

OPE Playbook: Should I Shoot?

OPE at a Glance	
Lesson	Description
OPE Description	• This class guides students through the critical decision-making process involved in self-defense situations, focusing on when and how to use force. The course concludes with a discussion centered around various shoot/don't shoot scenarios.
Ideal Venue	• Typically, this class is hosted at ranges or retailers. • That being said, this course could be taught almost anywhere because it is largely discussion based.
Key Demographics	• Usually a good mix of men and women in attendance. • Most, if not all, already have their CCW permit.
Pitch Points	• Focus on the aftermath of a self-defense incident and how the USCCA can help a member navigate the criminal investigation and potential civil lawsuits. • Highlight how the USCCA can help train an individual to be proficient with their firearm. ◦ Remind them of the importance of target acquisition, target identification and target isolation.
Timing	• 5 Minutes: Introduction • 45 Minutes: Classroom Presentation • 15 Minutes: Pitch • 5 Minutes: Break • 10 Minutes: Activity

Resources	
Resources	• Link to PPT

OPE Overview	
Overarching Goal	• External - Official Partner Experiences are brief 1-2 hour mini-classes with a corresponding multi-channel marketing campaign intended to drive foot traffic and introduce students to local training organizations and the

	USCCA. Internal - Provide AEs with additional sales opportunities during weekdays when Official Partner class inventory is limited.
Course Objectives	- What is the information this particular OPE is going to teach? - What knowledge or skill will the audience be introduced to?
Target Audience	- Who are we looking to attract to this particular OPE? - This is one of the more popular OPEs. - Most of those in attendance already have their CCW. - How will this audience affect the pitch? - You can expect most in attendance to be comfortable with the idea of carrying a firearm. - This class highlights the potential consequences of using a firearm in self-defense from the perspective of physical skill and the realities of using a firearm against someone you know.
Course Materials	Required: - Slide deck Optional: - Consider having a few copies of Should I Shoot vol 1 & 2 on hand. - They are tangible items the attendees can see and handle before they buy. - They can also be given away as a "reward" for answering a question well.
Safety Reminders	- Guns in the classroom MUST remain holstered or cased. (Unless there is a need for self-defense in a dynamic critical incident, or unless otherwise instructed, firearms should not be accessed by students.) - If you're conducting dry-fire training, all ammunition must be removed from the training room. (During instructor demonstrations with unloaded guns or training tools, you do not need to clear the entire room, but please follow the safety rules to ensure your safety and the safety of the entire class.) - If you're conducting dry-fire training and, if for any reason, somebody must leave the training room, you must pause and reset the training. You must perform another clearance check to ensure no ammo has made its way back into the training area. - Please abide by the requests or rules of your specific range or location!

AE Checklist	
Timing	Description
Four - Six Weeks Prior	☐ Submit event request in Salesforce. (4 wks prior for free events, 6 wks

	prior for paid events)
Four Weeks Prior	☐ Review the OPE slide deck. ☐ Order class materials. ☐ Promote/advertise the upcoming class on social media channels.
Two Weeks Prior	☐ Review the OPE slide deck. ☐ Confirm classroom/range time of class.
One Week Prior	☐ Review the OPE slide deck. ☐ Verify your class roster. ☐ Send students a follow-up email with class details and required gear.
Day of OPE	☐ Review the OPE slide deck. ☐ Confirm classroom/range time of class. ☐ Send a personalized email and/or text to registrants to remind them to attend the event. ☐ Prepare all training materials, aids and multimedia.
After OPE	☐ Send students a follow-up “thank you” email including any follow up discussions needed with students who were considering purchasing a membership

Introduction	
Presentation Content	Description
Welcome <i>(not in slide deck)</i>	• Before diving into the slides, cover introductions, venue-specific details, course objectives and, if desired, an icebreaker activity. • Introduce yourself and any co-instructors or guest speakers; if desired, give a short bio of yourself. • Set the stage and give context to the course; you won't know each student's reason for taking the course, but you'll want to support all students' training efforts in a safe learning environment. • Pro Tip: Learn the names of as many students as possible. This will allow you to cold call from the audience and will keep to keep the same 2-3 people from answering every question.
Policies and Procedures <i>(not in slide deck)</i>	• <i>Guns in the classroom MUST remain holstered or cased. (Unless there is a need for self-defense in a dynamic critical incident, or unless otherwise instructed, firearms should not be accessed by students.)</i>

