Course Title

Use of Force Investigations – Human Dynamics and Conflict Resolution

COURSE OVERVIEW

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LESSON PURPOSE:

To keep everyone as safe as possible, officers must understand the dynamics of human conflict. Officers without this knowledge run the risk of being drawn into confrontations that can quickly escalate and result in injury to themselves and community members. Investigators who are called upon to examine these incidents must also understand human factors and dynamics and how they can influence the actions taken or not taken by the officer.

In this course, you will come to understand the risks of unmanaged conflict and recognize the need to read what is happening, anticipate outcomes, pre-plan your responses, and adjust on the fly. Officers will learn about how stress, distraction, and other factors can impact perception and decision making and degrade performance and become familiar with methods to optimize the safety of all concerned through mastering their own skills and abilities. The implications of attention, perception, and other human factors in evaluating officer performance will also be considered.

The application of force by police and corrections officers on citizens is one of the highest responsibilities with which officers are empowered. The professional and ethical application of force requires a proper understanding of the complex milieu of human factors that are involved in these rapidly unfolding and complex encounters. Recent advancements in human factors research that impact officer decision-making and performance must be understood and incorporated into police training and investigations. This program, created and instructed exclusively by the Force Science® Institute, is designed to clearly present, in a practical and understandable fashion, the results of the most cutting-edge research into the dynamics of human behavior during life-threatening encounters, and how the findings are applied to the law enforcement and corrections field.

This course is specifically geared towards investigators, command staff, trainers & frontline officers.

LEARNING AND TRAINING OBJECTIVES:

Students will learn a wide variety of skills during this course including:

- Understanding of the various aspect of human factors that impact officer performance.

- What the research shows the most critical risk factors are for officers in use of force encounters.

- Vital threat cues and importance of early recognition and preventative action.

- How some common training methods and tactics actually set officers up for undesirable responses in a crisis.

- Recommended tactics for managing potentially dangerous incidents for achieving the most desirable outcome.

- How perceptual alterations and stress-induced memory gaps impact an officers' ability to accurately recall incident details.

- How quickly suspects can launch an attack and why officers and trainers must take speed of assault studies into account when preparing for a confrontation.

- Aspects of officer memory following a critical incident and how investigators can "mine" officers' memories and avoid interviewing mistakes that can put the officer, the investigator, and the entire department in jeopardy.

- What the most recent *Force Science*® studies have to say about traffic stop assault response and officer movement, threats posed by prone subjects, the impact of exhaustion on officer memory and performance, and much more.

COURSE OUTLINE

I. **INTRODUCTION** **(60 Minutes)**

A. **The Problem with Misunderstood and Controversial Police/Corrections Use of Force Events**

B. **An Overview of the Force Science Institute**

1. Explanation of the mission.
2. Description of the research and how it is conducted.
3. How Force Science findings impact investigations.
4. Overview of Force Science published studies.
5. Current research.

Learning Objectives

- To introduce participants to the need for new research.
- To make clear the importance of the findings
- To explain how applying the findings will enhance police officer decision making and the accuracy and thoroughness of investigations.
- Apply the principles in all aspects training development and delivery.
- Explain and apply the findings in the development of agency policy.

II. **HUMAN FACTORS AND THREAT ANALYSIS** **(300 Minutes)**

A. **Human Factors**

1. Definition of Human Factors and why they are critical to officer performance.
2. Understanding the Threat Environment.

B. **Threat Environment**

1. Review of the nature of rapid attacks at close distance.
2. Weapon types used by offenders.
3. Analysis of distances that typical attacks occur and the implications.
4. Offender hit rates and hit locations on officers.

5. Speed of attack analysis of various attack types and weapons.
6. Implications of trigger pull cadence / rate of fire.
7. Unique Circumstances: Attacks on Traffic Stops – nature and implications.
8. Unique Circumstances: Hands in Pockets – proper psychological and tactical control implications.
9. Unique Circumstances: The Prone Subject – speed of assault implications.
10. Offender Biomechanics: Sprinting, Movement and Turning - pattern analysis.

C. Officer Human Factor Aspects

1. Vision – Foveal and Ambient vision and implications for perception.
2. Reaction time considerations – various weapon positions.
3. Officer Movement – Speed of officer movement in different directions and the implications of officer equipment on movement patterns.
4. Time to Start / Time to Stop – analysis of complicated start and stop neurological and biomechanical processes.

D. Subject / Officer Interaction

1. Analysis of the biomechanics and perception and reaction time in force on force encounters.
2. Case examples – movement and complex shot patterns; threat recognition and time to start/ stop.
3. Application of principles to less lethal weapons and use of striking techniques.

Learning Objectives

- List the various human factors involved in understanding the threat environment.
- Describe the impact of perception time, decision-making time, and motor-movement response on officer reaction.
- Explain how interaction between time of subject attack and time of officer response impacts timing and biomechanics.
- Discuss the important human factors involved in time to start / time to stop motor actions.
- Help participants gain a deeper, more thorough understanding of the human dynamics and behavioral characteristics of both officers and offenders during deadly force encounters.

III. UNDERSTANDING THE LIMITS OF HUMAN PERCEPTION UNDER STRESS.   (330 Minutes)

A. Vision

1. Exploration of the visual systems and anomalies experienced during high stress, life-threatening encounters and their impact on officers' performance and ability to accurately recall incident details.
2. Types of vision used during violent encounters.
3. Implications of Low Light encounters.
4. Benefits and liabilities of visual changes under stress.

