

A Career in Law Enforcement

Course Syllabus

COURSE SYLLABUS

2 Credits (30 hours)

What You Will Learn

Law enforcement is one of the most demanding and impactful careers in the United States. This course introduces students to the realities of the profession—what officers actually do, how different agencies operate, and what it takes to enter and succeed in the field.

Course Length

This course can be completed during a relaxed 7 week period.

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Objectives

LEARN CONCEPT 1: Law enforcement is about service, responsibility, and real-world problem-solving—not what you see on TV. Most of the job involves communication, decision-making, and community interaction rather than high-intensity action.

LEARN CONCEPT 2: Law enforcement offers multiple career paths, but almost all begin in patrol. Patrol experience builds the foundation required for advancement into investigations, specialized units, and leadership roles.

LEARN CONCEPT 3: The profession demands strong communication, sound judgment, physical fitness, and personal integrity. These qualities are evaluated long before hiring and can be developed starting now.

LEARN CONCEPT 4: The hiring process is rigorous and selective, designed to evaluate readiness, character, and trustworthiness. Preparation, honesty, and consistency are what separate successful candidates from the rest.

Course Overview

Law enforcement is one of the most demanding and impactful careers in the United States. This course introduces students to the realities of the profession—what officers actually do, how different agencies operate, and what it takes to enter and succeed in the field.

From Observer to Prepared Applicant

Most people see law enforcement from the outside. This course shifts that perspective by explaining how the job actually works—from patrol responsibilities to report writing, crisis response, and long-term investigations.

Students will explore the structure of law enforcement agencies, daily responsibilities, career pathways, and hiring expectations. By the end of the course, students will understand not just the job—but how to prepare for it before ever applying.

The 4 Traits of Successful Law Enforcement Candidates

- **Communication:** Listening, de-escalation, and clear report writing
- **Judgment:** Decision-making under pressure and situational awareness
- **Physical Fitness:** Strength, endurance, and long-term conditioning
- **Character:** Integrity, accountability, discipline, and professionalism

Course Outline

Introduction: What Is Law Enforcement?

Chapter 1: What Police Officers Actually Do

Chapter 2: Types of Law Enforcement Careers

Chapter 3: Skills and Traits Needed

Quiz 1 (Chapters 1–3)

Chapter 4: Education and Requirements

Chapter 5: The Hiring Process

Chapter 6: How to Start Now

Quiz 2 (Chapters 4–6)

Final Exam (Essay-Based)

Final Reflection

Description of Activities

- Read and analyze course content and real-world law enforcement scenarios
- Watch career-focused videos on law enforcement roles and responsibilities
- Complete quizzes to assess understanding of key concepts
- Participate in discussions about ethical situations, decision-making, and community interactions
- Reflect on personal readiness, strengths, and areas for improvement
- Complete a final written essay and personal action plan

Rubric for Final Assignment

Essay Prompt

Write a comprehensive essay response to the prompt below. Your response should demonstrate understanding of all six lessons and be at least three well-developed paragraphs.

In a well-organized essay, summarize what you've learned in this course about a career in law enforcement. Address each of the following:

- What police officers actually do — and how it differs from what most people assume
- The variety of career paths in law enforcement and why almost everyone starts in patrol
- The skills and character traits the job demands, and how to start building them now
- The requirements and disqualifiers you need to know before you apply
- How the hiring process works and what separates candidates who advance from those who don't
- What you personally plan to do — or have already started doing — to prepare

Write in your own words. Connect ideas across lessons rather than summarizing each one separately.

Grading Guidance: Strong responses address all six areas with specific content from the course, show accurate understanding of key terms, include genuine personal reflection in the final section, and connect ideas across lessons in an organized, readable way.

Final Project: “Would I Work in Law Enforcement?”

Write a complete response addressing ALL FOUR parts below:

Part 1: Career Interest & Perspective (150–200 words) Would you consider a career in law enforcement? Why or why not? What aspects of the job interest or concern you?

Part 2: Understanding the Profession (150–200 words) Describe at least two aspects of law enforcement work (e.g., patrol, investigations, community interaction, report writing). Why are they important?

Part 3: Personal Skills & Experience (200–250 words) What skills or experiences do you already have that relate to law enforcement (communication, teamwork, responsibility, fitness)? Provide specific examples.

Part 4: Your Action Plan (200–250 words) What steps could you take in the next 90 days to begin preparing for a law enforcement career? Include actions like fitness, volunteering, research, or networking.

Grading Rubric

Criteria	Description	Points
Career Perspective	Clear and thoughtful reflection on interest in law enforcement	20
Understanding Law Enforcement	Accurate explanation of job roles and responsibilities	25
Personal Skills	Strong examples connecting experience to required traits	25
Action Plan	Specific, realistic, and actionable next steps	20
Writing Quality	Organized, clear, and meets length requirements	10
TOTAL		100

Resources

- "A Career In Law Enforcement"; Education4Equity Team.
- Course Text: A Career in Law Enforcement: Foundations, Hiring, and Career Paths
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (Law Enforcement Career Data)
- DiscoverPolicing.org (Career Exploration and Requirements)
- Police1.com (Professional Law Enforcement Resource)
- Local Police Department Websites (Hiring Requirements & Ride-Alongs)
- Online learning platforms (Coursera, edX, Khan Academy)

Instructor: Daniel Hage (Email: Daniel.ed4equity@gmail.com)

How much time does it take to finish this course: This course can be completed during a relaxed 7 week period.