Course Description: “Examination of the legal problems and principles from conviction through release. Topics may include sentencing and sentencing guidelines, probation, incarceration, conditional release, post-conviction remedies, and prisoner and probationer/parolee’s rights. Prerequisites: ENGL 1301 (or ENGL 1387) and ENGL 1302 (or ENGL 1388, or ENGL 1305) with a grade of ‘C’ or better, and sophomore standing” (UTRGV Course Catalog). Leading cases impacting corrections are also examined. This course is 100% Online using Blackboard.

Course Objectives:

Goal 1: The student will develop and apply knowledge regarding the current state of inmates’ legal rights, and leading cases in corrections that established these rights, as well as legal responsibilities of correctional workers.

Objective A: The student will complete assigned readings and be prepared to discuss these readings with fellow classmates in the Discussion Board within Blackboard.

Objective B: The student will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the assigned material through online examinations and a quiz.

Goal 2: The student will develop and improve communication, critical thinking, and writing skills.

Objective A: The students will discuss class material in a written format within Blackboard’s Discussion Board. Discussion Board assignments will include an interactive component.

Required Textbooks: There are two required textbooks for this course—be sure to buy/rent them as soon as possible:

   by Barbara Belbot, Craig Hemmens, and Michael R. Cavanaugh

   by Rolando V. del Carmen, Susan E. Ritter, and Betsy A. Witt

*You can buy or rent your textbooks online from Follett—the UTRGV campus bookstore. They will ship the textbooks to you if you are from out of town (Consortium students): https://www.bkstr.com/utrgvstore/home

It is your responsibility to make sure you have your textbooks so that you can meet assignment deadlines—if you are not going to order from the campus bookstore, make sure you order from a reputable seller like Amazon. Students in the past have told me about Online sellers who send the wrong book, send the book late, send the wrong edition, etc.
Class Map:  a.k.a. How to Navigate this Class (Blackboard)

- Be sure to check the “Announcements” page regularly for important class/schedule information/changes.
- The class Syllabus is posted under the “Syllabus” button. The Syllabus lists all assignments, including weekly textbook readings, the course schedule/calendar by week, and due dates for each assignment. Open/close dates for the Quiz and the Exams are also posted within the Syllabus.
- Instruction sheets detailing requirements, expectations, and grading information for each assignment will be posted under the “Instructions” button. Required (additional/outside of the textbook) readings/videos, etc. for Discussion Questions will also be posted under the “Instructions” button.
- Access the Exams by clicking on the “Exams” button. Exam reviews will also be posted under this button.
- Access the Quiz by clicking on the “Quiz” button.
- Discussion Questions can be accessed by clicking on the “Discussion Board” button. Your Biographical Paragraph will be turned in using the Discussion Board.
- PowerPoint outlines of assigned textbook chapters can be accessed by clicking on the “PowerPoints” button.
- Follow your grade throughout the semester using Gradebook.
- Supplemental videos that correspond with class material are posted under the “Videos” button.
- Supplemental websites that correspond with class material are posted under the “Web-Links” button.
- Interact with your fellow students using the optional “Class Blog” button.
- Any technical issues (Blackboard) students have should be directed to the COLTT Help Desk (Center for Online Learning and Teaching Technology):

UTRGV Help Desk for Technical Difficulties: (Blackboard)

COLTT Help Desk
Brownsville Campus | Edinburg Campus
Office: Casa Bella, Room 613 | Education (EDUC) 2.202
Submit a Ticket: UTRGV.edu/coltthelp
Email: COLTT@UTRGV.edu
Phone: (956) 882-6792 | (956) 665-5327
Fax: (956) 882-6751 | (956) 665-5276

Course Requirements/Policy:

1) Be an Active Learner:  I want all of you to be an “active learner.” What this means is that you rent/buy the required textbooks, keep up with all of the assigned textbook readings, review all instruction sheets carefully, and ask the professor if you have any questions about readings or assignments. Being an active learner also means that you check Blackboard regularly (and your UTRGV email) for class announcements and newly posted course information. Being an active learner means that you put the effort into earning your class grade and your degree. Don’t wait until the last week of class to worry about your grade—be an active learner throughout the semester—this is especially important if you are graduating! Your grade will reflect the amount of work and effort you put into this class—Do not ask your professor to “bump up” your grade at the end of the semester. There is no extra credit. Be sure to also pay attention to assignment/exam/quiz due dates/times. Assignments and exams for this class typically close/are due by 11:59pm on the assigned day (see the Syllabus calendar).

