Raritan Valley Community College
Course Outline

HMNS 201 Human Behavior & the Social Environment

I. Basic Course Information

A. Course Number and Title: HMNS 201—Human Behavior & the Social Environment

B. New or Modified Course: Modified

C. Date of Proposal: Semester: Spring  Year: 2008

D. Sponsoring Department: Humanities, Social Sciences & Education

E. Semester Credit Hours: 3 credits

F. Weekly Contact Hours: 3
   Lecture: 3
   Laboratory: 0

G. Prerequisites: Introduction to Psychology (PSYC 103) or Introduction to Social Work & Social Welfare Systems (HMNS 102)

H. Laboratory Fees: N/A

I. Name and Telephone Number or E-Mail Address of Department Chair: Stephen Kaufman, skaufman@raritanval.edu

II. Catalog Description

Prerequisite: PSYC 103: Introduction to Psychology or HMNS 102: Introduction to Social Work & Social Welfare Systems

The course will examine individual, group, organizational and societal theories of human development and their relevancy for social work practice. Each semester students will use the theoretical paradigms to analyze a selected social work or social welfare situation using these perspectives. Fifteen hours of field work/community service will be required.

III. Statement of Course Need

This course is usually one of two courses that serve as an introduction to the field of social work and social welfare for students interested in a bachelor’s degree in social work. All four-year degree programs in social work in New Jersey require the taking of an introductory course in social work during the freshman or sophomore years so that students may begin internships in the junior and senior years. Students transferring into these programs would be unable to graduate within the two years as they would not have
the prerequisites for advanced course work. This course is also an introductory course in two-year Human Service degree programs.

IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum

A. Free Elective
B. This is NOT a General Education course.
C. This course fulfills a requirement in the Human Service Degree programs.
D. Course transferability: This course is widely transferable as a Social Work major course equivalency for BSW programs in the area according to www.njtransfer.com.

V. Outline of Course Content

A. Introduction to Systems Theory
   1. Ecosystems theory
   2. Family systems theory
   3. Ecomaps, Genograms and ecological assessment

B. Values and Ethics in Social Work
   1. NASW Code of Ethics
   2. Hierarchy of Decision-making
   3. Implementation Exercises: Dealing with the ethical dilemma

C. Cultural Differences: Cultural Competence
   1. Self-awareness
   2. Implementation exercises

D. Infancy and Early Childhood
   1. Pregnancy and infertility
   2. Landmarks of Development
   3. Developmental Assessment exercises
   4. Overview of Theories of Psychological Development
   5. The Family Life Cycle
   6. Abuse and Neglect
   7. Assessment exercises

E. Adolescence
   1. Physiological Changes
   2. Erikson’s Life-stage Development
   3. Theories of Moral Development
   4. Theories of Identity Development
   5. Substance Abuse Treatment
   6. Effective Communication

F. Middle Adulthood
   1. Physiological Changes
2. Mid-life crisis: Real or imagined?
3. Mate Selection
4. Sexism

G. Late Adulthood
1. Physiological Changes
2. Cognition
3. Theories of Aging
4. Support Services
5. Programs and Benefits
6. Caregiver Issues
7. Death and Dying

H. Final Project: Application of theories of social work practice to an individual case study developed through Service Learning

VI. Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes

A. Educational Goals
   Students will:
   1. Examine various theories from individual, group, organizational and societal perspectives and evaluate their usefulness for providers of human services (G.E. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6);
   2. Analyze selected ethical dilemma from a service perspective and discuss these issues within the ethical framework promulgated by the National Association of Social Workers (G.E. 1, 2, 5, 6);
   3. Examine the biological, psychological and sociological connections affecting human behavior (G.E. 1, 3, 6);
   4. Develop a deeper understanding of the complexity of selected social problems and the difficulties in finding solutions (G.E. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6).
   5. Use the paradigms and criticisms of them in developing analyzes of selected social problems and case scenarios (G. E. 1, 2)

B. Learning Outcomes
   Students will be able to:
   1. Apply the various theories to assess individual case situations in class and their field placement to identify potential intervention strategies consistent within the social work practice model;
   2. Analyze the multiple factors influencing an individual or societal issue, choose a course of action and present a persuasive argument supporting the decision;
   3. Evaluate and clarify values and ethical dilemmas;
   4. Utilize theories, social work practice models and ethical guidelines in real life situations.
VII. Modes of Teaching and Learning

A. lecture/discussion
B. small-group work
C. library research
D. guest speakers
E. student presentations
F. simulation/role playing
G. student collaboration
H. independent study
I. service learning

VIII. Papers, Examinations, and other Assessment Instruments

A. research papers
B. essays
C. oral presentations
D. active group participation
E. written examination
F. written & verbal analysis of case scenarios

IX. Grade Determinants

A. active participation in class discussions and role plays
B. multiple choice examination of terminology, theories and practice models
C. small group presentation effectively communicating an assigned position regarding an ethical dilemma with potential personal and professional value conflicts
D. completion of 15 hours of service learning
E. written assessment of a real life situation within a social work framework

X. Texts and Materials

A. Suggested Text(s)


NASW Code of Ethics. (Most recent edition).

XI. Resources

A. Library research for oral presentation and brief written report
B. Computer access for preparation of position case summaries
C. Utilization of guest speakers from various disciplines and community services