B. Attention

1. Types of Attention and common myths
2. Selective Attention
3. Inattentional Blindness
4. The Quadrants of Attention

5. Attentional capture – 'bottom up' vs 'top down' attention and the implications for decision making and performance.
6. Impact of attentional phenomenon on situational awareness, decision-making and memory recall

C. "The London Study"

1. Study One: Results of the latest research on perception, attention and memory under stress.
2. Study Two: The relationship between attention, vision and anticipation on perception, decision-making, performance and memory

D. Memory

1. Types of memory; Implicit, Explicit, Declarative, Episodic and Semantic
2. Constructive nature and fallibility of memory
3. Trauma and memory
4. Memory error and confabulations
5. Dangerous interview questions that introduce memory error
6. The impact of exhaustion on memory

E. Training and Investigations

1. Training to prepare officers to enhance their performance in spite of the perceptual challenges of high-stress encounters.
2. Articulate how the realities and limitations of vision, attention and perception in high-stress encounters impacts investigative practices.

Learning Objectives

- Help participants understand what kind of human behavior and performance is and is not possible during high stress encounters.
- Discuss training implications for improving officer judgment and decision-making.
- Explain the physiological realities of the human senses in life threatening encounters and prepare investigators to approach force investigations and officer-involved shootings with these in mind.
- Help participants to understand what are considered "normal" gaps in memory and to better identify attempts at deception through that understanding.
- Articulate the important considerations for maximizing accurate memory recall during interviews.

IV. PERFORMANCE ERRORS & UNINTENTIONAL DISCHARGES   (90 Minutes)

A. Presentation of the Latest Research on Officers Who Have Experienced Unintentional Discharges

1. Why they occur – types and causes of unintended discharges
2. When they are most likely to occur – implications for training and reducing UD's on the street
3. Cues investigators should watch for that could indicate a need to challenge a claim that a discharge was unintentional

Learning Objectives

- Identify frequencies and impacts of Unintentional Discharges (UD's)

- Identify the types of UD's and the major factors involved in UD's were identified
- Discuss the investigative implications of the research into UD's.
- Provide methods and suggestions to prevent UD's

V. OFFICER DECISION MAKING (160 Minutes)

A. Heuristics and Contextual Cues

1. Explanation of the role of "contextual cues", the perception of risk, heuristics and officer schema on officer decision-making.
2. Why officers may perceive and respond as though the suspect is an immediate threat even though the person they are facing is unarmed.
3. Association Coherence – why we see what we expect to see.

B. Thinking Systems and Decision Making

1. System 1 & System 2 Theory of Decision Making.
2. Recognition Primed / Naturalistic Decision Making.
3. Implications for training.
4. Training Scars and Decision Making.

Learning Objectives

- How officer operate using contextual cues and schema's and how this may lead to performance errors in very time compressed, high-consequence events.
- Understanding threat perception, recognition and response
- To understand the factors involved in interview timing to elucidate the most accurate memory recall from officers.
- Explain the difference between 'historical truth' and 'narrative truth'
- Discuss various memory errors that may lead to inaccurate reporting

VI. APPLIED ANALYSIS TO OFFICER INVOLVED SHOOTINGS (90 Minutes)

A. Exploration of Several High-Profile Cases Where Findings Have Been Successfully Applied in Court.

Learning Objectives

- Provide students with the opportunity to apply the learned factors encompassing numerous principles taught during the course.

VII. USE OF FORCE – LAW AND PRINCIPLES (120 Minutes)

A. Laws and Principles that Guide Use of Force Decisions

1. "Objective reasonableness" (rules based) versus Peelian principles (socially responsive).
2. Implications of objective legal reasonableness as a standard, and impact of qualified immunity (awful but lawful).
3. Some states are turning away from *Graham,* and taking a *Graham*-informed, Peelian approach.

4. This move may require the evaluation of pre-event tactics in defense situations and calling on officers to assess threats and rationality and seek nonviolent outcomes in control situations (de-escalation).
5. Duty to intervene and freedom to disengage likewise point to the obligation of officers to preserve the rights and safety of others.

Learning Objectives

- Differentiate between objective legal reasonableness and Peelian principles on using force.
- Explain how and under what circumstances officers should consider the rationality of the subject when determining an appropriate course of action.
- Consider how training should be conducted to differentiate between defense and control situations and threatening versus non-threatening behavior.
- Identify when deliberate de-escalation, intervention, or disengagement should be considered or implemented.

VIII.   BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS OF VIDEO AND BWC   (60 Minutes)

A. Explore aspects of inherent video errors, and how to avoid misinterpretation of what is observed on the video.
B. Cautions and best practices regarding the use of video in interviews, scene walk-throughs, and incident recreation.

Learning Objectives

- Describe factors used in analyzing video in use of force and officer-involved shooting incidents.
- Provide a basic understanding of human vision, attention, perception, decision making, emotions, stress, error, and memory.
- Understand the different levels of video analysis.
- Identify issues with digital video in relation to human performance.
- *Be able to explain how the perception of a person/witness can be different from a digital video camera (BWC) recording*

IX.   QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH CLASS PARTICIPANTS   (50 Minutes)

Learning Objectives

- Provide clarity to students
- Ask probing questions to verify comprehension
- Test critical thinking and material integration

COURSE SCHEDULE TIME   **TOTAL   (1260 Minutes)**

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