The University Committee for the Advancement of Teaching (UCAT) is pleased to offer curriculum development opportunities to faculty for 2015-2016. Grants can be used to support significant curricular development activities related to either new course/curriculum creation or course/curriculum revision. Additionally, the committee will accept applications for the purchase of pedagogical and/or classroom materials that are essential to either a new or existing course.

All full-time faculty members are eligible to apply. Grant applications are due to your college representative by April 1, 2016 and the final application is due to UCAT (submit to unofacdev@unomaha.edu) by April 15, 2016. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

2015 – 2016 UCAT College Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College of Arts and Sciences</th>
<th>David Peterson</th>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
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Notes

- All applications MUST be reviewed by your UCAT college representative and the final applications submitted to UCAT via e-mail to unofacdev@unomaha.edu
- You may elect to receive funds for materials (e.g. books, software licenses) for either course development or classroom instruction, receive funds as a lump-sum summer stipend, or a combination of both. Note: stipends will require standard tax deductions.
- Routine course maintenance (changes to syllabus for new textbook edition, CCMS data entry, etc.) will not be considered for funding.
- Applications submitted to the full UCAT committee will not be returned for revision and resubmission; poorly described, incomplete, or unclear applications will be rejected.
- Budgets should be as complete and accurate as possible.
- Sample applications and the rubric used by the committee to review applications is available at the UCAT Curriculum Development Grant webpage (http://cfe.unomaha.edu); please review before submitting your grant application to your UCAT representative.
- Faculty may only receive one UCAT Curriculum Development grant per academic year.
If your proposal is accepted, you are responsible for submitting two separate reports including:

- An initial report of 2-3 pages describing the work completed as a result of the curriculum development funding will be due by August 31, 2016.
- A final report of 2-3 pages describing the implementation of your curriculum development project, including learning outcomes and student feedback is due at the end of the semester in which the new or revised course is offered.
Applicant Information

Name Gregory A. Petrow

Faculty position: Associate Professor

Campus phone: 4-3991

Office address: ASH 208

E-mail: gpetrow@unomaha.edu

Department/School: Political Science

College: Arts and Sciences

If team, please complete the following:

Team Leader(s):

Team Members:
(graduate students may be members of the team but cannot be the primary recipients of UCAT funding)

Have you received a UCAT Curriculum Development Grant in the past?  _____ Yes  ___X___ No
If yes, please describe in less than 250 words how your UCAT funding has affected your teaching and/or student's learning experiences.

Signature of Department Chair/School Director: ________________________________

Date Submitted to UCAT Representative: ________________________________

Curriculum Development Information

Course(s) Name and Number: Stand-Up Politics PSCI 4010

Please mark appropriate line:  ___X___ New Course Proposal  _____Significant redesign of existing course or curriculum
**Budget**  
(List Requests at left; add more lines as necessary)

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<th>Item</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stipend</td>
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<td>Development Materials</td>
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<td>Classroom Materials</td>
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TOTAL $1,000

**Less other funding** (specify sources and amounts)

TOTAL UCAT REQUEST $1,000

*maximum UCAT award is $1,000*

**Rationale for the Grant Proposal**

*For curriculum development, applicants should carefully and clearly establish the rationale for type of funding requested.*

I am seeking funding to develop the course, “PSCI 2010: Stand-Up Politics.” I attended graduate school with a friend of mine, who became a professor. We discussed a class he had developed for the honors program, called, “Stand-Up Politics.” The idea of developing the course here percolated in my mind over the years. He contracted a terminal illness and is now too ill to share course materials with me, but I still recollect our conversations about the course and I seek to develop it for our students, here.

The course is motivated by the continuing blurring of the line between entertainment and public affairs. Examples abound. As I write this, the leading candidate for the Republican nomination for U.S. President has never held elected office, and is probably best known for hosting a reality television show. And of course, *The Daily Show* created a new style of television, combining information about public affairs with comedy.

The grant will support my efforts over the summer to develop this course. I will spend a good deal of time doing so, and I would like to receive some financial support for these efforts. There are voluminous amounts of materials available that are explicitly related to the topic (that is, academic books and articles about comedy and politics), and an almost unlimited amount of material that constitutes the topic itself – political comedy. There is even a quantitative scientific literature in the field of American political behavior concerning how political humor in late night televisions affects attitudes and behaviors.

More than anything, I will thoughtfully and carefully parse through the academic and non-academic material alike, to create a course.
The course, while called “Stand-Up Politics,” will cover the topic of comedy and politics, broadly speaking. The course will feature many stand-up comics, but include material from all genres of comedy, including writing. The course will start with a study of where comedy comes from – theories of why humor exists in the first place. We will assess these theories throughout the semester as we encounter comedic material and review the relevant academic material. And we will consider politically relevant topics of comedy, such as gender, race, and class. There is even comedy that is relevant to public policy (such as Chris Rock’s gun control solution, which is to tax bullets).