	• Please silence or turn off cellphones. It is not OK to leave to make phone calls or conduct other business unless it constitutes an emergency. • We will be taking regular breaks, but if you need a bathroom break, please feel free to quietly leave the classroom.
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Classroom Presentation	
Presentation Content	Description
Presentation Overview	• Objective: Guide students through the critical decision-making process involved in self-defense situations, focusing on when and how to use force. The course concludes with discussion centered around various shoot/don't shoot scenarios.
Title Slide	• Welcome students to the class. ○ What are students hoping to get from this class? ○ How many students have their CCW permit? ○ How many students are members of the USCCA? • "Should I Shoot?" is an important question for those who choose to carry a firearm for self-defense. • This course is designed to give you a framework for answering this question, by asking three additional questions: ○ Is it legally justifiable? ○ Can I shoot? ○ Am I willing to live with the consequences? • [Note] It's likely many of the students will have thought of a specific scenario in which they would need to use their firearm. ○ They might seek validation from you (the instructor). You cannot give them a Yes/No answer. ○ The best response to such questions would be something like, "That's a good question. Unfortunately I can't give you an answer either way because there are too many variables to consider, and I'm not the one who will have to live with the consequences of your decisions."
Key Topics	• Is It Legally Justifiable? • Can I Shoot? • Am I Willing to Live With the Consequences? • Scenarios
Is It Legally Justifiable?	• [Note] <u>Don't spend a lot of time on this concept.</u> There are other classes provided by the USCCA that explore the legal use of force in greater detail.

- Laws vary by state, as do the specific definitions and criteria for this level of force.
- But generally speaking, the four conditions listed here will meet or exceed any particular state's requirements for the use of deadly force.
 - Immediate deadly threat
 - Immediate
 - Intent - this person wants to hurt you
 - Means - this person has the capability to hurt you
 - Opportunity - this person is close enough, or has access to hurting you.
 - Serious Injury
 - Serious injury is any injury that will have a significant impact on your quality of life.
 - Permanent disability
 - Loss of function or severe deformity (vision, walking, use of a limb, etc.)
 - Innocent party
 - Must not be the aggressor
 - Mutual Combat vs Self-Defense
 - Mutual combat - both parties enter into an altercation willingly, often fighting for status/ego
 - Self-defense - predator vs prey, the defender is an unwilling participant fighting for survival.
 - No lesser force
 - Disparity of force
 - The defender may be justified to use a higher level of force to stop the threat if the aggressor has a significant advantage over them.
 - On the other hand, if the defender has a significant advantage over the aggressor, they may not be justified in using deadly force if they can reasonably apply a lower level of force to stop the threat.
 - No means of escape
 - Not required to leave others behind
 - Not required to go from a bad situation to a worse one
- **For the purpose of this class, we'll assume the criteria for the use of deadly force has been met in any scenarios that are presented.**
 - [Note] This does **NOT** apply to any scenarios presented by the students.

Can I Shoot?	● Do I possess the physical skills in terms of marksmanship and gun handling to take the shot? ● There are several factors to consider when answering this question. Some of those factors are the size of the target, your distance from the target, and the movement of the target. ○ Size of the target ■ Realistically, the target is going to be 3-8 inches in size. ● Headshot ● High center chest ○ Distance from the target ■ Most defensive shooting engagements begin close (contact distance) and spread out to 21 feet or greater. ■ Shooting at contact is different from shooting at distance. ● Close - Retention, Pectoral Index, etc. (demonstration?) ● Far - Marksmanship and recoil management ■ What distances are you comfortable shooting at? ○ Movement of the target ■ On a static range, the target stays in one place. ● It might turn to face you, or move out and back, but that's about it. ■ In a defensive shooting, it's likely that you and your attacker will be moving. ● Moving to cover, creating distance, finding an exit, etc. ● Shooting at a moving target requires additional skills. ○ Visual tracking, leading, timing ● Have you practiced shooting at a moving target?
Can I Shoot?	● Some additional things to consider are your orientation to the target, as well as your accessibility to your own firearm. ● Even a shooter with excellent marksmanship and gun handling skills can face serious disadvantages in terms of target orientation and weapon accessibility. ○ Target orientation ■ Your attacker may be right in front of you, but it's also likely they could be to your left, right, or even behind you.

