

HOW TO USE *POLICE ISSUES* IN YOUR CRIMINAL JUSTICE CLASSES

Police Issues blogs in nine topical areas:

- Conduct & ethics
- Crime & punishment
- Use of force
- Gun control
- Resources, selection & training
- Strategy & tactics
- Technology & forensics
- Terrorism
- Wrongful conviction

There is also a regularly updated [news](#) section, with links and brief summaries. Blog posts and news clips can keep students current on crime and justice developments. I often use them at the beginning of class to get things going. Most blog posts are also linked to news videos that can be projected in suitably-equipped classrooms.

If your coursework covers any of these topics, students can be assigned to read a particular blog post and, using suitable sources, expand on the post or, even better, argue against it. 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.”

I use the blog as a basis for term papers and presentations. Students are formed into teams, with each assigned a topical area. Each team scans the [news clips](#) 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 from newspapers and magazines, then analyze what took place using the text and other trustworthy sources.

For example, one student might describe the incident from beginning to end. The next student could discuss accepted best practices, and the third compare 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 official publications.

If you have comments or have found another way to use the blog, please [let me know!](#)