COURSE DESCRIPTION FOR "Psychology, Policing, and Social Justice"

As the “face” of governmental social control, the police are tasked with ensuring public safety. And yet, policing in the United States has long functioned as an institution that reinforces race and class-based oppression. In this course, we will examine how policing perpetuates social inequalities. We will also learn about reforms to address those inequalities and achieve social justice.

The study of policing and oppression does not fit neatly within the bounds of any single academic discipline, and neither will the topics in this course. We will read and discuss research that spans the social sciences, including work from psychology, sociology, political science, and organizational behavior. In doing so, we will place emphasis on how "on the ground" individual-level psychological processes build up into systemic inequalities.