PHI 815-22 History of the Integration of Religion and Society

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Professor

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**Assignment #2** – Developmental Readings 1. Create Developmental Readings from seminal sources and scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles. Review instructions for Assignment #3, the course essential elements, and course readings to identify selections of books and journals to create entries.

a. Refer to the "Student Guide to Developmental Readings" in the General Helps folder for updated information on sample comments, the grading rubric, and key definitions related to developmental readings.

Brian, your sources and **Quote/Paraphrases** are well chosen for an essay that will address the need for social reforms in policing. Your Developmental Readings have me looking forward to reading your Assignment #3 Essay!

The **Essential Elements** component of a Developmental Readings Comment is where you need to identify which Course Essential Element from the Syllabus your selected reading is related to, so for PHI 815 here are the Course Essential Elements

Social Reforms

Religion & Society Integration Models

Christianity’s Influence on Society

Historical Methodologies

So, as an example, it appears that the Williams reading selection is about the “Lack of equality between black Philadelphians and the police.” Of the PHI 815 Course Essential Elements, the Williams reading selection would seem to relate to the need for social reforms in policing. So you need to explicitly name that Essential Element as part of your response for the sake of clarity:

“This comment is associated with the Course Essential Element of Social Reforms. This is because social reform is needed due to excessive use of force and lack of trust between law enforcement and minority communities. The Philadelphia citizenry, through organized groups, began demanding change.”

Your **Additive/Variant Analyses** demonstrated critical thinking.

Your **Contextualizations** showed relevant applications.

**Works Cited:** Here are some APA technical suggestions (see Works Cited feedback):

* The first element in a Developmental Reading is to list the Bibliographic reference as it is listed in the Works Cited. Also, every Works Cited entry should begin at the left margin and then be in a .5” hanging indent form.
* Journal Titles are to be in Title Case.
* Book titles are to be in sentence case: Capitalize first letter of first word in the title and subtitle and any proper nouns.
* Article titles are to be in sentence case.

Overall, good job! Dr. Ward

**Source One:** Williams, I. (2023). *Police Brutality*. Lexington Books.

**Comment 1:** The legacy of resistance and progressive political activity of black Philadelphians

**Comment 2:** Lack of equality between black Philadelphians and the police.

**Quote/Paraphrase:** This reality has forced the citizenry to coalesce, demanding an end to brutal policing through oversight and institutional changes within the police structure (Williams, 2023).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with excessive use of force and lack of trust between law enforcement and minority communities. The Philadelphia citizenry, through organized groups, began demanding change.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive to police brutality. The primary perennial complaints were arrests without proper cause, brutality, and the disregard for Black-on-Black crime. Allegations of police brutality and corruption were handled internally by the Police Trial Board, holding that they were the only independent agency that could adequately monitor the police. In one case, police officers terrorized a family when they raided their home looking for a crime suspect. When the family asked for a search warrant, they arrested the suspect's brother for acting "too smart" (Williams, 2023).

**Contextualization:**  The concern of police brutality in minority neighborhoods has been brought to the forefront by various incidents and reports over the years. Unfortunately, these communities often experience a higher level of police presence, surveillance, and enforcement, leading to feelings of over-policing and targeting. As my team has assisted allied agencies throughout my career, I have witnessed many of these issues firsthand. Seeing a few bad actors tarnish the profession's reputation and detract from its true purpose: to serve and protect is disheartening. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach that involves community engagement, police reform, accountability measures, and efforts to build trust between law enforcement and minority communities. Fair and equitable policing practices that uphold the rights and dignity of all individuals, regardless of their background, are crucial to regaining the trust of our communities.

**Source Two:** Dingle, T. (2022). *African American Male Perceptions of Police in the Era of YouTube*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

**Comment 3:** African American males’ perception of police

**Comment 4**: YouTube's influence on policing

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Research has examined attitudes concerning police violence toward African American male adults. Findings concluded that individuals approve of police violence associated with negative images of African Americans (Dingle, 2022).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the often negative portrayal of African American males with law enforcement on YouTube videos.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to the discussion. African American males are subject to the influence of labeling, which refers to African American males being judged because of the perception associated with the image of their demographic. The police are called because some say African Americans should not be in this neighborhood. Some Caucasians call the police on African American people simply for being in Starbucks (Dingle, 2022).

**Contextualization:** Historical and contemporary experiences of systemic racism, discrimination, and unequal treatment by law enforcement deeply influence the perception of police among Black men. Black men in the United States have a strained relationship with the police, shaped by a long history of racial profiling, police brutality, and injustice. Ironically, I can address this from both sides of the fence. Being a black police officer for many years has allowed me to have a real-time perspective on how much some things have changed and how some things have gone backward. I often travel around the country on official business with my team. There have been many occasions when, just driving around in another city, I have been stopped simply for driving through a neighborhood. In those times, it was stressful because I was armed, and I did not know the mindset of the officers. It is funny and sad to hear their reasons for being stopped once they find out I am a police officer.

