

For Educators

At present *PoliceIssues* posts essays in nine main areas and eleven special topics:

Main topics

- Compliance and Force
- Conduct and Ethics
- Crime and Punishment
- Gun Control
- Resources, Selection and Training
- Strategy and Tactics
- Technology and Forensics
- Terrorism
- Wrongful Conviction

Special topics

- Assault on the Capitol
- Bail Reform
- COVID-19
- George Floyd (murder & trials)
- Gun Massacres
- Immigration
- Marijuana legalization
- Neighborhoods
- Police and the mentally ill
- Quantity and Quality
- Stop-and-Frisk and Hot-Spots

Using *PoliceIssues* in class

Students can be assigned a specific blog post and, using fresh examples and suitable sources, critically expand on the post and bring it up to date. Posts can be used as a basis for panel discussions, say, with one team taking a “for” or “agree” position and the other an “against” or “disagree.”

Students can be asked to analyze the content of a specific blog post from the perspective of a criminological theory or policing strategy (for how I’ve done that see below.)

Blog posts can also be used as a go-by and information source for term papers and presentations. Students can be formed into teams, with each assigned a topical area. Each team scans newspapers for a relevant, recent episode. For example, if the assigned topic is Conduct & Ethics or Use of Force they might select a news story about a questionable use of the Taser. Their task is to learn everything they can about that event, then analyze what took place using the text and other trustworthy sources. Presentations begin with one student describing the incident from beginning to end. Each of their colleagues focuses on a specific aspect, incorporating best practices from the text and other reliable sources and comparing those standards with what actually took place. Teams model their approach on the “opinionated but informed” style of the blog posts, except that their judgments and conclusions must be explicitly supported with references to texts, journal articles and government publications.

Here, for example, are the instructions your blogger provided to students:

Papers and presentations

Each student will use one or (maximum) two chapters from the text to analyze situations and events described in an assigned Police Issues blog post. Their project has three distinct aspects which are covered in turn:

- Blog post summary: detailed summary of interesting themes and events in the blog post
- Chapter summary: detailed summary of aspects of the chapter that seem most applicable to the above themes and events in the blog post (don't make the connections yet!)
- Analysis: analysis of how the above aspects of the chapter help explain or clarify the selected themes and events in the blog post

Students will do the following:

- Prepare a formal paper that sets out each of the above in sequence.
- Condense this paper into a series of concise bullet points and place them on three Power Point slides, using one slide for each element of the assignment (see example below.)
- Use the slides to help deliver 5-minute classroom presentations.

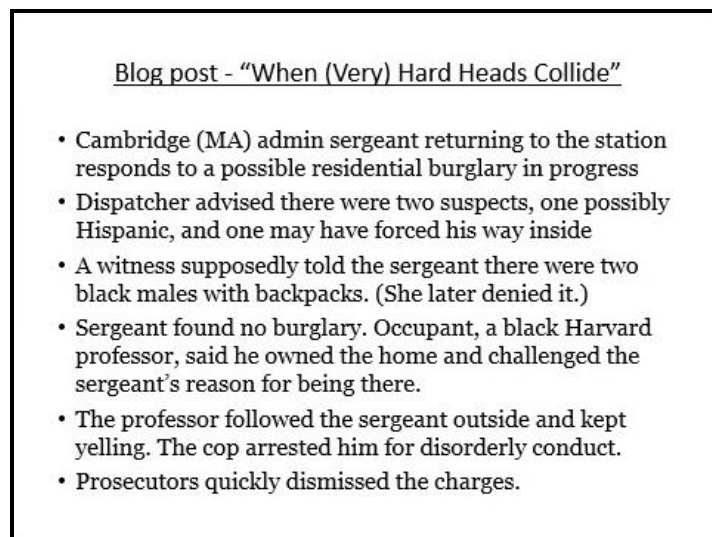
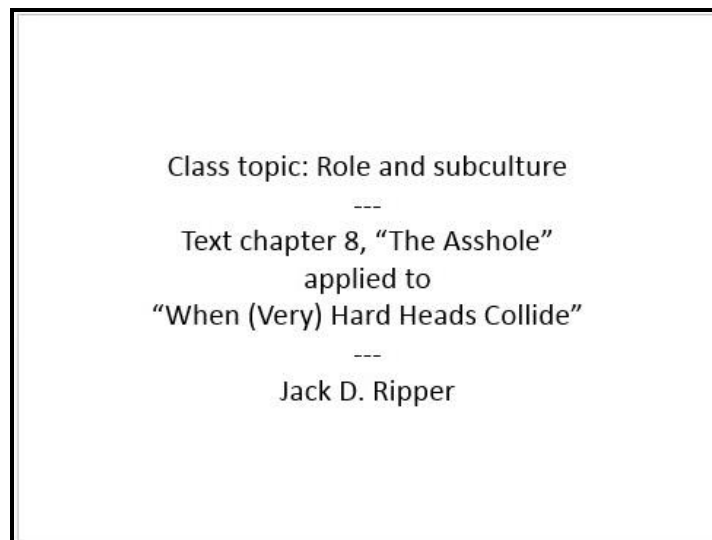
NOTE: It is not necessary to cover everything in the assigned blog post. Some may be quite long and discuss several events. Focus on one or two key themes or events in the blog post, and analyze these themes and events using relevant aspects of the chapter.

