**Plea Bargaining Key Terms**

1. Plea – an accused’s response in court to the charges made against him or her
2. Plea Bargain – formal agreements between the prosecution and defense concerning the defendant’s offering of a guilty plea in exchange for some form of sentencing leniency
3. Guilty Plea – a defendant’s formal affirmation of guilt to the charges contained in a complaint, information, or indictment, in which the defendant claims that he or she committed the offenses listed
4. Not Guilty Plea – a defendant’s formal answer to the charges in a complaint, information, or indictment, in which the defendant states that he or she has not committed the offense(s) as charged
5. *Nolo Contendere* – a plea of “no contest” to charges
6. No Contest – same as nolo contendere in that the defendant does not contest the charges. The effect is the same as a guilty plea, except the plea cannot be used against the defendant as an admission in any subsequent civil proceeding arising out of the same offense.
7. Prosecutorial Discretion – the decision-making power of prosecutors based upon the wide range of choices available to them in the handling of criminal defendants, the scheduling of cases for trial, and the acceptance of bargained pleas
8. Arraignment – the official proceeding in which a defendant is formally confronted by criminal charges and enters a plea, and a trial date is established
9. Alford Plea – a guilty plea by a defendant who claims innocence