

Geography 8601 Theory of Political Geography

# POLICE POWER

Tuesdays, 5:00-7:48pm, 1116 Derby Hall

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

There is surprisingly little work on the police in geography, despite repeated calls for geographers to engage with the cops (Fyfe, 1991; Yarwood, 2007). For a discipline so centrally concerned with the ways in which state power is spatially organized – for example, in terms of the concentration of state power in particular locations and not others (Herbert, 2008), as well as the surveillance and regulation of peopled mobilities (Blomley, 2013) – the dearth of research in geography on the police is remarkable. Moreover, the few geographers working on the cops have mostly overlooked the ways in which police power – and state security more generally – is constitutively racialized. Indeed, race is conspicuous by its absence in the most well-cited geography-based research on the police, which tends to focus on the abstract spatialities that underwrite modern police work.

In this seminar we will attempt a rigorously spatialized theorization of police power. We will focus mostly – but not exclusively – on the United States, and as such on the history, technologies, policies, laws, and practices that constitute police work in the U.S. context. Our core focus will be on how to understand police power as racialized violence. Rather than approach policing through the lens of white privilege, we will emphasize instead the problem of white supremacy. Whereas white privilege suggests a domain of power structured contingently around unthought advantage, white supremacy suggests a material domain of structured, constitutive practices predicated on an explicit attitude of racial superiority as well as explicit claims about nonwhite inferiority or nonwhite danger (Bonds and Inwood, 2015; Pulido 2015; Smith, 2016).

Students do not need to have a background in geography in order to take this seminar. However, students not familiar with the above citations should consult the bibliography below prior to the first day of seminar.

- BLOMLEY, N. K. 2013. 2011 Urban Geography Plenary Lecture—Colored Rabbits, Dangerous Trees, and Public Sitting: Sidewalks, Police, and the City. *Urban Geography*, 33, 917-935.
- BONDS, A. & INWOOD, J. 2015. Beyond white privilege: Geographies of white supremacy and settler colonialism. *Progress in Human Geography*, 40, 715-733.

- FYFE, N. 1991. The Police, Space, and Society: the Geography of Policing. *Progress in Human Geography*, 15, 249-267.
- HERBERT, S. 2008. Coercion, Territoriality, Legitimacy: The Police and the Modern State. In: COX, K. R., LOW, M. & ROBINSON, J. (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Political Geography*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- PULIDO, L. 2015. Geographies of race and ethnicity I: White supremacy vs white privilege in environmental racism research. *Progress in Human Geography*, 39, 809-817.
- SMITH, A. 2016. Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy: The INCITE! Anthology. In: INCITE! WOMEN OF COLOR AGAINST VIOLENCE (ed.). Durham: Duke University Press.
- YARWOOD, R. 2007. The geographies of policing. *Progress in Human Geography*, 31, 447-465.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Regular seminar participation and attendance: 30%.
2. Seminar presentation: 30%. You will be responsible for leading at least two seminar discussions, starting in Week 2. Your goal is to highlight and discuss key arguments from the assigned texts, and which you consider worthy of extended group attention.
3. 2,500-3,000 word essay: 40%. Your essay can be on a topic of your choice, but should draw in detail on at least five readings from the seminar. The essays will be due during exam week, details TBD. The essay format is open, but we will discuss 'best practices' as a group during the seminar.

## GRADES

If you fulfill all the requirements for this course, as above, and if you do not fall afoul of Ohio State's academic integrity expectations (see section below), you will receive one of the five following letter grades:

A	93-100%
A-	90-92.9%
B+	87-89.9%
B	83-86.9%
B-	80-82.9%

An "A" grade indicates truly outstanding performance and top prospects for future scholarships and academic careers.

An "A-" grade indicates a good student who performs at the standard expected for graduate students with no particular concerns or weaknesses.

Students with clear weaknesses or generally mediocre performance will earn a "B+" or lower.

A “B” or lesser grade indicates major problems.

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS

There is a good deal of reading for this course. **I consider reading, as well as related discussion of the readings during seminar, to comprise the bulk of work for this course.** Hence, I have weighted your regular seminar participation and your seminar presentation to count for 60% of your grade. We will talk about how to read efficiently during the first class.

**My baseline expectation is that seminar participants will come every week having read the assigned readings in their entirety.** I also expect seminar participants to **come prepared with something substantive to say about the week’s readings.** All seminar participants should expect to be called upon each seminar.

