

POL 201A – POLICING, PROTEST, & THE PUBLIC ORDER

Fall 2024

Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:30-3:50 pm
Maxey 308

Instructor: Professor Kathryn (Katie) Heard

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Office hours: Tuesdays 3-5 pm and Fridays 10:30 am-11:45 am (or by appointment)

Course Description

Do we have an obligation to obey the state? And if not, what forms of disobedience are permissible – and what happens when the state responds? In this course, we examine why individuals and communities protest, how protests seek to transform the real conditions of political and legal life, and whether the operations of state power can expand, contract, or otherwise impact the realization of protesters' goals. In undertaking this examination, we will also consider how the assumed tensions between concepts like civility and incivility, nonviolent and violent direct action, orderliness and disruption, authority and anarchy, and individuality and solidarity influence how a protest is framed under prevailing political orders. We will do this work through an engagement with both scholarly literature and first-person narratives, and we will explore a variety of protests and social movements within the United States – explorations that will ultimately prompt us to assess whether, and what circumstances, protests can relieve experiences of oppression and foster conditions of justice. Where and when appropriate, participants in this course can expect to observe or analyze coverage of protests occurring in our local communities.

This course is distinct in that it will draw from several different academic traditions in order to explore the promises and limits of liberal democratic order. Across the semester, we will read and analyze political theory, legal statutes and cases, sociological literature on the rise and entrenchment of policing, first-person narratives of injustice and disobedience, organizational statements and how-to manuals, images and videos of protest, and more. Classroom activities will provide a space for student-driven discussion in order to tease out the complexities of policing, public order, and protest – complexities that will be furthered by our engagement with physical archives and the completion of written and oral work.

An Inclusive Learning Environment

Creating Community. Due to the collaborative nature of this course, I encourage your consistent attendance and participation. At the beginning of each class, I will take roll and I will invite you to: 1) consider your use of technology and 2) turn your attention to that day's readings. Because this is an upper division course, it is important for us to intentionally and creatively build community with one another, which rests on removing barriers to seeing and engaging with those around us. At crucial points during class, and over the course of the semester, we will make space for focused small-group discussions and engage with lived experience and community as a tool of learning.

Classroom Climate. One key feature of creating an inclusive classroom is to understand the classroom as a cooperative learning community that cultivates an atmosphere of active, mutual respect for all. To this end, and given that this course covers sensitive materials, I have zero tolerance for belittling, harassment, or abusive and inappropriate language and behavior. Over the course of the semester, we will read works that make us uncomfortable or unsure about ourselves and our knowledge. These feelings of uncomfortableness or unsureness are welcome and encouraged; indeed, such feelings motivate discussion, critical engagements with the text, and reassessment of our own opinions, biases, and commitments. Uncomfortableness or unsureness is not an appropriate reason for opting-out of discussion or delegating textual interpretation to other individuals; if you feel hesitant about speaking in class on sensitive or difficult topics, please do come see me and we can work together to create a plan for your engagement with the class.

Flexibility. I recognize that this semester, as with the last several semesters, poses significant challenges to learning. We are still encountering the challenges of the pandemic, and we are learning how to adapt to new and emerging difficulties in the realm of public health – and we, unfortunately, cannot predict what the next several months will look like. Many of us are also reckoning with forms of harm or trauma that are deep-seated. Because of this, the readings, assignments, and guidelines in this course have been designed to keep flexibility and accessibility in mind. If you are struggling with anything – adjusting to life on campus, this course or its materials, problems at home, mental health – please do consider me a source of support.

Course Materials and Reading Preparation

I ask that you purchase one text for our course, which can be purchased through your favorite book retailer or through the Whitman College Bookstore:

Dean Spade, *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis and the Next* (New York: Verso, 2020).

Beyond this book, I will organize our course readings by date under the Modules tab on Canvas. Additionally, because we are engaging with a timely topic, I would encourage you to follow news on policing and protest. The library has student subscriptions to various newspapers, but you may also want to productively (and cautiously) engage with social media. You are more than welcome to send me anything that you find and would want to discuss in class.

