

# Problem Solving in Policing (CJ 3504)

University of Cincinnati School of Criminal Justice Spring 2021

Virtual Office Hours: TBD OR [by appointment]

**Class time:** Asynchronous

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## Course Description

Problem-oriented policing (POP) focuses on the theory and practice of POP. The course distinguishes POP from other forms of community policing. It explains how problem-solving fits in with other aspects of police work. The course examines POP's underlying principles and notes how police and the community work together, using the SARA model to resolve local problems — a process used by policing worldwide.

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## Course Objectives

This course is designed for undergraduates looking to expand their knowledge about policing strategies and tactics. During this course, students will learn both the theory and practical aspects of POP. It will focus on how policing can be moved from an incident-based, reactive response to crime to a proactive response. At the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Describe and apply the principles of crime and disorder problem solving.
2. Discuss the theory, terminology, and techniques of problem-solving in policing.
3. Understand how the principle of POP fit within the theories of environmental criminology.
4. Think critically and use a variety of analytic strategies to respond to the problem.
5. Define a problem, analyze in-depth by posing a variety of relevant questions, find a practical response to solving the problem, and find ways of assessing the impact.

## Course Communication

### Canvas

You must activate your Bearcat account. You must be able to access Canvas and your UC email account. I will post to Canvas all communications regarding class materials, due dates for assignments, changes in plans, absences, cancellations, and other important announcements. You should consider all announcements posted to Canvas as official communications for this course. For your convenience, you may download the Canvas app as well. Please see <https://uc.instructure.com/courses/1094746/pages/access-canvas> for more information.

### Virtual Office Hours and FAQ

Virtual office hours will be used in this course. I will be online to answer questions about the content of the course, any assignment, and other class related information. Outside of virtual office hours, you may book an appointment at: <https://calendly.com/arguetjr/pop> I will follow up with a WebEx request for a meeting. All of these meetings will be recorded and can be viewed up to 48 hours after the meeting date.

In addition to virtual office hours, I will be creating a Frequently Asked Question discussion board for any general questions about the course, or course content.

### Email

Only the University of Cincinnati (UC) email will be used in the course per UC policy. Please do not email me from personal email accounts. My email address is listed above, and you can also send me an email from within Canvas as well. When emailing me, **please make sure you include the course name in the subject heading.** I will do my best to respond within 48 hours (or faster in most cases). Do not wait until right before an assignment is due to contact me if you have questions.

## Course Content

Due to the recent pandemic, this class is now an online. The material for this course is organized into learning modules. When you go to the Module section, you will find modules with overviews, learning outcomes, lecture videos, and readings.

Inside of each module, I will post pre-recorded lectures for everyone to watch. I release one module a week. There are 12 modules in total. The PowerPoint slides used in the lecture will also be provided. Please note that with the online format, you are responsible for going over the PowerPoints, reading all the material, listening to the lecture, and turning in all the assignments.

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### Readings

I provide the majority, if not all, of the readings on Canvas. Whenever possible, I embed hyperlinks in the syllabus. If a link does not work, please inform me. I provide these readings to reduce costs and ensures we are reading the same material.

Finally, I provide a general recommended reading list. This general recommended reading list serves to help guide your knowledge for becoming a proficient problem solver and a well-read scholar. I highly recommend you read the articles I notate with a dagger (+). You can find this list at the end of the schedule.

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### Grading & Policies

Your grade will be determined based on your performance on 3 assignments, participation in discussion boards, 1 mid-term presentation, and 1 project which will take the place of your final exam. I will give more detail about each assignment as the due dates approach.

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### Writing and Communication

I expect well-written assignments. This means I expect your assignments to be grammatically correct, well organized, tell a coherent story, and be devoid of extraneous material. Most of this field, the social sciences, and even job applications warrant a clear

written paper. I also expect clear and uncluttered graphical materials (charts, tables, maps, and other figures). Advice on this is provided in Crime Analysis for Problem Solvers (<http://www.popcenter.org>). A well-crafted paper that shows evidence of thought and attention to detail will receive a far better score than a paper that appears to be thrown together at the last moment. I consider good writing while grading papers and deduct credit for sloppy work (e.g., misspelling), bad grammar, poor word choice, poorly phrased sentences, disorganized thoughts, and so forth.

The academic writing center is here to help you become stronger writers, and throughout this class their services will be available virtually for all students. Please see <https://www.uc.edu/learningcommons/writingcenter.html> for more information, and how to schedule a free, no-cost, appointment with a writing tutor. The tutoring is free. You may initiate it without the instructor's permission or knowledge. Plan extra time before your assignment is due to allow time to send a draft to the tutor, receive input, revise the assignment, and get it turned in or before the due date. It is your responsibility to get the paper to me on time, even if it is late getting returned from a tutor.

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## Assignments

- The written assignments will be submitted via SafeAssign on Canvas. If you have any issues with a submission, please let me know immediately.
- Please use Microsoft Word to write your assignments. MS Word is the official word processing program for CJ.
  - If you do not have Microsoft Word, it is available for free for all students. Please see this [link](#) for more information about installation.
- Please remember to put your name on every writing assignment that you complete. Save your files using your last name First initial name of the assignment (for example, ArguetaJ\_module2assignment).
- Feedback regarding assignments will be provided in a reasonable amount of time. However, keep in mind that things may not always be on time. Thus, it may take a week to grade assignments and have them returned to you.

## Mid-Term

This mid-term project is a **10–15 minute** PowerPoint presentation on your POP project. Submit your final presentation for my approval one week before you are scheduled to present. Make sure you have your presentation well-organized and focus only on the most critical parts. I will grade you on the quality of your presentation.

