I. Basic Course Information

A. Course Number and Title: HMNS 207—Social Policy & Politics
   [Formerly Social Welfare Policy & Human Services]

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 Social Work & Social Welfare Systems (HMNS 102), Introduction to Sociology (SOCI 101), or Introduction to Criminal Justice (CRMJ 101)

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

Prerequisites: Introduction to Social Work & Social Welfare Systems (HMNS 102), Introduction to Sociology (SOCI 101), Introduction to Criminal Justice (CRMJ 101)

How does the government decide who gets what, if anything? This course examines social policies in the U.S., past and present, using a social justice framework that asks: who bears the costs, who receives the benefits, does everyone affected by this policy have an equal voice, what are the rules, and ultimately, is this policy fair? Topics covered include theories of poverty, the redistribution of wealth, political philosophies, social security, public assistance, human rights and other timely social policy issues. Students will develop the skills and knowledge necessary to interpret and evaluate the impact of social policies at the local, state and federal level. Of particular emphasis for pre-social work students will be a foundation for playing an
active role in macro level social work as advocates, educators and initiators of social change.

III. Statement of Course Need

This course may be of interest to anyone concerned with the general welfare of society and the public process that shapes social programs and the policies that guide them. For Human Service majors, it builds on the introduction to social work and social welfare systems provided in HMNS 102, by examining the policy making process and the social programs in which human services/social workers are typically employed. This course deals with social justice, human rights and advocacy strategies, focusing on human services and social work intervention at the macro level. This course is one of the three “core courses” that provide the foundation for a Bachelor’s degree in Social Work (BSW).

IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum

A. Free Elective
B. This course 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. (May not be accepted for Social Work credit at Kean University, where Social Policy is considered a 400-level course to be taken in conjunction with field placement.)

V. Outline of Course Content

A. Social Welfare: What is it?
B. Social Justice
   1. Examination of current political issues such as policy initiatives, political campaigns and/or local news items within a social justice framework
   2. Competing political philosophies
C. Politics, Rationalism & Social Welfare
D. The Historical Role of Government
   1. Elizabethan Poor Laws
   2. The New Deal
   3. The Great Society
   4. Civil Rights
   5. Welfare Reform
E. Poverty
   1. Definitions
   2. A livable wage
   3. Poverty Thresholds
   4. What the Data Tell Us
F. Theories of Poverty
   1. Examination of poverty programs past and present
2. Analysis of local, state, and national policy initiatives

G. Social Insurance Programs
   1. Social Security
   2. Medicare
   3. Unemployment
   4. Workman’s Compensation

H. Public Assistance
   1. SSI
   2. Medicaid
   3. General Assistance

I. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
   1. Analysis of program components
   2. Review of the Research
   3. Proposed alternatives (student research papers)

J. Health Care Policy
   1. Universal Healthcare
   2. Home-based Healthcare
   3. Intergenerational Equity: An ethical dilemma

K. Human Rights, Social Welfare & Diversity
   1. Marriage Equity and other GLBT policy issues
   2. Immigration Laws and Social Welfare
   3. Women, Men and Equality
   4. No Child Left Behind and Education Reform
   5. Disability Rights, Social Services and Citizenship

VI. Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes

A. Educational Goals
   Students will:
   1. use technology and other information outlets to analyze and synthesize contemporary social policy issues (G.E. 3, 7);
   2. develop the skills necessary for preparing a scholarly research paper (G.E. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7);
   3. increase their understanding of the political forces that have and continue to influence social welfare policies in the United States (G.E. 6);
   4. trace the origins and influences of social welfare policy in the United States on various segments of society (G. E. 1, 6);
   5. analyze issues and share informed judgments about the values and impact of various social policies (G.E. 2, 5);
   6. examine the effects of institutional racism and discrimination on individuals and groups (G.E. 5, 6).

B. Learning Outcomes
   Students will be able to:
   1. conduct research and develop a position paper addressing a contemporary social policy issue
2. identify the rational and political elements of social policy
3. identify the various interests and political perspectives reflected in various policies and policy alternatives
4. engage in informed and active participation in class discussion, effectively communicating their views to others
5. evaluate current social welfare policies and proposed alternatives in terms of costs and benefits impacting various groups in society
6. identify the formal and informal steps involved in the political process

VII. Modes of Teaching and Learning

A. lecture/discussion
B. small-group work
C. guest speakers
D. student collaboration
E. independent study
F. library research

VIII. Papers, Examinations, and other Assessment Instruments

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

IX. Grade Determinants

In order to evaluate achievement of the goals and outcomes listed above, possible grade determinants may include:

A. active participation in class discussions
B. preparation of research papers
C. class presentations
D. midterm and final examinations

X. Texts and Materials

A. Suggested Text(s)


**XI. Resources**

A. Library research for oral presentation and research paper  
B. Computer access for preparation of research paper and field interview summaries  
C. Utilization of guest speakers from various disciplines and community services

Revised 3/31/08