I have high expectations for your ability to keep up with the assigned materials. Indeed, the texts we are reading must be approached with care, as the phrasing and language used can initially appear quite opaque. Moreover, the provocations, subtleties, and tensions in our readings cannot be captured by online summaries. It is important to keep up with the reading schedule as you may otherwise be lost in class and unable to participate.

Office Hours

I hold two drop-in sets of in-person office hours on Tuesdays from 3-5 pm and on Fridays from 10:30 am-11:45 am. I am also available by appointment. You may drop into my physical office hours in Maxey 130 at any point during these periods – no notice or appointment necessary.

I much prefer to discuss substantive matters (like questions on a given text or expectations for an essay) face-to-face (via Zoom or in-person meeting), rather than over email. Please think of me as a

resource – office hours are a space in which you can pose questions, deepen your knowledge of course materials, discuss paper ideas, connect the themes of the course to your other intellectual interests and pursuits, and more. I especially encourage you to meet with me if you have any reservations about participating in class, or if there is anything outside of class that impacts your ability to learn.

Grading Policy and Assignments

This course will be letter graded, but several of the assignments will be assessed on a credit/no credit metric. The credit/no credit assignments will be designed to give you some creative space to connect with your community and to work through specific legal conundrums from the point of a politics-scholar-in-training. All work submitted must be your own. Your final grades will be assigned based on the following rubric, rounding up at the .5 mark:

A: 100-93	B: 87-83	C: 77-73	D: 67-63
A-: 92-90	B-: 82-80	C-: 72-70	D-: 62-60
B+: 89-88	C+: 79-78	D+: 69-68	F: 59 and below

Each assignment is briefly described below the table, but we will discuss them in a more in-depth fashion as the semester progresses. The relative weight and due date of each component is as follows:

Assignment	Grade Percentage	Modality	Due Date
Attendance and Participation (inclusive of being on call)	15%	Letter	Ongoing
Why Protest?	5%	Credit/No Credit	Friday, September 20, at 11:59 pm
Paper #1	20%	Letter	Friday, October 18, at 11:59 pm
Paper #2	25%	Letter	Friday, November 15, at 11:59 pm
Reflections on Student Activism	5%	Credit/No Credit	Wednesday, December 4, at 11:59 pm
Final Paper	30%	Letter	Due date TBD

Attendance and participation. Your consistent attendance and thoughtful participation are essential to achieving the learning outcomes identified for this course. You are allowed **two** absences over the

course of the semester, no questions asked – these absences, however, do not apply to the day that you are “on call,” unless in the event of an illness or an emergency. Any absence beyond these two initial absences will reduce your overall attendance and participation grade by one step (for example, from a B+ to a B). If you have ongoing concerns (parenting or familial responsibilities, etc), something troubling arises, or you experience an emergency, please contact me as soon as you are able – we will work together to come to a solution.

However, if you are sick, please do not come to class – I would also encourage you to seek Covid testing. If you are ill, do let me know as soon as you are able, so that I may anticipate your absence. If you have been exposed to Covid, I would be happy to welcome you to class with a negative Covid test – if you have difficulty accessing a Covid test, please do not hesitate to reach out. If you miss two or more consecutive classes due to illness, it is expected that you will respond to course materials in writing.

Please know that classroom engagement extends beyond merely showing up. I expect the classroom to be a kind of intentional community, where the free and vital exchange of ideas is encouraged; respect for persons is fundamental to cultivating this atmosphere. Engagement includes asking questions, actively listening, offering an interpretation of a text or of a peer’s comments, providing oral or written feedback on peers’ essays, referring to specific ideas from readings and discussions, focusing on our class and avoiding distractions during discussions, preparation for our class by completing the readings and materials prior to coming to class, synthesizing differing arguments, promoting classroom discourse, attending office hours, and meeting (in-person or virtually!) with a Writing Center consultant, just to name a few. If you feel hesitant about speaking in class on sensitive or difficult topics, as will happen over the course of the semester, please do come talk to me and we can work together to create a plan for your engagement with the class.