Today's technology has allowed us to capture and share video footage, including door cameras, surveillance equipment, and cellphone cameras. As a result, platforms like YouTube have become an influential space for documenting and sharing policing incidents, both positive and negative. Many of these videos have featured my team and me, whether we were aware of it or not. This technology can be beneficial in the realm of policing, as it can help raise awareness around issues related to accountability, community relations, and policing practices.

**Source Three:** Barron, J. (2023). *They Killed Freddie Gray*. Simon and Schuster.

**Comment 5:** Lack of accountability by Baltimore City Police

**Comment 6:** The law enforcement culture within Baltimore City

**Quote/Paraphrase:** The actual story of Gray’s arrest history says as much about policing in West Baltimore as it does about his life. Officers often taunt kids with their upcoming eighteenth birthdays, given the adult criminal justice system is harsher than the juvenile system (Barron, 2023).

**Essential Element:** This comment suggests that policing in Baltimore City is a form of physiological warfare for young black males (Barron, 2023).

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment adds an additive to the discussion. The media portrayal of the circumstances of Gray’s life and death made it seem as if all were the result of a calamitous series of events that no one had control over (Barron, 2023). The truth is much more complicated to swallow, that every difficulty and challenge that Gray faced, both in his childhood and adulthood, is the result of a deliberately designed, long-standing, deeply entrenched, and very American system of racial inequity and oppression (Barron, 2023).

**Contextualization:**  Many police officers enter the profession with biases and prejudices. Often, these biases and prejudices are targeted at those of color living in low-income urban areas. This fosters a fear among those we, as police officers, are sworn to protect.

Seeing officers from similar backgrounds or shared experiences can make people feel understood and respected. More importantly, it can bridge the gap created by the many past incidents of police brutality, foster positive relationships with the community, enhance accountability, and create a more inclusive and responsive law enforcement agency.

**Source Four:** Holmes IV, O. (2020). Police brutality and four other ways racism kills Black people. *Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion: An International Journal*, *ahead-of-print*(ahead-of-print). https://doi.org/10.1108/edi-06-2020-0151

**Comment 7:** Performative activism and allyship.

**Comment 8:** Assigning black people the responsibility for fixing racism

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Performative activism and allyship occur when organizations and individuals mimic genuine activism and allyship without truly intending to challenge systemic oppression. Instead of genuinely seeking to dismantle systemic oppression, they engage in performative activism and allyship for self-serving reasons (Holmes IV, 2020).

Although police killings and physical violence are primarily associated with police brutality, it is essential to note that police brutality also includes emotional and sexual violence, verbal assaults, psychological intimidation, and other forms of police misconduct. Racism negatively impacts Black people's psychological, emotional, social, spiritual, financial and physical well-being (Holmes IV, 2020)

**Essential Element:** Police brutality and racism affect black people in many ways.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to the discussion. The tactic at the heart of the above messages is that no matter how much pain, loss, depravity, orracism black people experience, we are expected to suppress our genuine emotions and impulses and attend to others' needs and desires. Although the practicality of this tactic is understandable even today, this form of racism is also killing us. While it is true that black people have done the lion's share of the work of advancing and securing civil rights for everyone in this country, this responsibility should not rest solely on black people. Being the work mule to organize people, pass legislation, secure broader opportunities for all people, reform policies and practices, etc., are conspicuous ways in which people expect Black people to fix racism (Holmes IV, 2020).

**Contextualization:** Having the opportunity to work throughout the Maryland and District of Columbia area has allowed me to see and, in many cases, interact with individuals who have been traumatized by the police. The trauma of police brutality is a serious issue that can have long-lasting effects on individuals, families, and communities. Victims of police brutality may experience physical injuries, psychological trauma, and emotional distress. The trauma of police brutality can manifest in various ways, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, and feelings of fear, anger, and helplessness. It can erode trust in law enforcement, exacerbate existing social inequalities, and contribute to a sense of injustice and powerlessness.

**Source Five:** Bleakley, P. (2019). A Thin-Slice of Institutionalised Police Brutality: A Tradition of Excessive Force in the Chicago Police Department. *Criminal Law Forum*, *30*(4). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10609-019-09378-6

**Comment 9:** Forming an intra-organizational culture is common in most police departments.

**Comment 10:** Willingness to use extreme force to maintain order on the streets has developed into a central element of Chicago police culture

**Quote/Paraphrase:** As the second-largest police department in the United States of America, the Chicago Police Department finds itself in the challenging position of having to enforce the law in a city in which intrinsic socio-economic and racial divisions typify the relationship between the community and law enforcement (Bleakley, 2019).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the culture of policing in the Chicago Police Department

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive to the discussion. Organizational culture significantly impacts an officer's capacity to make quick decisions about their duties. When cultural influences pressure officers to regularly resort to violent or inappropriate strategies on the job, the entire police department could likely be perceived as engaging in procedural corruption (Bleakley, 2019).