2) Class Participation:  Being an Active Learner also means that you are participating in class—in a non-online class, this would include attendance, but for an online class, this means that you are keeping up with your assignments, and logging into our class Blackboard site regularly. If you have to miss an assignment due to a documented emergency, contact your professor. If you miss three assignments in a row without contacting the professor, you may be dropped from the class for non-participation. Blackboard has a feature that allows professors to view the level of student activity in the course.

3) Biographical Paragraph:  Students will be required to post a biographical paragraph (minimum of 100 words total) within the Discussion Board. The purpose of this assignment is to introduce yourself to the class—what is your name, where are you from, what you want to do with your degree when you graduate, your goals, etc. You can include a picture
of yourself if you wish. Do not attach your Bio as a Word doc—just type your bio in the box provided. Remember—this posting will be within the Discussion Board and will be viewable by all of your fellow class members, so don’t post anything that you feel is too private to share! Detailed instructions including grading information will be posted within Blackboard (Instructions button and Discussion Board button).

4) Discussion Questions: Discussion Questions can be accessed by clicking on the “Discussion Board” button in Blackboard. Post your answers to each discussion question within the Discussion Board. Each original Discussion Board post must be a minimum of 400 words in length. You are also required to post a reply to at least one other students’ posting. Click on their post, read it, and hit the “reply” button. **This is your chance to interact with your fellow students.** Remember to be respectful when discussing other student postings. Your reply to a fellow-student’s post must be a minimum of 50 words in length (do you agree/disagree with their post and why).

Do not re-type the original questions, and please do not number or bullet-list your answers—Just answer the questions as a comprehensive whole (a mini-essay), and be sure to follow the basic rules of writing (complete sentences, paragraph breaks, correct spelling/grammar, etc.). Adding headings or citations (which you do not need) or your name will not be counted toward the total required word count. Please do not use quotes from the textbook—paraphrase the material—it is always better to use your own words! **Never plagiarize**—plagiarism will result in a zero.

General instructions for using the Discussion Board (how to post) are posted under the “Instructions” button, and detailed instructions for each question, including grading information is posted under the “Discussion Board” button (as well as under the “Instructions” button in printable PDF format). The Discussion Board is set up so that you will not be able to view your fellow student’s posts until you have submitted your original post 1st—in other words, answer the discussion question first and then you will be able to reply to a fellow student. I will not accept emailed assignments.

**Do not plagiarize**—this means you must do your own work and use your own words—never use another student’s work, and never copy from any source. A general guideline is that any more than 5 words in a row is plagiarism. For more information about how to avoid plagiarism, go to: [https://ossja.ucdavis.edu/avoiding-plagiarism-mastering-art-scholarship](https://ossja.ucdavis.edu/avoiding-plagiarism-mastering-art-scholarship)

**Late Work Policy and a Note on Discussion Board Assignments:** You may turn in written work (not quizzes or exams) early, but turning in an assignment early does not guarantee that it will be graded early. Be sure to look carefully at the dates/times that assignments are due—all of this information is in the class Syllabus. Not all online classes follow the same schedule or the same format—each professor is different.

If you miss the deadline for a Discussion Board assignment, you may turn it in in LATE (after the posted deadline), but you will lose 10 points for each day the assignment is late, including weekends. An assignment is considered late even if it is turned in one minute past the deadline. Be sure to double check that your Discussion Board posting was successful—if it is blank I cannot grade it. If you submit the wrong assignment or a blank post, or a “draft” you will lose 10 points, and you will lose additional late points until the correct assignment is submitted (10 per day). **No late work will be accepted after the last official day of class (see the University schedule).**

**Written Work Grading Timeline:** Written work for this class will consist of Discussion Board assignments. Written work may take up to a week to grade. The professor will email all students through Blackboard (and post as a course announcement) when the grades have been entered in Gradebook. All written work receives grading feedback within Gradebook (an explanation for your grade).