The practice of cold calling. In popular culture, cold calling – which is the practice of calling on students who have not raised their hands – is associated with high-stress situations and public humiliation. Such representations often depict a professor with a nearly impossible to answer question choosing an unsuspecting student at random – and then making an example of the student’s answer.

This is not something I practice. Over the course of the semester, I will ask pre-assigned small groups of students to be “on call” five times. On the day that you are on call, you can expect to take the lead in recalling what we discussed last class period, interpreting a particular passage, posing answers to the journal question, and more – think of yourselves as the starting line-up for a given class period. I may also invite individuals, who fall within that day’s “on call” group, to answer a specific question. Those individuals *always* have the ability to “pass” or “pass for now,” without judgment from me. Following the “cold call,” the discussion will be opened up to the entire class. This may seem stressful at first, a feeling with which I sincerely empathize. However, studies have shown that, in classes with low-stakes cold calling, student comfort with voluntarily participating in class rises and holistic understanding of the material significant increases. These studies also report that students feel more comfortable in a class in which all students have a “stake” in the conversation – and it allows me to hear from those that often feel lost in larger classes like ours. If you have accommodations that exempt you from speaking in class, or if you have ongoing trauma associated with class participation, please do come speak with me and we can set up an alternative arrangement.

Papers. At certain points throughout the semester, I will ask you to respond in either oral or written form to our course material. More will be said about these assignments in due course.

Extra credit opportunities. There will be regular opportunities for extra credit in this course, and more will be said as such opportunities approach.

Paper Formatting

Where specified, written work must be uploaded to our Canvas site by the date and time assigned. Your papers should be formatted as follows: 1-inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right), 12-point Times New Roman font, and double-spaced line formatting. Your papers should also be submitted in .doc or .docx format. *Do not submit a .pdf or share a Google doc with me.*

For citations, I would prefer in-text parenthetical citations (rather than footnotes), and I would ask that if an assignment is 3 pages long (for instance), you write to the end of the third page (rather than stopping at 2.25 pages).

Late Policy and Delayed Grading Policy

The principle guiding belief in this course is flexibility and accessibility. We do not know what challenges await us, and many of us struggling with emergent issues related to health, economic stability, and technology. The central assessments in this class – the papers – come with an automatic 24-hour grace period. This means that, if a paper is due on Thursday at 11:59 pm, you may take until Friday at 11:59 pm with no questions asked and no penalty. Every student in this class also has a one-time 3-day extension that they may take advantage of (with respect to the central assessments). In order to take advantage of your extension, please email me to let me know that you will be using your extension. You do not have to tell me why you are taking your extension.

I have noticed that, since the pandemic began in March 2020, the practice of assigning grades on papers (in particular) is a source of stress, anxiety, and difficulty for students. Students report that, when they focus on receiving an A on a paper, they often create overwhelming expectations for themselves – and they lose their ability to focus on improving the craft of their argument or their prose. To this end, I have developed what I call a “delayed grading policy.” A delayed grading policy means that, when you receive your paper back, you will receive comments and feedback – but no grade. You will then be offered the opportunity to submit a reflective response to my feedback for extra points added to your grade; I will, in other words, ask you to write 3-4 sentences about what you intend to improve upon for your next paper. At the conclusion of this extra credit submission period, you will receive your grade back, with points added. I have found that this system – though it may initially seem stressful – cultivates stronger and more robust improvement across the whole semester. It also helps lessen student anxiety surrounding grades by shifting our attention towards improvement, rather than immediate outcomes.

Email and Communications

I will endeavor to respond to any questions you send me within 24 hours, although I may take up to 48 hours. While you should feel free to contact me with any questions regarding the course, I prefer not to engage in a substantive discussion about the material over email. If you would like to talk to me about the reading or would like to discuss a particular topic further, ask in class, come to office hours, or schedule an appointment.

Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and Large Language Models

Broadly understood, plagiarism is the presentation of another's words or ideas as one's own without attributing the proper source. Plagiarism includes copying material from books and journals, as well as taking material from the internet. Plagiarism also includes privately purchasing or obtaining papers from others, which one then presents as one's own. Any material taken word-for-word from another source must be placed in quotation marks and footnoted or cited within the text. You can use ideas and information from other authors without directly quoting from them, but you must acknowledge them in your footnotes or parenthetical documentation.

For any student discovered to have committed plagiarism, I will refer the matter to Whitman College's office of academic integrity. The procedures and definitions of plagiarism can be found here: <https://www.whitman.edu/dean-of-students/student-handbook/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academic-integrity-policy>.

In this course, I encourage you to be skeptical of open-sourced websites like Wikipedia and SparkNotes. If you feel lured to them regardless, you must cite them and you ought to remain intellectually vigilant and adopt a critical stance towards these sources.

Your use of large language models (like ChatGPT, but inclusive of other AI generators) is prohibited in this class. Because one of the goals of this class is to develop your knowledge of the subject matter, and to investigate the nuances of it, you would undermine your learning by using large language models and/or AI technology. If you feel attracted to these technologies because of feeling like you are overwhelmed or unsure, please reach out to me – I can help or I can direct you to further resources, like the Writing Center. Use of large language models in this class will constitute a violation of my academic integrity/plagiarism policy.

Electronic Etiquette Policy

Computer use (and the use of tablets and e-readers) during class is by permission only, as the minimization of electronic devices also minimizes the chances of distraction. There is the inevitable temptation to text, check email, scroll Twitter, or buy a pair of shoes from your favorite online retailer. I ask that, to the best of your ability, you take notes with pen and paper – but if you are a student who wishes to use a laptop for notetaking, please come see me during office hours or catch me after class. For more on the benefits of a no-laptops policy, see: <https://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom>.

This class may be audio recorded by students who have an accommodation to do so. Recording of any session in this course other than for the above purposes is strictly prohibited, and it would be in violation of Washington's Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance laws.

Title IX Disclosure

As a member of Whitman College's faculty, I am a mandatory reporter for instances of sex- or gender-based harassment and sexual violence. This means that I am required – by law – to report to Whitman any mentions or observances of sex- or gender-based discrimination and assault. Because our course may engage with narratives of sex- and gender-based harms, please be aware that *specific* discussions of such harms will be reported to our Title IX office. In sum: I can promise you respect and privacy,

but not absolute confidentiality. If you have any questions or concerns about Title IX, please reach out.

Religious Accommodations Policy

In accordance with Washington State Law and the College's Religious Accommodations Policy, I will provide reasonable accommodations for all students who, because of religious observances, may have conflicts with assignments or required attendance in class. Please review the course schedule at the beginning of the semester to determine any such potential conflicts and send me an email by the end of the second week of class so that I can take note of your religious accommodations. If you believe that I have failed to abide by this policy, here is a link to the [Grievance Policy](#), where you can pursue this matter.

Accommodations

If you are a student with a disability who will need accommodations in this course, please meet with the Assistant Director of Academic Resources: Disability Support for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs. All information about disabilities is considered private; if I receive notification that you are eligible to receive an accommodation due to a verified disability, I will provide it in as discreet a manner as possible.

If you encounter barriers to learning in this course, or experience a crisis that is impeding your work in this class, please be in touch with me to discuss strategies for navigating these challenges. Early and open communication allows us to work together to support your success.

I reserve the right to revise or alter this syllabus as the semester progresses.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Wednesday, September 4 Introductions
 First Amendment to the United States Constitution
 Elly Page and Alana Greer, “States are Restricting Protests
 and Criminalizing Dissent,” pp. 1-6

Monday, September 9 The life of the gadfly
 Plato, *The Apology*, pp. 21-34

Wednesday, September 11
On Call Group 1 The death of the gadfly
 Plato, *The Crito*, pp. 45-57

Unit One
 An Initial Origin Myth:
 Defining the Public, Constituting Political Order, and Launching a Critique

