Instructor: Chris Kroh  
Course: POLS 104: American Government and Politics (3 Credit Hours)  
Summer 2014: MTWR, 10:00am-12:05pm, Room (See Campus)  
Office Hours: (UW-Marathon) 9:00-9:50 and 1-2, Monday thru Thursday in Room 340  
(UW-Marshfield): By Appointment in Room 325D  
Phone: 715-389-6554 (UW-Marshfield), 715-261-6257 (UW-Marathon)  
Email: christopher.kroh@uwc.edu  

COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION  
Analysis of the decision-making structure and processes of American national government, including the role of parties and interest groups, and the value preferences within American society which affect the formation of public policy.

COURSE THEMES  
This course is designed to introduce students to the principles underlying the development, organization, and function of the American political system. We will review and critique U.S. cultural, economic, and social institutions. Accordingly, the goal of the course is to ensure that students come away not only with a greater understanding of how the federal government functions, but also to develop the analytical skills necessary to effectively interpret the impact of the federal government and the broader political system in daily life. This will be accomplished by not only a review and discussion of the material concerning each branch of government and the key socio-economic actors in American politics, but also through completion of current event reports, civic projects, exams, discussion and group exercises.

REQUIRED READINGS  
The 10th Edition of “We the People: A Concise Introduction to American Politics” by Thomas Patterson is the formally assigned reading.

DEPARTMENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS COURSE  
1. expose students to the basic institutions and processes of American government  
2. help students analyze the Constitution, its origins and implications, as the foundation of American government and politics  
3. assist students to deconstruct the sources and distribution of power, as well as the implications of power on politics and policy outcomes  
4. detail the roles, activities, and composition of political parties, interest groups, and key actors in civil society  
5. offer students insight into the decline of civic engagement, its causes and consequences, in the context of the health and vitality of American democracy  
6. describe and compare mainstream social science models that are used to explain democracy in America, including, but not limited to, behavioralist, structuralist, and pluralist-elitist models  
7. scrutinize the impact and implications of identity politics including race, gender, religion, and class, on political behavior, policy formation, and power distribution  
8. define and interpret modern American political ideologies  
9. identify and analyze contemporary issues in American government and politics
ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT
Grading Assessment for this course will consist of the following:
Mid Term Exam: 25%
Final Exam: 25%
Civic Project: 20%
Current Event: 10%
Attendance/Participation: 10%
Assignments (2) 10%

GRADING SCALE
A  94-100  C+  77-79  D-  60-62
A-  90-93  C  73-76  F  0-59
B+  87-89  C-  70-72
B  83-86  D+  67-69
B-  80-82  D  63-66

EXAM FORMAT
The exam format will consist of two sections: short ids and an essay with each contributing toward fifty percent of the exam grade. The id section will consist of ten terms of which five must be answered (best five answers are counted toward the grade) with each answer worth ten points. Answers should be approximately five to seven sentences in length and should describe the id in full detail as possible while also providing relevant analysis. Finally, students will select one essay from among two options which will be worth fifty points or half of the exam grade. Answers should be approximately the front and back of one page in length and should entail a broader application of the approach to answering ids but with a greater emphasis placed upon analysis. A study guide will be emailed to everyone approximately one week prior to the exam. It will contain 2-3 potential essay questions and roughly 20-30 potential short ids. Exam material will be drawn from the course text and lectures (the outlines of which will be emailed after each class), as well as from class discussions and group projects.

CIVIC PROJECT
Instead of a traditional research paper, students will be responsible for completing an individual project encompassing civic participation. The goals of the project are to put the material introduced in the course into practice and to encourage civic responsibility. Students may select any topic related to the role of the federal government in any domestic or foreign policy area. Topics must be approved by the instructor (please refer to due dates below and to the course schedule). Papers must be submitted via hard copy during class and should be 7-9 (numbered) pages in length, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12 inch font, and with one inch margins. Students should identify and properly cite a minimum of 4 sources with at least one source consisting of student civic participation or an interview associated with the topic. The extent and form of participation are completely left up to the student. For example, a student may decide to volunteer for a community organization, while yet another may start a petition or conduct a survey. Interviews may target elected and bureaucratic officials, community/international activists, or persons directly impacted by or who have extensive knowledge of the selected topic. Videos of interviews, speeches, or containing advocacy content may be considered.
In addition, a separate title page and works cited page must accompany the paper. Papers should not only provide background information but must also include analysis—from the author and from additional sources. The paper should consider the importance of the topic and offer a solution(s) to the related problem or challenge. The introduction should address why the question is important and place the topic in context. I will review rough drafts as time permits. The paper assignment in total will be worth 100 points or 20% of the semester grade. Papers will be assessed according to the following criteria: Coherent Writing/Sentence Structure, Proper Grammar & Spelling, Organization, Accuracy of Content, Quality and Quantity of Analysis, and Proper and Effective Use of Citation.

**PAPER DUE DATES:**
Research Topic: July 29
Final Draft: August 5

**POTENTIAL PAPER TOPICS**
Divided Government: Successes & Failures
Solving the Fiscal Crisis
Role of the Federal Government & Education or Health Care
Foreign Policy Challenge
Review a Recent Federal Court Case
Civil Liberties in Modern America
Interest Group Profile
Campaign Finance or Electoral Reform
Role of the Federal Government and Energy or Environmental Policy
Track a Political Campaign for Elected Office
INSERT YOUR IDEA HERE!

