**Brief Summary**

**Philosophies of Policing**

With its roots in nineteenth-century England, policing has evolved through several historical eras, including the political era, the professional era, the community era, and the nascent homeland security era. Although strategies may change, the role of the police has been shaped by the function of order maintenance and the ability to legitimately use force on citizens. Law enforcement is constrained within an organizational structure that is broadly influenced by politics, social stability, professionalism, and the needs of the community.

**The Culture of Policing**

Policing styles develop within an occupational culture that influences police practice and behavior.  James Q. Wilson described three different policing styles that attempt to explain why police officers make the decisions that they do. The concepts of the "working personality" and of internal personality traits may also offer explanations for the use of police discretion and officers' behavior while on the job.

**The Structure of American Law Enforcement and Ethical Issues in Policing**

The United States has a decentralized and fragmented system of law enforcement.  Local and federal authorities have similar functions but maintain their own goals and missions. Within this structure we find that law enforcement is not exempt from various levels and types of corruption. Controlling unethical police behavior has been a goal of law enforcement since the professional era and depends largely on the development and enforcement of clear administrative policies, as well as the integrity of individual officers.

**Policing Strategies**

Just as the role of the police has changed over time, so have policing strategies.  Some studies have suggested that traditional policing strategies are not fully effective at reducing crime and promoting citizen satisfaction.   In the search for more effective solutions, community policing has emerged in a new era of law enforcement that focuses on building mutual relationships with the community and erasing the "thin blue line."