**Contextualization:** I often make split-second decisions in high-pressure situations that significantly affect my team and the community. The training, experience, and clear protocols we receive are crucial for enabling effective decision-making under pressure. As a police officer, maintaining control over my emotions is essential for upholding professionalism and ensuring sound judgment in high-stress scenarios. I draw on my faith as the foundation for managing stress and regulating my emotions, with prayer and meditation serving as my primary coping mechanisms.

**Source Six:** Reny, T. T., & Newman, B. J. (2021). The Opinion-Mobilizing Effect of Social Protest against Police Violence: Evidence from the 2020 George Floyd Protests. *American Political Science Review*, *115*(4), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055421000460

**Comment 11:** Lethal and unaccountable police violence against Black civilians has emerged as a prominent and critical political issue in the United States during the twenty-first century.

**Comment 12:** The available evidence indicates that the protests following the death of George Floyd contributed to an increased emphasis on racial identity and political engagement in discussions surrounding race and law enforcement in the United States.

**Quote/Paraphrase:** The past decade has witnessed repeated outbreaks of large-scale social protest following the killing of unarmed Black civilians by police officers. The 2014 Ferguson uprising propelled prior social media activism using the hashtag *#BlackLivesMatter* into a mass protest movement holding nationwide street demonstrations (Reny & Newman, 2021).

**Essential Element:** The BLM movement has sparked renewed interest in political science, mainly focusing on studying social protest. One area of research examines the effectiveness of protest in influencing public opinion. This line of inquiry has been applied to the BLM movement, explicitly concerning its efforts to address systemic and unchecked police violence against Black Americans (Reny & Newman, 2021).

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This statement is additive and highlights the impact of large-scale social protests against police violence in altering public perceptions of law enforcement and raising awareness of racial injustice (Reny & Newman, 2021).

**Contextualization:**  Since the George Floyd incident and the several cases of police use of force that have occurred, I have noticed a shift in the culture of policing. The old "us versus them" and "take control" mentality has come to an end. While officer safety and tactical dynamics are still important when my team arrives on the scene or conducts a raid, we have adopted a more low-key, less aggressive posture. Police accountability is now at its highest level since I became a police officer, but unfortunately, there are still individuals who cross the line. The ongoing protests and new legislation are poised to change the nature of policing by holding individuals and agencies accountable for behaviors that go beyond what is expected of us and into abusive territory.

**Source Seven:** Barna, M. (2021). Public health approach to police reform gaining momentum: States, cities redirecting police funding. *the Nation’s Health*, *51*(5), 1–8.

**Comment 13:** Police reform became a rallying cry in the U.S

**Comment 14:** 30 states passed new police oversight and reform laws

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Since the summer of 2020, more U.S. communities have been redirecting police funds to programs that take a public health approach to public safety. And even as some cities backpedal on promises and raise rather than reduce police budgets, increments of change are occurring in racial justice, reform

**Essential Element:** Reducing police interaction with the public is a common theme in city and local proposals. Berkeley, California, restricted the reasons city police can stop drivers, which can be a pretext for racial profiling and escalate into violence. Officers can no longer pull drivers over for not wearing a seat belt, failure to dim high beams or vehicle registration expiration (Barna, 2021).

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This statement is additive and highlights the impact of police reform in the United States.

**Contextualization:** A few years ago, police reform became a prominent issue in the U.S. during civil rights demonstrations that arose in response to police brutality against Black Americans, particularly following the tragic murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer. This brought police violence and systemic racism to the forefront of the national dialogue on an unprecedented scale (Barna, 2021).

Abdullah, co-founder of Black Lives Matter-Los Angeles, noted that there was an immediate shift in attitude, with a greater willingness to acknowledge the importance of Black lives (Barna, 2021).

In my early years as a police officer, we were trained to identify infractions that justified making a legal traffic stop. While many of these infractions were minor, they provided an opportunity to make contact with drivers in the hope of uncovering more significant issues. In light of numerous incidents of police brutality, reducing police interactions with the public has become a common focus in local proposals. For example, Berkeley, California, has limited the reasons city police can stop drivers to minimize potential racial profiling and situations that could escalate into violence (Barna, 2021). As a result, officers are no longer permitted to pull drivers over for infractions such as not wearing a seat belt, failing to dim high beams, or having an expired vehicle registration. Additionally, interactions between police officers and individuals experiencing a mental health crisis can quickly become volatile. Some states and cities have implemented protocols where mental health professionals, in collaboration with law enforcement, are dispatched to appropriate 911 calls (Barna, 2021).

According to Ray, the racial justice movement that started last summer has seen substantial progress. Law enforcement policies at various government levels have changed significantly, and Congress increasingly recognizes that comprehensive police reform is inevitable (Barna, 2021).

# References

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