Monday, September 16
On Call Group 2 Liberalism’s promises and the body politic I
 John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, chs. 1-3, 5, 8

Wednesday, September 18
On Call Group 3 Liberalism’s promises and the body politic II
 John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, chs. 17-19
 Declaration of Independence
 Publius, *The Federalist Papers*, nos. 1 (Hamilton) and 10
 (Madison), pp. 1-4, 42-49

Friday, September 20 **Why Protest? Assignment due**
Please be sure to upload your reflections to Canvas by 11:59 pm

Monday, September 23
On Call Group 4 Liberalism’s order and the challenge of progress
 John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*,
 excerpts

Wednesday, September 25
On Call Group 5 Liberalism’s equality and the ideals of disobedience I
 John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, excerpts

Monday, September 30
On Call Group 1 Liberalism’s equality and the ideals of disobedience II
 John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, pp. 103-121
 Michael Walzer, “The Politics of the New Negro” and “A
 Cup of Coffee and a Seat,” pp. 45-52, 111-120

Wednesday, October 2
On Call Group 2

A critique: liberalism's democratic discontents
Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" pp. 1-6
Charles Mills, "Racial Equality," pp. 43-69

Unit Two

A Challenge to Liberalism's Myth:
The Power of the Police and Movements of Black Liberation

Monday, October 7
On Call Group 3

Preservations of "order": enslavement and social control
Markus Dubber, *The Police Power*, pp. 81-119
Ben Brucato, "Policing Race and Racing Police: the Origin of US Police in Slave Patrols," pp. 115-134
Watch: Vice News, ["Do the Police Actually Keep Us Safe?"](#)

Wednesday, October 9
On Call Group 4

Reconstruction's failures and democratic exclusions
The Reconstruction Amendments
The Civil Rights Cases (1883)
Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)
Margaret Burnham, "Soldiers and Buses: All Aboard," pp. 91-110
Listen: [NPR's Fresh Air with Michelle Alexander, "Jim Crow Still Exists in America"](#)

Monday, October 14
On Call Group 5

The return of the gadfly: moral obligations and disobedience
Martin Luther King, Jr., "A Letter from Birmingham Jail," pp. 1-6
Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here*, excerpts
Sylvie Laurent, "MLK was an Exemplar of the Black Socialist Tradition," pp. 1-12
Explore: images of the Civil Rights Movement on Canvas
Watch: [60 Minutes, "MLK – A Riot is the Language of the Unheard"](#)

Wednesday, October 16
On Call Group 1

Disobedience and specters (and spectacles) of violence
James Wilson and George Kelling, "Broken Windows: the Police and Neighborhood Safety," pp. 29-38
Bernard Harcourt, *Illusions of Order: the False Promise of Broken Windows Policing*, excerpts
Political Research Quarterly, "Black Lives Over Broken Windows," pp. 1-14
Watch: [Angela Davis, Interview from Prison](#)
Listen: [NPR's Hidden Brain, "Broken Windows: How a](#)

Theory of Crime Was Born and Went Terribly Wrong

Friday, October 18

Paper #1 Due

Please be sure to upload your paper to Canvas by 11:59 pm

Monday, October 21
On Call Group 2

Governing through “law and order”

Loïc Wacquant, “From Slavery to Mass Incarceration,” pp. 41-60

James Forman, *Locking Up Our Own*, excerpts

Watch: [Transient Pictures, “Am I Next? Ferguson’s Protests Through the Eyes of a Teenager”](#)

Wednesday, October 23
On Call Group 3

Ferguson: liberation from “civil” order?