5) Quiz: There is a Quiz over the class Syllabus. The quiz will cover general policy information from the class Syllabus. The Quiz consists of 10 multiple choice and true/false questions, and is timed at 10 minutes. You can access the quiz by clicking on the “Quiz” button—the quiz is not open notes/Syllabus. Questions appear all at once and you must complete the quiz in one sitting. The Quiz will automatically close after the time is up whether you have finished or not. You must complete the quiz within the posted date/time range—it will be left open across several days, so you may not take it late.

6) Exams: There are a total of two examinations—A Midterm Exam and a Final Exam. Exams can be accessed by clicking on the “Exams” button in Blackboard. **Exam Reviews** will also be posted under the “Exams” button. Each
exam will consist of 50 multiple choice and True/False questions. The exams are NOT open book/notepad/Internet, etc. Examinations will only be open during the specific dates/times posted within the Syllabus. Students must take and submit their exams within the specified time periods—you may not take them late. Each exam is timed at 50 minutes and must be completed in one attempt—You cannot start the exam and save it and pick it up later—it will automatically close when the timer has run out, even if you have not finished.

The exams automatically tell you when you are running out of time, and if you have left any questions blank. Exams are left open across several days to accommodate differing student schedules. Do NOT wait until the last minute to attempt the exams because you never know when your Internet may go out or your computer may experience problems, or you feel sick, etc. If you have a medical emergency, you must email the professor and provide valid documentation within two days. Take exams using a computer with a fast and reliable Internet connection—do not attempt exams on a Smartphone or tablet device. The exam will close if you navigate outside the exam window. Cheating will be reported to the Dean of Students and result in a zero for the exam.

*A Note on the Quiz and Exams:* The Quiz and each Exam must be completed during the designated time period detailed in the Syllabus. You cannot take exams/quiz late. Be sure to look carefully at the times that the Quiz and the exams open and close—all of this information is in the class Syllabus. Not all online classes follow the same schedule or the same format—each professor is different.

*Contacting the Professor:* Either e-mail me at Deborah.Hartley@utrgv.edu or call my office at 956-882-7266, or come to my office during scheduled office hours. I will be sending out class e-mails throughout the semester using Blackboard. If you e-mail me, I will always reply promptly (typically within 24-48 hours) to let you know that I received your e-mail. I do not check my UTRGV e-mail through my personal cell phone, meaning, be patient. If you do not receive an e-mail reply from me within 24-48 hours, your e-mail did not reach me. Remember—UTRGV only uses official UTRGV emails—be sure you are using and checking your official UTRGV email (so in other words, no emails will be sent to your gmail, yahoo, etc.). This is your responsibility—you don’t want to miss important deadlines or other class announcements.

**GRADING:**

*Detailed expectations and grading guidelines will be given to students within each assignment instruction sheet. Detailed instruction sheets will be posted for each assignment under the “Instructions” button in Blackboard. Instructions for each Discussion Question can also be found under the “Discussion Board” button. Contact me if you have any questions. There is no extra credit in this course.*

*Follow your grades using Gradebook in Blackboard. Assignments for this class will be graded using numbers on a 100 point scale, but each assignment will be given a different weight (percentage), which will be used to determine your final course grade. Your final course grade will not be based on total points—it will be calculated in Gradebook using grade weights/percentages (see the column in Gradebook called Final Grade %):*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Assignment Weight/%:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biographical Paragraph</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabus Quiz</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam:</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam:</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions (3):</td>
<td>27% (3 at 9% each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100% Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**University Grading Scheme:**

A = 100-90
B = 89-80
C = 79-70
D = 69-60
F = 59 and below
UTRGV—UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
Students with a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects academic performance) who would like to receive academic accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible to schedule an appointment to initiate services. Accommodations can be arranged through SAS at any time, but are not retroactive. Students who suffer a broken bone, severe injury or undergo surgery during the semester are eligible for temporary services.