**Attendance for all seminars is required. If you miss a seminar, you must complete an essay (minimum 5 pages, double spaced) on the readings for that day.** The essay should not be a summary; it should raise substantive issues. Essays for missed classes will be due the following week, at the beginning of seminar. **If you do not turn in your essay, I will automatically take 10% off your final grade.** If personal issues arise which make attendance (and active participation) difficult, please talk to me immediately.

Lastly, please **participate actively** in seminar. This will be a fun and rewarding seminar if everyone pitches in.

## OFFICE HOURS

I will be holding office hours weekly during a two hour window. If your schedule conflicts with my dedicated office hours, I will be happy to meet you at another time. I encourage you to come to office hours.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research and other educational and scholarly activities. The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expects that all students have read and understand the University’s Code of Student Conduct, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University’s Code of Student Conduct and in this syllabus may constitute “Academic Misconduct.”

The Ohio State University’s Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) ([oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html](http://oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html)) defines academic misconduct as: “Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process.”

Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the COAM. If COAM determines that you have violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a **failing grade** in this course and **suspension or dismissal**. If you have questions about this policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me. If you have questions about how to cite sources, how to work in groups, etc, please contact me.

## BOOKS AND ARTICLES

I will not be ordering books. You are responsible for ordering your own copies. You are also responsible for getting articles through the library system.

## AN IMPORTANT NOTE ON THEORY

*"We can't learn if we are unwilling to admit ignorance. In so far as the theory boy holds forth as if there were no limits to his own wisdom, he is engaged in ideological mystification. In so far as the climate of graduate school makes both men and women feel shy about admitting to ignorance and uncertainty, it encourages an intellectually destructive stance of all-knowingness. The problem, then, is how to express one's passionate commitment to specific theories, ideas or methods without implying that those who are not equally enamored by them must be morons."*

— Toril Moi, Professor of Literature and Romance Studies, Duke University

The point is that theoretical seminars do not need to be about narcissistic, masculine display and deafness to our peers. Before enrolling in the seminar, please read Professor Moi's full commentary @ [http://www.torilmoi.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Moi\\_Arrogance-and-despair\\_2003.pdf](http://www.torilmoi.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Moi_Arrogance-and-despair_2003.pdf).

### **Week of Jan 7-11: Foundations**

AHMED, S. 2004. Declarations of Whiteness: the Non-Performativity of Anti-Racism. *Borderlands e-journal*, 3, [www.borderlands.net.au/vol3no2\\_2004/ahmed\\_declarations.htm](http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol3no2_2004/ahmed_declarations.htm)

HOOKER, J. 2017. Black Protest / White Grievance: On the Problem of White Political Imaginations Not Shaped by Loss. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 116, 483-504.

MCKITTRICK, K. 2015. Mathematics Black Life. *The Black Scholar*, 44, 16-28.

POVINELLI, E. A. 2011. *Economies of Abandonment: Social Belonging and Endurance in Late Liberalism* Durham, Duke University Press. (Selections: 'The Child in the Broom Closet', 'Road Kill: Ethical Substance, Exhaustion, Endurance')

### **Week of Jan 14-18: Police as government**

NEOCLEOUS, M. 2000. *The Fabrication of Social Order: A Critical Theory of Police Power*, London, Pluto Press.

PASQUINO, P. 1991. 'Theatrum Politicum: The Genealogy of Capital—Police and the State of Prosperity' and 'Criminology: The Birth of a Special Knowledge' in G. Burchell, C Gordon and P Miller *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 105-118, 235-250.

### **Week of Jan 21-25: Police power as racialized anticipation**

SINGH, N. P. 2014. The Whiteness of Police. *American Quarterly*, 66, 1091-1099.

WAGNER, B. 2010. *Disturbing the Peace: Black Culture and the Police Power After Slavery*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

### **Week Jan 28-Feb1: White supremacy and policing**

HARTMAN, S. & WILDERSON III, F. 2003. The Position of the Unthought. *Qui Parle*, 13, 183-201.

MARTINOT, S. & SEXTON, J. 2003. The Avant-Garde of White Supremacy. *Social Identities*, 9, 169-181.

MARTINOT, S. 2010. The Militarization of the Police. *Social Identities*, 9, 205-224.

