

Copwatch: Community Based Police Accountability

Spring 2019

THIS IS THE SYLLABUS FROM SPRING 2019, THE FALL 2019 SYLLABUS WILL BE VERY SIMILAR, BUT THERE WILL BE DIFFERENCES IN COURSE MATERIAL TO REFLECT CURRENT EVENTS AND NEW DEVELOPING MATERIAL

Copwatch Primary Contact Email: alexli98@berkeley.edu

Class Facilitators:

Alex Lil: alexli98@berkeley.edu

Class meetings:

Mondays 5:00-6:30pm

Location 120 Wheeler Hall

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
- Be able to confidently contact and lobby your representatives
- 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. 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 03/04 & 04/15**
- Students will be required to write a public records request for information from a public institution (university, police, nonprofits, etc). They will also be taught how to effectively contact their lawmakers.
- Students are expected to complete readings and come to class prepared to discuss them.
- Final assignment based on students' individual interests. Project/presentation proposals need to be approved in advance.

Grading

- Attend at least **FIVE** Copwatch Shifts (30%)
- Have no more than two unexcused absences (20%)
- Complete the two reflections (10%)
- Complete the Public Records Act Request (10%)
- Complete the approved final project (30%)

Spring 2019 Semester Schedule

Syllabus readings are subject to change as current events come up. I will email out any changes to readings at least one week in advance.

January 28

Introduction to Community Based Police Accountability

- Begin Know Your Rights Legal Training/Techniques
 - **Reading for next class**: CW Handbook

February 4

Monitoring Techniques and Documentation

- Homework for next week:
 - **Reading for next class**: Read timeline of policing and come to class with 3 dates and events from http://criticalresistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/policing_timelinenew.pdf

- Recommended Reading: “The Iron Fist and the Velvet Glove” (on bcourses)
- Recommended Reading: Washington Post findings on Police Shootings, also review the database
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/investigative/wp/2015/12/26/2015/12/26/a-year-of-reckoning-police-fatally-shoot-nearly-1000/>

February 11

History and Role of the Police

- Guest Speaker: Andrea Prichett
 - Discussing the origins of police and tracing the development of policing from 1700s to the present.
- **Reading for next week:** See what information you come away with from the Berkeley Police Review Commission website (<https://www.cityofberkeley.info/prc/>)

February 18 NO CLASS PRESIDENT’S DAY

February 25

Police Review Commission: Overview of functions, updates on happenings and Police Commission proposal

- Guest Speaker: Andrea Prichett
 - Public Records Act Request Workshop: Mechanism for demanding accountability
- **Reading for next class:** The People’s Investigation of the Death of Kayla Moore
- http://www.berkeleycopwatch.org/resources/Peoples_Investigation_Kayla_Moore_2013.pdf
 - **REMINDER THAT FIRST REFLECTION DUE NEXT WEEK**

March 4

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

- **Reading for next week:**
<http://www.ktvu.com/news/what-exactly-is-urban-shield-preparing-law-enforcement-for>
- Guest Speaker: Maria Moore

March 11

Militarization and Urban Shield

- **Possible Guest speaker: John Lindsay Poland**
- **Reading for next week:** Homeless encampment resident’s response to city of Berkeley

March 18

Berkeley’s Response to the Homeless Community

- Possible Guest Speaker (Barbara Brust)
- **Reading for next week:**
 - Review timeline of Dec 6 & 7 protests and complete People’s Investigation timeline scavenger hunt before class
 - Timeline available here: <http://berkeleycopwatch.org/timeline/>

- Excerpts from: Video as Evidence Field Guide- Witness (on bcourses)

March 25: NO CLASS SPRING RECESS

April 1

Advanced Copwatch Footage Analysis & Discussion of Video As Evidence

- People's Investigation of Police Response to December 2014 Protests
- Possible Guest Speaker: Jonathan Simon on Mass Incarceration and the State of California's prisons

- **Reading for next week:**

http://justiceteams.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/APTP_view_single.pdf

April 8

Structures and Tactics of Resistance

- From the Black Panthers to the Anti Police Terror Project (Possible Guest: James Burch from APTP)
- **Discuss Final Project requirements
- REMINDER REFLECTION DUE NEXT WEEK
- **Reading:** Explore Anti-Eviction Mapping Project website <http://www.antievictionmap.com>
 - Summary of findings of Urban Displacement Project Study:
http://www.urbandisplacement.org/sites/default/files/images/urban_displacement_project_-_executive_summary.pdf

April 15

The Role of Police in Gentrification & Displacement (Peoples Park)

- Assignment Due: **Reflection #2 in class**
- **Reading to help with final project:**
 - <https://www.berkeleycopwatch.org/know-your-rights>

April 22

Evaluation and Presentations

- **Assignment Due: Final Project

April 29

Evaluation and Presentation

- Finishing Final Project presentations

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 Rodríguez, and Eddy Zheng (2008)

The New Jim Crow: Michelle Alexander