Pregnancy, Pregnancy-related, and Parenting Accommodations:
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination, which includes discrimination based on pregnancy, marital status, or parental status. Students seeking accommodations related to pregnancy, pregnancy-related condition, or parenting (reasonably immediate postpartum period) are encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services for additional information and to request accommodations.

Student Accessibility Services:
Brownsville Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at ability@utrgv.edu. Edinburg Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at ability@utrgv.edu.

MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATION PERIOD:
Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (http://my.utrgv.edu); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Online evaluations will be available on or about:
Full Spring Semester: April 10 – May 1

ATTENDANCE:
Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and may be dropped from the course for excessive absences. UTRGV’s attendance policy excuses students from attending class if they are participating in officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Students should contact the instructor in advance of the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations.

SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY:
As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, and VIOLENCE:
In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “Responsible Employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect that is free from sexual misconduct and discrimination. If students, faculty, or staff would like confidential assistance, or have questions, they can contact OVAVP (Office for Victim Advocacy & Violence Prevention) at 665-8287, 882-8282, or OVAVP@utrgv.edu.
COURSE DROPS:
According to UTRGV policy, students may drop any class without penalty earning a grade of DR until the official drop date. Following that date, students must be assigned a letter grade and can no longer drop the class. Students considering dropping the class should be aware of the “3-peat rule” and the “6-drop” rule so they can recognize how dropped classes may affect their academic success. The 6-drop rule refers to Texas law that dictates that undergraduate students may not drop more than six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six-course drop limit. The 3-peat rule refers to additional fees charged to students who take the same class for the third time.

STUDENT SERVICES:
Students who demonstrate financial need have a variety of options when it comes to paying for college costs, such as scholarships, grants, loans and work-study. Students should visit the Students Services Center (U Central) for additional information. U Central is located in BMAIN 1.100 (Brownsville) or ESSBL 1.145 (Edinburg) or can be reached by email (ucentral@utrgv.edu) or telephone: (888) 882-4026. In addition to financial aid, U Central can assist students with registration and admissions.

Students seeking academic help in their studies can use university resources in addition to an instructor’s office hours. University Resources include the Learning Center, Writing Center, Advising Center and Career Center. The centers provide services such as tutoring, writing help, critical thinking, study skills, degree planning, and student employment. Locations are:
- Learning center: BSTUN 2.10 (Brownsville) or ELCTR 100 (Edinburg)
- Writing center: BLIBR 3.206 (Brownsville) or ESTAC 3.119 (Edinburg)
- Advising center: BMAIN 1.400 (Brownsville) or ESWKH 101 (Edinburg)
- Career center: BCRTZ 129 (Brownsville) or ESSBL 2.101 (Edinburg)

UTRGV CJ Student Learning Outcomes: *1-4 do not all apply to every class. The SLOs are set by the CJ Department.
1. Demonstrate knowledge of the structure, operations, and practices of the major components of the criminal justice system, which includes police, courts, corrections, and law.
2. Explain the fundamentals of research methods and statistical techniques used in criminal justice research.
3. Apply critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, and communication skills through classroom assignments.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of criminological theory and crime control techniques.

*A Note on the Readings: The Belbot et al. textbook is our main textbook, and we will go in order from Chapter 1 to Chapter 11. I have assigned readings from the del Carmen textbook that correspond with the Belbot textbook, so you will need to go back and forth in the del Carmen textbook (instead of reading it straight through)—all page numbers are given below. For example, the Belbot textbook discusses the death penalty in Chapter 2, but the del Carmen textbook does not discuss it until Chapter 4. Also, because many of the U.S. Supreme Court cases you will be asked to read about deal with more than one issue, you may be asked to read the same case more than once (see below). Additionally, not all of the cases mentioned in the Belbot textbook are required reading in the del Carmen Briefs textbook—Use the Midterm/Final Exam Reviews to focus your reading/studying. Exam Reviews are posted under the “Exams” button in Blackboard, and PowerPoint outlines from the Belbot textbook are posted under the “PowerPoints” button.

****Course Schedule/Calendar: TBA (1st day of class)