George Yancy and Judith Butler, “What’s Wrong With All Lives Matter?” pp. 1-11

Clarissa Rile Hayward, “Disruption: What is it Good For?” pp. 448-459

Linda Zerilli, “Against Civility,” pp. 107-131

Watch: [“Black Brunch” at High Cotton in South Carolina](#)

Monday, October 28
On Call Group 4

Reclaiming order: white backlash and liberalism’s legacies

Charles Mills, *Black Rights/White Wrongs*, pp. 49-71

Alexander Tsesis, “Confederate Monuments as Badges of Slavery,” pp. 695-712

Watch: [Vice News, “Charlottesville: Race and Terror”](#)

Explore: Jamelle Bouie, “Charlottesville: A Visual Narrative” (on Canvas)

Wednesday, October 30
On Call Group 5

Reclaiming order: police unions and sheriff elections

Mirya Holman and Emily Farris, *The Power of the Badge: Sheriffs and Inequality in the United States*, excerpts

Explore: the Department of Justice’s documents on twenty-first century policing on Canvas

Unit Three

Liberalism’s Gadflies:

Free Speech, the Right to Assemble, and Student Lives

Monday, November 4
On Call Group 1

Forms of resistance: “gumming up the works”

Henry David Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government,” pp. 1-21

W.E.B. du Bois, *John Brown*, excerpts

Wednesday, November 6
No On Call Group

The day after the 2024 election
Holding space for conversation

Monday, November 11
On Call Group 2

A theory of speech, harm, individuality, and progress
John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, chs. 1-2

Wednesday, November 13
On Call Group 3

Free speech and the pursuit of education I
Erwin Chemerinsky, *Free Speech on Campus*, excerpts
Erwin Chemerinsky, “No One Has the Right to Protest in My Home,” pp. 1-5
Mario Savio, “Bodies Upon the Gears,” pp. 326-28
Watch: [ABC News, “Gaza Protesters Disrupt UC Berkeley Dean’s Party”](#)

Friday, November 15

Paper #2 due
Please be sure to upload your paper to Canvas by 11:59 pm

Monday, November 18
On Call Group 4

Free speech and the pursuit of education II
Sigal Ben-Porath, *Cancel Wars: Free Speech and the University*, pp. 59-91
Wendy Brown, “Free Speech is Not for Feeling Safe” and “Critics of the Woke College Kids are Missing the Point,” pp. 1-6 and 8-29

Wednesday, November 20
On Call Group 5

Student speech in action: experiments in living
Students for a Democratic Society, “The Port Huron Statement,” pp. 239-283
Explore: American Association of University Professors, [“Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students”](#)
Explore: [Whitman College’s “Policies and Examples Related to Advocacy and Protest”](#)
Explore: President Sarah Bolton’s August 2024 email
Whitman Wire, “College Threatens Felony Charges Against Students”
Whitman Wire, “In Response to Cabinet’s Email About Felony Vandalism”

Monday, December 2
On Call Group 1

Student speech in action: policing the college order
Sumona Gupta, “Policing Student Protests and the Imperial Feedback Loop,” pp. 1-10
T.M. Song, “Columbia’s Violence Against Protesters Has a Long History,” pp. 1-11
Nathalie Baptiste, “Campus Cops: Authority Without Accountability,” pp. 1-15
Meg O’Connor, “Prosecutors Have Levied Serious Charges Against Pro-Palestine College Protesters,” pp. 1-25

Explore: [“The NYPD Descent on Columbia, as Told by Student Journalists”](#)

Watch: [NYPD Video, “Schools Request Police Presence”](#)

Watch: [PBS NewsHour, “Columbia University’s President Testifies at House Antisemitism Hearing”](#)

Wednesday, December 4
On Call Group 2 and 3

Towards solidarity? I

Dean Spade, *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis and the Next*, pp. 1-65

Friday, December 6

Reflections on Student Activism Due

Please be sure to upload your reflections to Canvas by 11:59 pm

Monday, December 9
On Call Group 4 and 5

Towards solidarity? II

Dean Spade, *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis and the Next*, pp. 65-149

Wednesday, December 11
No On Call Group

A return to King’s question: “Where do we go from here?”

Alan Blinder, “Professors Are Uniquely Powerful. That May Be Changing,” pp. 1-10

Neil Shah, “Faculty Members Suspended from Harvard’s Main Library After Study-In Protest,” pp. 1-11

Tilly Robinson, “No ID Checks, But Harvard Determining Next Steps After Second Faculty Sit-In,” pp. 1-5