SEXTON, J. 2010. People-of-Color-Blindness: Notes on the Afterlife of Slavery. *Social Text*, 28, 31-56.

WILDERSON III, F. 2014. 'We're Trying to Destroy the World': Anti-Blackness and Police Violence After Ferguson. *Ill Will*, <https://imixwhatilike.org/2014/10/01/frankwildersonandantiblackness-2/>

### **Week of Feb 4-8: Gendered, racialized police violence**

RITCHIE, A. J. 2017. *Invisible No More: Police Violence Against Black Women and Women of Color*. Boston, Beacon Press.

THREADCRAFT, S. 2017. North American Necropolitics and Gender: On #BlackLivesMatter and Black Femicide. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 116, 553-579.

### **Week of Feb 11-15: Police, counterinsurgency, and coloniality**

COMAROFF, J. & COMARROF, J. L. 2004. Criminal obsessions, after Foucault: Postcoloniality, policing, and the metaphysics of disorder. *Critical Inquiry*, 30, 800-824.

SEIGEL, M. 2018. *Violence Work: State Power and the Limits of Police*, Durham, Duke University Press.

### **Week of Feb 18-22: Broken windows**

CAMP, J. T. & HEATHERTON, C. (eds.) 2016. *Policing the Planet*, London: Verso.

MOUNTZ, A. & CURRAN, W. 2009. Policing in Drag: Giuliani Goes Global with the Illusion of Control. *Geoforum*, 40, 1033-1040.

SWANSON, K. 2013. Zero Tolerance in Latin America: Punitive Paradox in Urban Policy Mobilities. *Urban Geography*, 34, 972-988.

### **Week of Feb 25-Mar1: Police as hunting**

CHAMAYOU, G. 2012. *Manhunts: A Philosophical History*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

LINNEMANN, T. 2017. Proof of Death: Police Power and the Visual Economies of Seizure, Accumulation and Trophy. *Theoretical Criminology*, 21, 57-77.

VALAYDEN, D. 2016. Racial Feralization: Targeting Race in the Age of 'Planetary Urbanization' *Theory Culture & Society*, 33, 159-182.

WALL, T. 2016. 'For the Very Existence of Civilization': The Police Dog and Racial Terror. *American Quarterly*, 68, 861-882.

### **Week of Mar 4-8: Police as prediction**

HARCOURT, B. E. 2007. *Against Prediction: Profiling, Policing, and Punishing in an Actuarial Age*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

JEFFERSON, B. J. 2017. Predictable Policing: Predictive Crime Mapping and Geographies of Policing and Race. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 108, 1-16.

### **Week of Mar 11-15: No class (Spring Break)**

No reading

### **Week of Mar 18-22: Police ethnography**

FASSIN, D. 2013. *Enforcing Order: An Ethnography of Urban Policing*, Cambridge, Polity.

FASSIN, D. 2017. 'Ethnographing the Police' in *Writing the World of Policing: The Difference Ethnography Makes*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

### **Week of Mar 25-29: States of exception**

BALIBAR, É. 2002. 'What Is a Border?' in *Politics and the Other Scene*, London, Verso.

GRAHAM, S. 2010. *Cities Under Siege: the New Military Urbanism*, London, Verso. (Selections TBD)

MEZZADRA, S. & NEILSON, B. 2012. Between Inclusion and Exclusion: On the Topology of Global Space and Borders. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 29, 58-75.

### **Week of Apr 1-5: No class (American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, D.C.)**

No reading

### **Week of Apr 8-12: Prisons**

GOTTSCHALK, M. 2015. *Caught: The Prison State and the Lockdown of American Politics*, Princeton, Princeton University Press. (Selections TBD)

LOYD, J., MITCHELSON, M. & BURRIDGE, A. (eds.) 2012. *Beyond Cages and Walls: Prisons, Borders, and Global Crisis*, Athens: University of Georgia Press. (Selections TBD)

Interview with Ruthie Gilmore @

<http://www.historicalmaterialism.org/index.php/interviews/prisons-and-class-warfare>

**Week of Apr 15-19: Revolt**

DIKEC, M. 2017. *Urban Rage: The Revolt of the Excluded*, New Haven, Yale University Press.

**Week Apr 22-26: Police reform, police abolition**

CORREIA, D. & WALL, T. 2018. *Police: A Field Guide*, London, Verso.

VITALE, A. S. 2017. *The End of Policing*, London, Verso.