	• Can you position yourself to get a clear shot on target? • Possible example - you're seated in the driver's seat of your vehicle and someone in the passenger seat (or back seat) turns out to be a threat. ○ Weapon accessibility ■ Can you draw and shoot before you get shot? ■ You can't outdraw a drawn gun (demonstration?) • Several actions (clearing a cover garment, gripping the firearm, drawing the firearm, presenting to the target, pressing the trigger) vs one action (pressing the trigger)
Can I Shoot?	• As we wrap up this section, we need to discuss the concepts of target acquisition, identification and isolation. • All three of these must be present in order to effectively engage your threat. ○ Target Acquisition ■ This means physically locating your target. ■ You have accurately determined where the threat is coming from. ■ You have located the threat and you're able to put your sights on it. ○ Target Identification ■ This means you have confirmed your target is correct. ■ You've clearly identified the target as opposed to an innocent bystander. ■ How do you know this is the right target? • Physical appearance can be deceiving • The presence of a weapon doesn't always mean "bad guy" ○ Target Isolation ■ This means you can shoot your target without the danger of harming innocent people, and there will be minimal collateral damage to property. ■ There is a potential felony and lawsuit attached to every bullet that leaves your gun. ■ Greater Danger exception - the consequences of not stopping the threat are worse than the possibility of hitting an innocent person.
Am I Willing to	• What are the consequences?

Live With the Consequences?	○ Prison or Jail time ■ Even if you felt justified, that doesn't mean the courts will agree. ■ Feelings aren't facts ○ Financial Ruin ■ The cost of a criminal defense attorney is staggering ■ Even if the courts agree that you were justified, you can still get sued. ○ Serious Injury or Death ■ Even if no charges are filed and you don't get sued, you may still face other consequences for your actions. ■ If you don't have the skills you need, you could get yourself or someone else seriously hurt or killed ○ Personal Relationships ■ Most acts of violence happen between people who know each other, not strangers. ■ Can you live with shooting someone you know? Someone you care about? ■ Even if loved ones are not directly involved, defensive shootings are potentially traumatic events for those who survive or witness them. ● [Note] The image on this slide is of a USCCA member who was forced to shoot his son in self-defense. Ultimately he was cleared of any wrongdoing, but he still struggles with what happened that day.
AE Pitch	● Introduce the AE. ● After the pitch, give the students a 5 minute break before resuming with the activity.

Pitch	
Content	Description
Pitch Points	● Focus on the aftermath of a self-defense incident and how the USCCA can help a member navigate the criminal investigation and potential civil lawsuits. ● Highlight how the USCCA can help train an individual to be proficient with their firearm. ○ Remind them of the importance of target acquisition, target identification and target isolation.

Activity: Scenarios	
Content	Description
Scenarios	• [Warning] Inform your students that many of the following scenarios depict acts of violence and situations which may be unsettling to some of those in attendance. If anyone would not like to participate, they are not required to do so. • Give your students a 5 minute break before you begin the first scenario to allow those who do not wish to participate to leave. • You as the instructor do not need to include every scenario in your class. If you feel a particular scenario is inappropriate for your audience, do not include it in your presentation (hide the slide). • Students will be asked to respond to a series of scenarios in which they will be required to answer the question, "Should I Shoot?" ○ The scenario will be displayed on the slide. ○ You (the instructor) will read the slide aloud to the class. ■ Don't be "that instructor" who picks a student to read the slide to the class. ■ Students should be focused on the scenario itself rather than stressing about whether or not they will be called on to read off a slide. ○ After you (the instructor) have finished reading the scenario, have your students indicate whether or not they would shoot. ○ Ask students to explain their decision. Make sure you hear from both perspectives. • [Note] The majority of these scenarios are designed to break any notion that defensive shootings have an obvious right choice. Some of the scenarios will not have a good answer... just answers that aren't as bad as others.
Evening Walk	• "You are taking a walk in your neighborhood after supper. You hear a car approaching from behind you. As it passes, you see it quickly slow down and pull over about 20 feet ahead of you. A hooded man jumps out of the passenger seat and begins walking quickly toward you. You notice he is holding a gun in his hand down by his side." • Discussion Points ○ Potential Issues ■ Weapon accessibility - the man has a gun in his hand. Yours is in the holster. ■ The driver could also be armed, or there could be others in the vehicle. ○ Reasons for Shooting