If you are not presenting, you will be part of a "panel" that interviews/questions this presentation. This panel will ask questions regarding the project as if you were one of the following: city council member/officer/lieutenant/chief of police, asking for advice on their issue. This means you have to lead the discussion that follows their presentation. Come with two or three important questions for your presenter. Your presenter must give you a copy of their presentation ahead of time to help you prepare. I will grade you on the quality of the questions. When you are not a discussant, I expect you to participate in the conversation by adding your own questions and comments.

## Mid-Term: March 1<sup>st</sup> – March 14<sup>th</sup> Presentation Dates and Groups to be assigned

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### Final

For the final, you will make a Problem-Oriented Policing guide on an original problem. Throughout the course, you will be working on aspects of this guide. The Final is a cumulation of your efforts, discussions, and learned material throughout the course. **The POP Guide:**

- The submission of your topic is required. If you do not submit one, you will count as a late day for your final assignment each day you do not submit.
- The guide must be at least 20 pages, typewritten in MS Word, and double spaced.
- Students must identify *an original* crime or disorder problem (one that has not already been published) that harms their local community.

- Your "local community" is the town/city or neighborhood where you live. Identifying the problem can come from the local newspaper, minutes from a town council meeting, or the police. You can always consult with me for advice on your guide.
- You must undertake a comprehensive literature search based primarily on library materials to identify factors contributing to the problem and effective ways of responding to the problem.

## Final: April 27th

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### Course work & Evaluation

<u>Item</u>	<u>Assigned Points</u>	<u>Grading Scale</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
POP Topic	<i>Pass/Fail</i>	A 93–100	Excellent
Discussion Board Participation (x2)	5	A- 89–92	
Assignments (x3)	30	B+ 86–88	Very Good
Mid-Term	20	B 83–85	
Panel Participation	5	B - 79–82	Satisfactory
Final	40	C + 76–78	
<hr/> <i>Total</i>	100	C 69–75	Poor
		F Below 69	Failure

# Course Policies

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## Accountability

If you miss an exam or an assignment, you must: (1) notify me within 24 hours AND (2) provide me with an acceptable excuse. Common forms of acceptable documentation include doctor's notes, and funeral programs, but as each student's circumstance are different I'm open to discussion.

Please note that while late work will be accepted, without acceptable documentation, the following penalties will apply. For each 24 hour pass after the deadline, 1% will be taken off your assignment grade. If I do not receive your work within 5 days, this assignment will be marked as a zero. While I can be more forgiving with assignments, exams must be taken the day they are scheduled. If this date does not work with you, please email me at least one week in advance to discuss alternative scheduling arrangements.

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## Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty and misconduct, as defined by the University of Cincinnati, will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, falsifying work (e.g., fabricating/altering research data), cheating (e.g., copying others' work), and plagiarism (e.g., submitting another's published work without properly crediting the author; submitting student's work used in a previous course). Students are expected to abide by the UC Code of Conduct. Any academic dishonesty or misconduct (regardless of the intent of the actor) will be reported and dealt with pursuant to UC policy. It is the professor's policy to assign a failing grade in the class to students violating the UC Code of Conduct. I expect and demand original work. That means you must acknowledge the sources of ideas that are not your own. Plagiarism and other forms of intellectual theft will result in an F for the entire course and report the infraction to the Undergraduate Director. Please see the following links for more details:

[http://www.uc.edu/conduct/Academic\\_Integrity.html](http://www.uc.edu/conduct/Academic_Integrity.html)

[http://www.uc.edu/conduct/Code\\_of\\_Conduct.html](http://www.uc.edu/conduct/Code_of_Conduct.html)

## Accommodations Policy

If you have a disability that may influence your performance in this course, please meet with the Accessibility Services Office to arrange accommodations. Information on disability services can be found at <http://www.uc.edu/aess/disability.html>

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## Course Withdrawal

Please check with your advisor before withdrawing from any course. If you are receiving financial aid, there could be repercussions from withdrawing. Also, note that in very rare circumstances, a grade of "Incomplete" will be assigned. For your convenience, a list of important dates is provided on Canvas. These dates are provided for convenience. You should check with your advisor to ensure that you have the most current information regarding registration issues.

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## Netiquette

The University has a strong commitment to free speech principles, open access to knowledge, and respect for a diversity of opinions. It is important, therefore, to be polite and respectful to others in an online environment. Netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly and professionally online. Something about cyberspace makes it easy to forget that you are interacting with other people. Here are some basics to communicating online:

- Be sensitive to the fact that there will be different cultural and linguistic backgrounds as well as different political and religious beliefs.
- Use good taste when composing your responses in discussion forums. Profanity should be avoided as part of being sensitive to your classmates. Also, consider that slang or sarcasm can be misunderstood and/or misinterpreted.
- Do not use all capital letters when composing your responses. This is considered "shouting" on the Internet and is regarded as impolite or aggressive. It can also be stressful on the eye when trying to read your message.
- Be respectful of others' views and opinions. Avoid "flaming" (publicly attacking or insulting) them. This can cause hurt feelings and decrease the chances of getting all different types of points of view.



- Be careful when using acronyms. If you use an acronym, it is best to spell out its meaning first, then put the acronym in parentheses afterward. For example, "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)." After that, you can use the acronym freely throughout your message.
- Use good grammar and spelling and avoid using text messaging shortcuts.
- Most importantly, please remain professional in all communications with your classmates and me. College can be stressful, but remember I am preparing you to be a professional in a stressful field. I expect professionalism.
- Be sure to think before pressing the send/submit button!

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## Course Changes

Every effort will be made to abide closely by the syllabus schedule. However, changes may occur to better suit the course objectives. Notifications of any changes to the course will be provided in person, via email, and/or Canvas.