


2 | POLICING

1.1	
introduction to your course companion	

In recent years the study of policing has attracted an increasing amount of interest from a variety of academic perspectives: criminology, sociology, social policy and public administration, politics and governance, criminal justice, social history, law and human rights. There are wider tangential interests. Policing as a concept of social control may be of interest to philosophy students. The contribution of policing to foreign policy may be of interest to students of international relations. Press or dramatic representations of policing may well be of interest to media and cultural studies students. Policing can be studied as a sub-set of any of these disciplines or in its own right. Offered at an increasing number of higher and further education institutions, the relatively recent academic specialism of police studies has yet to define a common and traditional curriculum and the permutations of academic modules around policing-related subjects are numerous. That variety and this broad academic community are reflected in this volume, which aims to provide the reader with a general introduction to various key aspects of police studies that may feature in any of the curricula for the above disciplines.

A volume this size cannot hope to discuss in detail the complexities of these different key aspects, but it does draw attention to the breadth of the subject and it will highlight for students of one discipline how other disciplines might be engaged. For those specifically studying policing, this book aims to provide both a broad introduction and a framework for study revision. Its features, explained below, are intended to facilitate this and the book is structured accordingly. Following this introduction, Part Two outlines key aspects that are likely to feature in any policing curriculum. Part Three, based upon the work of David McIlroy (for whose assistance the primary authors are very grateful), presents guidance on core academic skills. In Part Four, additional study resources are presented.

Good practical policing demands a multitude of skills and an open mind, whether the primary purpose is the investigation of crime or the preservation of the sovereign's peace. It often requires the ability to multi-task. It is perfectly possible, for example, for students to focus on

police powers purely from the perspective of criminal law and procedure, but such a focused and forensic legal study will not provide the wider understanding to be gained when the social context for the use of police powers is studied – the role of officer discretion and the socio-political and cultural factors that influence such discretion, for instance. Nor will the social consequences and implications of any given policing action, initiative or philosophy necessarily be fully understood without an appreciation both of the powers at police disposal and of the available alternatives to the use of such powers, particularly when crime detection (although a priority for politicians) represents a minority of the demands placed upon the police by the public.

In that vein, those undertaking police studies must adopt a multidisciplinary approach in order to achieve academic success. Policing is a skilled profession. No less professionalism is required of those who would study it.