

**RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ACADEMIC COURSE OUTLINE**

HMNS 109: Poverty and Society

I. Basic Course Information

A. Course Number and Title: HMNS 109: Poverty & Society

B. New or Modified Course: Modified

C. Date of Proposal: Semester: Spring Year: 2021

D. Effective Term: Fall 2021

E. Sponsoring Department: HSSE

F. Semester Credit Hours: 3

G. Weekly Contact Hours: Lecture: 3
 Laboratory: 0
 Out of class student work per week: 6

H. Prerequisites/Corequisites: None

I. Laboratory Fees: None

J. Name and Telephone Number or E-Mail Address of Department Chair and Divisional Dean at time of approval: Isabel Gutierrez-Bergman, Dept. Chair,
Isabel.gutierrez@raritanval.edu; Patrice Marks, Division Dean,
Patrice.Marks@raritanval.edu

II. Catalog Description (no change)

Pre-requisites: None.

Through the lens of economic class, this course examines the nature and effect of poverty within our communities and within the socio-political structures that surround them. Students will gain familiarity with poverty issues such as people's views of poverty, poverty measurement, the characteristics of the poverty population, underlying causes of poverty, and government programs and policies that address poverty. Various theoretical perspectives are utilized in an effort to understand why particular individuals and families become trapped in the tyranny of generational poverty and what change agents are best able to raise people out of poverty. Questions to be addressed include: Who are the poor?

Why does poverty remain so pervasive? How do economic processes contribute to poverty? Are people from particular racial and ethnic backgrounds or family types inevitably more likely to be poor? What are the effects of gender? Through a process of co-investigation, students assess their own position within a system of structured economic class (poverty, middle-class and wealthy environments) and develop solutions for solving individual, community and systemic problems that contribute to the perpetuation of poverty in the U.S. Assessment, analysis, and planning for change are key components of the course.

III. Statement of Course Need

The course is designed for two groups of students. Under-resourced students will find that the course directly addresses the complex economic and social hurdles that they face daily, and resourced students with a concern for social or economic justice will learn about poverty from those who experience it first-hand and have an opportunity to support individuals seeking to escape it. A goal of the course is to provide the under-resourced students with both the knowledge and the social support—during and after the completion of the semester—to assist their escape from poverty and to provide the resourced students with the knowledge and the capacity to help reduce the poverty of individuals they know and the community they live in. This course is designed to inform and support local and national efforts to improve college outcomes for students across economic and social classes facing barriers to success.

- A. This course requires no lab components.
- B. Course transferability
 1. This course may transfer as a General Education course in Social Science and Global & Cultural Awareness (Pending)
 2. This course generally transfers as a free elective.
 3. This course generally transfers as a human service program elective.

IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum

- A. Free Elective (This applies automatically to all college level credit courses in the College.)
- B. This course serves as a General Education course in Social Science and Global & Cultural Awareness (Pending)
- C. This course meets a program requirement for Human Services/Pre-Social Work, A.S. degree and certificate options.
- D. To see course transferability: a) for New Jersey schools, go to the NJ Transfer website, www.njtransfer.org; b) for all other colleges and universities, go to the individual websites.

V. Outline of Course Content (no change)

- A. Sociological perspectives on the causes of poverty

- B. Economic disparity and the widening of the rich/poor gap
- C. The hierarchical structure and the hidden-rules of economic class
- D. The role of language, discourse patterns and story structure in framing socioeconomic class
- E. The driving force of middle-class rules upon the orientation of societal institutions, with primary focus upon institutions of higher education and the human services system
- F. The role of institutional sexism and racism in the maintenance of poverty
- G. The inter-relationship between college, resources, and economic class
- H. The development of human and social capital on the campus and in the community
- I. Fostering of student engagement with social capital on the campus and in the community

VI. General Education and Course Learning Outcomes

A. General Education Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens (GE- 5)
2. explain why an understanding of differences in people's backgrounds (e.g. education, race, ethnicity, gender, social and economic status) is particularly important to American society (GE-8)
3. utilize technology to research topics, organize information, and cite sources on macro system issues impacting poverty in society (GE 1*, IL*)
(*Embedded critical thinking)

B. Course Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. demonstrate a basic sociological knowledge of the causes and effects of poverty in the U.S.
2. describe the hidden rules of economic class within each hierarchical structure: poverty, middle class, wealth, and their relevance to success in the academic environment
3. describe resources needed for well-being and self-sufficiency across diverse individuals and groups in society
4. identify solutions to affect systems change related to each cause of poverty at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
5. critically evaluate one's self in relationship to resources, well-being and self-sufficiency to develop a personal action plan to build social capital and personal resources relevant to academic and personal success.

C. Assessment Instruments

1. essays (midterm and final exam)
2. weekly journals
3. personal planning document
4. presentations

VII. Grade Determinants

- A. essays
- B. projects
- C. exams
- D. presentations
- E. class participation
- D. journals

Primary formats, modes, and methods for teaching and learning that may be used in the course:

- A. lecture/discussion
- B. small-group work
- C. student oral presentations
- D. documentary films
- E. personal reflection

VIII. Texts and Materials

Required Text

Ehrenreich, B. (2011 or 2001). *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Shipler, D. K. (2004). *The Working Poor: Invisible in America*. Alfred A. Knopf: New York, NY. (ISBN 0-375-70821-9).

Students are required to both paperback books for this course. Additional required readings will be provided to students electronically or hardcopy (distributed in class).

Suggested Supplemental Readings

Desmond, M. (2016). *Evicted: Poverty and the Profit in the American City*. New York: Crown Publishing.

DeVol, P. and Krodel, K. (2010). *Investigations into Economic Class in America*. aha! Process, Inc.

- Edin, K. and Kefalas, M. (2011). *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood before Marriage*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Gaffney, K. (2018). *Dismantling the Racism Machine: A Manual and Toolbox*. New York and London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.
- Giffords, E. D., and Garber, K. R. (eds.). (2014). *New Perspectives on Poverty: Policies, Programs and Practice*. Chicago, Illinois. Lyceum Books, Inc.
- Goldrick-Rab, S. (2016). *Paying the Price: College Costs, Financial Aid, and the Betrayal of the American Dream*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Hinton, E. (2016). *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press Iceland, John. 2012.
- Iceland, J. (2006). *Poverty in America: A Handbook*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Khan, S. R. (2011). *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Lang, K. (2007). *Poverty and Discrimination*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Lareau, A.(2011). *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.
- Moore, W. (2011). *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates*. New York: Spiegel & Grau.
- Putnam, R. D. (2015). *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Reich, R. (2015). *Saving capitalism for the many, not the few*. Random House: New York.
- Stiglitz, J. E. (2012). *The Price of Inequality*. New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Vance, J.D. (2016). *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

(Please Note: The course outline is intended only as a guide to course content and resources. Do not purchase textbooks based on this outline. The RVCC Bookstore is the sole resource for the most up-to-date information about textbooks.)

IX. Resources

- A. Library
- B. Films/video
- C. Computer
- D. Internet access

X. Honors Options [if relevant]

This course is not offered as an Honors option or course at this time.

Revised: 1/7/21

Approved by Dept: 1/21/21