	■ A man you don't recognize is quickly approaching you with a firearm. It's reasonable to assume he wants to rob you, kidnap you, murder you, or all of the above.
Food Court	● "You're eating lunch at a mall food court in between running some errands. About 50ft away from you, there is a children's choir singing to a crowd of parents and shoppers. You notice a suspicious looking man with a large duffle bag enter the food court and walk toward the gathered crowd. When he reaches the edge of the crowd, he stops, placing himself between you and the choir. He suddenly pulls a rifle from the bag and points it at the unsuspecting group of shoppers." ● Discussion Points ○ Potential Issues ■ Marksmanship - the bad guy is 50ft away. ■ Target Isolation - the bad guy is standing in front of a group of children. ■ Firepower - the bad guy has a rifle. You have a handgun. ○ Reasons for Shooting ■ There is a clear deadly threat against the children and other shoppers. ■ Greater Danger Exception - the consequences of not stopping the threat are potentially worse than the possibility of hitting an innocent person.
Movie Night	● "You are home with your teenage son, getting ready for your weekly movie night tradition. The two of you are talking in the kitchen waiting for the popcorn to finish, when your son hears a noise coming from your attached garage. He opens the door to see a man with a crowbar has broken into the garage. Your son lunges for the man, and a fight ensues. In the melee, the only light in the garage is broken, shrouding them both in darkness. You see their shadows struggling against each other and the fight quickly moves to a darkened corner of the garage. You can tell one of them clearly has the upperhand, but you can't tell which." ● Discussion Points ○ Potential Issues ■ Target Acquisition - it's dark in the garage. It might be difficult to get sights on target. ■ Target Identification - the darkness combined with the chances that the intruder and the teenager are roughly the same size could make it difficult to tell who is who.

	■ Target Isolation - the man and the teenager are struggling in close proximity to each other making it difficult to get a clear shot. ○ Reasons for Shooting ■ There is a deadly threat against a child.
Phone Call	● "You get a frantic call from your mother asking you to come to the house. Your father has dementia and it has taken a turn for the worse. Your mother is worried he will hurt himself. When you get to the house, you hear screaming coming from the inside. You rush in to see your father threatening your mother with a large kitchen knife. He turns toward you as you enter, screams, "Who are you?!" and charges you with the knife raised." ● Discussion Points ○ Potential Issues ■ Personal relationship - this is your dad, not some "bad guy." ■ Close quarters - you may not have time to draw your firearm if he's approaching you quickly with the knife. ○ Reasons for Shooting ■ Clearly defined deadly threat.
Date Night	● "You're having dinner with your spouse at an upscale restaurant. Your spouse leaves to use the restroom which is on the opposite side of the restaurant. 20 seconds later, you hear screams and gunshots coming from the waiting area near the front entrance. You rush around the corner to see a man with a gun in his hands. Some people are lying on the floor, others are running for exits or ducking under their tables. The man with the gun locks eyes with you." ● Discussion Points ○ Potential Issues ■ Target Acquisition - the man has a gun already in his hands. Yours is still in the holster. ■ Target Identification - you don't know for sure that this man is the shooter. He could have been responding to the situation just like you. Even if he is the shooter, you don't know why. ■ He hasn't pointed his gun at you. ○ Reasons to Shoot ■ You heard gunshots and a man you don't know is holding a gun and looking at you. ■ He hasn't identified himself as Law Enforcement.

	■ Your spouse is somewhere in the restaurant, potentially in danger.
Daycare Pickup	● "You're helping a family friend by picking up their 3-year-old from daycare. After you get the child buckled into their carseat, you walk around the vehicle and get behind the wheel. As you finish buckling your seatbelt, the front passenger door opens. A man climbs inside, points a gun to your head and says, "Give me the keys." ● Discussion Points ○ Potential Issues ■ Weapon accessibility - the man has a gun to your head. Yours is in the holster. ○ Reasons to Shoot ■ The man is threatening you with deadly force. ■ There is a child secured in the backseat who is also in danger. If you give up the keys, the man could take the child with him.
Questions	● If there are no questions from the audience, consider asking them: ○ Were there any situations that you particularly struggled with? ○ If you were placed in any of the scenarios we discussed, how would you feel about your ability to successfully deal with it? ○ What skills or knowledge do you feel would improve your chances of reaching a successful outcome in these scenarios?
Next Steps	● Seek further training - online and offline ● Buy the books - "Should I Shoot?" volumes 1 & 2 ● Become a member of the USCCA.