**PAPER SOURCES**
ABC, CBS, CNN, Fox, and MSNBC are acceptable media sources, but local newspapers or national papers like the Washington Post, Washington Times, The New York Times, USA Today, and the Wall Street Journal may prove more useful as might NPR. The Economist, BBC, Foreign Policy, and Financial Times are excellent resources for foreign policy papers. Legal Journals such as the Harvard Law Review or similar publications may prove useful. Finally, students may consult interest group (NRA, NAACP, etc.) websites or publications for additional information. You may cite the text, dictionaries and encyclopedias but they do not count as sources. WIKIPEDIA IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE SOURCE!

**CURRENT EVENT REPORT**
Current event reports provide the student with an opportunity to offer up-to-date insight into key issues and actors in the American political system. Students in this course will be required to submit a 2-page (see above for format and other guidelines) summary (what, who, etc.) and analysis (why important, relevance to course, and opinion) of key issues relevant to this course, as well as an in-class presentation of their report (not to exceed 2 minutes). Topics must be pre-approved by the instructor at least 24-hours in advance of the due date-the date the student signed-up for the in-class presentation with the report to be turned in as hard copy. Reports will be worth 100 points or 10% of the course grade. A minimum of 1-2 sources are required, but a title page is not required. Assignments should also be two double-spaced pages in length with
similar format requirements as the current event report. More information will be provided in class. Please refer to the calendar for due dates.

**LATE WORK**
Unless a prior arrangement has been worked out with the instructor, five points will be deducted for each day the Civic Project, Assignments, or the Current Event Report is late in addition to overall assessment of the work.

**ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION**
Attendance for this course is mandatory (with roll taken every class session) and will reflect UWC regulations in terms of policy and enforcement (please refer to students’ rights and responsibilities on the UWC website for more information). Unexcused absences in excess of three class periods will result in a reduction of the attendance/participation grade or either an incomplete or withdrawal for the course. In order to ensure a productive semester, student participation will be essential whether through comments, questions and presentation or summarization of course material. To facilitate discussion, we will often break-up into small groups to address key topics (please refer to course schedule for small-group exercises) and then discuss these small-group findings as an entire class. Points will also be subtracted for excessive lateness defined as arriving to class more than five minutes late three or more times.

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**
All students are expected to refrain from cheating, plagiarizing (please refer to in-class discussion of citation rules), and other forms of academic misconduct. Failure to abide by these expectations may result in censure, reduction of grade, course failure, probation, suspension, or expulsion. Each student should consult the “Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities” found on the UWC website for a full description of policy and procedure. Acts of plagiarism include the following:

- Presenting another’s essay or class assignment as one’s own
- Failing to acknowledge the source when repeating another’s wording
- Failing to acknowledge the source when paraphrasing another’s argument
- Failing to acknowledge the source when presenting another’s line of thinking
- Making slight changes in wording from another source so that the passage is not copied word for word.

Note: All laptops, cell phones, smart pads, and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. Texting during class is prohibited. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in a reduction in the student’s participation grade and students may be asked to leave the classroom if the problem persists.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**
After being admitted to UW-Marathon County, students with disabilities should make an appointment with Annette Hackbarth-Onson in the Office of Student Affairs (room 150) to discuss their specific needs. Individual assistance is available in planning a manageable schedule. Special effort will be given to provide for a quality university experience. For more information or to schedule a time to take an exam please call 715-261-2643.
CALENDAR (Based on a Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday Schedule)

July 7: Syllabus Review and Introduction

July 8: U.S. Constitution
Reading: Chapter Two

July 9: U.S. Constitution
Group Project: What amendment (if any) should be added to the U.S. Constitution? You will work in groups and propose a constitutional amendment which will then be voted on by the entire class. I will provide suggestions.

July 10: Federalism
Reading: Chapter Three

July 14: Federalism
Reading: Chapter Three
Group Project: What issues are best resolved at what level of government? Once more in groups, you will consider a range of issues and then decide which level (federal, state, or local) is best equipped or appropriate to take the lead on each.

July 15: Civil Liberties
Reading: Chapter Four

July 16: Civil Liberties (Assignment 1 Due: Pg. 145)
Reading: Chapters Four & Five
Reading: Obama calls for significant changes in collection of phone records of U.S. citizens
Audio of Oral Arguments in Supreme Court on Greece v. Galloway

July 17: Judiciary Branch
Reading: Chapter Fourteen

July 21: Mid-Term Exam Review

**July 22: Mid-Term Exam**

July 23: Congress
Reading: Chapter Eleven

July 24: Congress
Group Project: You will be divided up into the House and Senate and consider legislation. Your proposals will then go to a conference committee and return to each chamber for a final vote.

July 28: Executive Branch
Reading: Chapter Twelve

July 29: Elections (Paper Topics Due)
Reading: Chapter Seven and Chapter 12: Pgs. 399-407

July 30: Elections
Group Project: What electoral reforms would you make? In groups, you will consider proposals ranging from term limits to abolishing the Electoral College.
Assignment 2 Due: Please refer to email attachment

July 31: Political Parties
Reading: Chapter Eight

August 4: Interest Groups
Reading: Chapter Nine

August 5: Domestic Policy (Papers Due)
Reading: Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen

August 6: Foreign Policy
Reading: Chapter Seventeen

August 7: Final Exam Review

August 8: Final Exam