For stipends, describe the proposed activities clearly, addressing both the scope of the activities, the action steps you will take, and expected outcomes.

My first action step will be to catalog the academic literature on the topic, developing a course bibliography with an eye toward materials I will bring into the classroom for reading and discussion. There are academic books about comedy and politics (such as The Stewart/Colbert Effect: Essays on the Real Impacts of Fake News; or, Laughing Matters: Humor and American Politics in the Media Age). I will review all of the relevant academic literature, from books to journal articles. The expected outcome is that I will end up with a rich source of material to select from. I expect this to be completed by the end of June.

My second step will be to locate and review relevant syllabi from other courses. This will reveal to me if I missed any academic literature, and it will give me ideas as to what non-academic sources to use. Naturally, I already have some ideas about the non-academic content. I will organize the different weeks around themes, and such as gender and politics. The value and meaning of gender identity is fraught and contentious in the popular culture (Donald Trump, anyone?), and nowhere is that more clearly the case than in comedy. Considering how the comedy of Andrew Dice Clay (a misogynist comedian from the ‘80s) compares to that of Amy Schumer could allow for provocative and insightful juxtapositions of gender norms and attitudes. And then an interesting question in and of itself is – how are attitudes toward gender, that lack explicit political references or meanings, political? Are they political? What does it mean to contend that something is “political,” when it is not explicitly so? I expect this step to be completed by the end of the first week in June.

My third step will be to review the non-academic material. There is obviously a lot of it. This will include viewing comic performances. It seems to me I will need to be exposed to dozens of them before I can select the ones I wish to include in the course. Some of them I have already seen and I have ideas about, but there are still others I need to seek out. I will develop discussion questions and lectures related to the material, including the performances. I will develop analytic assignments. For example, there will be an essay assignment regarding how theories of where humor originates from are supported, or not supported, by the humorous material we view.

I will identify course material from the syllabi I have reviewed, from my conversations with colleagues, and from my own background and knowledge base. With the blossoming of the Internet, a massive amount of the material is available for free, on-line. In addition, I have my own personal materials I have accumulated over the years. And many materials are available through the library. This should all be done by the end of July.

The fourth step will be to design the course; in other words, write the syllabus, the assignments, and pick the course materials. I will organize the course in terms of units – such as one on comedy, gender and politics. I will develop the assignments, such as the essay assignment on how theories of humor relate to the comedic material we experience. I will develop the lectures, such as ones about theories of gender, race and power. And then I will discuss how these theories may overlap with theories of
comedy. I can lead students through discussion exercises in which we predict what kind of racial comedy we might see given theories of both where comedy comes from, as well as theories of power. For example, Freud predicts that comedy is used to express unconscious tension concerning taboo topics. If whites are unconsciously uncomfortable with their own racial thoughts and attitudes, how might white comedians tap into this to create humor? Or even, black comedians, performing in front of white audiences? The course will have the students illustrate the themes in the course through their own comedic oral presentations. This should all be done by the middle of August.

Fifth, in August 2016, I will have completed all of these steps and submit a report to UCAT.

Sixth, I expect to offer the course in fall 2017. I will carefully review the course evaluations to assess the strengths and weaknesses.

Finally, in early spring 2018, I will submit my final report to UCAT, and also the department.

**Explain specifically how you expect your curriculum development activities will enhance the teaching/learning environment at UNO and when you expect to offer the curriculum developed as part of this grant.**

The most concrete way to explain how the curriculum will enhance the teaching and learning environment at UNO is to list the anticipated course themes and learning outcomes. However, I need to explain the underlying course motivations first. The over-arching idea of the course is that in a free society, there is a marketplace of ideas. This marketplace is composed of the widest variety of “goods” – some of which are highly valued (such as the nation, and its symbols), some that are contentious (unfortunately, an example seems to be the value of Islam in American society), and some that are disparaged (such as white supremacists). Group identities are among the most important of these “goods,” because the collective assessment of these identities impacts the lives of the group members. For example, clearly, gays and lesbians have become much more accepted, and this positively impacts millions of lives. How the value and meanings of different group’s identities is conveyed through comedy is an important reflection of these values in the wider society.

With the first theme, we will explore concepts of power, race and gender, and see how the conflicts that these theories describe, play themselves out in comedy.

Second, we will learn about the cultural economy of humor – its production and consumption, how comics use comedy to instruct, as well as how comics address social issues.

Third, how is comedy used to generate or motivate political activism? We can use the Stewart and Colbert “Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear,” which was held on the Mall in Washington D.C. in 2010, as a case study.

Finally, through the study of comedy we will assess the various theories that address how comedy comes about in the first place. For example, Freud writes about comedy as resulting from a release of anxiety when the id and superego are in conflict – violating norms causes tension and anxiety, but comedy produces laughter to release the anxiety.

As far as learning outcomes, students will think analytically (see the themes above), and also improve their writing and oral presentation techniques.

I expect to offer the course in fall of 2017.