



the university of south dakota.

Welcome to

CRIMINAL LAW
CJUS/POLS 431/531

August 2009

Dear Students,

Welcome to an introductory course on criminal law. I appreciate your enrolling in this course and hope it will serve you well.

This course format emphasizes online interactive discussion. **It is not an independent study course.** While communication among students will be required, autonomous learning will also be an important part of your experience in this course. This course is a study of the criminal law system in the United States, with all of its strengths and weaknesses. Although some of you may choose to go on to law school or pursue a career in criminal justice, the course is designed for any student interested in understanding the fundamentals of criminal law regardless of career plans.

You will find detailed information about the course requirements in the syllabus. Please familiarize yourself with the syllabus as well as the course requirements and assignments.

Getting Started: This semester we will be using the Desire 2 Learn (D2L) course management software. Please note that you will not have access to your course in D2L until the first day of class. If you have questions before the class start date, please do not hesitate to contact me via USD's web email system. My email address is: Mike.Martinez@usd.edu. Alternatively, you can contact me at jmikemar@aol.com.

The South Dakota Board of Regents (SDBOR) will send you a password and login id prior to the course start date. **It will be important that you log into the course D2L site on the first day of class.** USD's Continuing Education department will send additional information on how to log into the course. Please be sure to check your USD email account regularly for communication regarding this course.

D2L/Online Orientation: If this is your first online course at the University, I would suggest that you review the new student guides for online learning. They have valuable information to help you be successful as an online learner, as well as necessary information on how to log-in if you are not familiar with USD's D2L environment. The new learner guide can be found at <http://www.usd.edu/ce/Orientation.pdf> and the guide to access D2L can be found at <http://www.usd.edu/ce/AccessingD2L.pdf>.

Getting to Know You: I would like to get know each of you as the course begins. This can be done in the "Introductions" discussion forum within the D2L course. I made the first entry and I would like each of you to enter one.

Technology Requirements: The University has established minimum hardware and software requirements to ensure the effective delivery of online courses. Those requirements are listed in the student guide found at the URL <http://www.usd.edu/ce/Orientation.pdf>. Further, I will ask that you submit all of your assignments to me in the appropriate folder within the D2L course dropbox, so you will need to know how to do this.

Online Autonomous and Collaborative Learning: Both autonomous and collaborative learning is an important learning strategy for this course; it promotes authentic learning as students learn to take responsibility for their own learning and learning with and from each other. These strategies are particularly important in this course because we will not be meeting face-to-face. Please follow the basic netiquette rules listed in the student guide found at URL (<http://www.usd.edu/ce/Orientation.pdf>).

Contact Information: If you have any questions or concerns about the course, please feel free to e-mail me at Mike.Martinez@usd.edu or call me at (770) 207-8890. **Once the course begins, please contact me through D2L email** since that allows me to track all course-related messages throughout the semester. I will strive to respond to all such messages within 48 hours or less.

I look forward to working and learning with you this semester.

Sincerely,

J. Michael Martinez
Part-Time Instructor