent articles, update us on upcoming events). Jonathan Simon will also be shared on a google doc where student attendance and assignment grades will be updated weekly.