Paper (15 points)

- Students will complete an academically acceptable, four to five page paper that conveys the substance of their assignment in detail. A separate section must be used for each of the three aspects of the assignment listed above.
- Page 0 is the title page. Pages 1-3 or 1-4 are for the three sections. Page 4 or 5 is for endnotes.
- Text chapters and page numbers must be referenced and listed as "endnotes" on the last page.
- Academically trustworthy reports can be used as background materials to supplement what is known about the events. If used, they must be cited and identified in the endnotes. NOTE: these reports must not become the primary source for analysis. That is for the chapter(s).
- Students should use twelve-point type, one-inch margins and double-space.
- Students must use completely original sentences and paragraphs. They MAY NOT mimic paragraphs or sentences in the blog post or text chapters, for example, by rearranging or substituting words. Information must be conveyed in a clear, well-organized manner and make perfect sense to ordinary, non-academic readers. NO technical terms. NO quotations, even if declared. Strict plagiarism rules apply. To receive credit, a full printout of the blog post MUST be attached to the paper.
- Papers will be graded on originality, coverage, clarity of expression, organization, and spelling and grammar.
- Papers with attached blog post printouts will be turned in immediately after the presentation. Papers and blog post printouts must be turned in to receive credit for the course.

PowerPoint slides (5 points)

- Students will reduce their paper to four PowerPoint slides (one title slide and three content slides.) Slides will be used as prompts during the presentation and to help the audience follow along. Each slide should be broken down into bullet points that concisely convey key aspects of the paper. Detailed information should be saved for oral delivery.
- Slides should be black lettering on a white background. NO pictures or graphics.



Text chapter 8, "The Asshole"

- Calling persons "assholes" simplifies the cop's world by neatly labeling those who disrespect the police
- The label acts as a shortcut that explains why a cop finds someone offensive
- Most importantly, labeling provides a ready rationale for taking action to remedy circumstances that cops find offensive or challenge their purpose or dignity
- Since cops prefer to view themselves as crime-fighters, they can use the label to justify elevating "peacekeeping" situations to "law enforcement"
- Taking law enforcement action against "assholes" is satisfying and lets cops vent frustration against those who question what the police do.

Applying the chapter to the blog post

- When the sergeant first encountered the professor, the cop was in "law enforcement" mode
- But the professor reacted as though he was being bothered and only reluctantly offered his driver license
- The sergeant felt that he was being disrespected. This led him to label the professor an "asshole".
- When the professor followed the cop outside and disrespected him in full view of neighbors, the sergeant elevated the misunderstanding to a crime.
- Arresting the professor publicly "confirmed" the professor's status as an "asshole." It also helped the sergeant vent his frustration.
- An official report (it did not use the "asshole" analysis) blamed both parties for failure to de-escalate.

Oral delivery (five points)

- Each student will orally deliver a concise, factual summary of their paper. Five minutes is allotted, plus time for responding to questions from the audience and instructor.
- Presentations should be rehearsed. Slides and papers must not be read from. That will lead to a loss of points.

Grading

Thirty points can be earned: Up to twenty points for the paper, up to five points for the slides, and up to five points for the oral presentation.

Making a presentation on the scheduled date and turning in all required materials are required components of the course. Failure to fulfill these requirements will result in a term grade of "F".