

RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Course Proposal Revision

**I. Basic Course Information**

- a. Course Number and Title: PSYC 222 Community Psychology
- b. Date of Revised Proposal: January 26, 2004
- c. Sponsoring Department: Humanities, Social Sciences and Education
- d. Semester Credit Hours: 3.0
- e. Weekly Contact Hours: Lecture 2.0  
Field Experience: 3 hrs per week
- f. Prerequisites: Introduction to Psychology and permission of instructor
- g. Laboratory Fees: none

**II. Catalog Description**

Prerequisites: Introduction to Psychology and permission of the instructor

Community Psychology focuses on understanding and helping individuals by working to improve the environments and social systems that affect their lives. Topics include community-based treatment approaches, the role of self-help and nonprofessional help, the nature of organizational change and preventive approaches to mental health. This seminar course has a required service learning component to complement the course's academic material. Students will work 3 hours per week either at a community mental health facility or with individuals living in the community under the guidance of a social service organization.

**III. Statement of Course Need**

Many students interested in psychology are particularly interested in understanding psychological disorders. Community Psychology offers a unique perspective within psychology in that the focus is not on diagnosis and therapy but on an approach to understanding the importance of person-environment fit in enhancing optimal development. This is the only elective course based on a significant number of required service learning hours and thus meets the needs of students interested in working within the local community. It also meets the needs of students who are interested in getting a particular "real life" experience within the field of psychology in order to better assess their professional interests.

**IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum**

- A. Community Psychology is a:
  - Free elective
  - Social Science elective
- B. This course has been granted 300-level transfer status at Rutgers and has been accepted at several other colleges. Checking with Advising and Counseling is suggested as some institutions may grant non-specific transfer credit.

## **V. Outline of Course Content**

- A. Philosophical roots, historical trends and the central thesis of community psychology
- B. The ecological model: person-in-context
- C. Prevention
- D. Crisis and coping
- E. Social support and self-help
- F. Consultation
- G. Program evaluation
- H. Community change, politics of intervention and empowerment
- I. Strategies for change
- J. The future of Community Psychology

## **VI. Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes**

- A. Goals:
  1. The student will demonstrate
    - a. an appreciation for the many forces that work for and against optimal psychological functioning (G.E. 1,3,12)
    - b. understanding of the obstacles faced by individuals who are members of a group marginalized by the larger society (G.E. 3,4,10)
- B. Outcomes:
  1. The student will:
    - a. describe how various societal and political forces affect the nature of social services (G.E. 4)
    - b. analyze the connections between theory and practice (G.E. 1)
    - c. discuss effectively, conveying both understanding and openness toward another legitimate point of view (G.E. 2)
    - d. compare and contrast the similarities and differences between people with and without serious diagnosable disorders (G.E. 6)

## **VII. Methods of Teaching and Learning**

The following formats, modes, and methods for teaching and learning are appropriate for this course:

- seminar/discussion
- small-group work
- guest speakers
- student collaboration
- field experience is required mode

## **VIII. Papers, Examinations, and other Assessment Instruments**

The following assessment methods will be used:

- essay exams
- journals
- seminar preparation and participation

## **IX. Grade Determinants**

Students will write approximately four (5-8 page) papers, each covering  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the semester's work. The papers will require the demonstration of students' understanding of major theoretical work in the field and the application of such work to other readings as well as their weekly service learning experiences.

- Due to the class size (limited to 15) and seminar format, class participation, in combination with reflective journal writing, will count as an additional exam grade.

## **X. Texts and Materials**

The following (or similar) course materials will be used when the focus of this course is on mental health.

Rogers, C.R. (1961). *On Becoming a Person*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.  
ISBN: 0-395-75531-X

Scileppi, J.A., Teed, E.L. & Torres, R.D. *Common Community Psychology: A Common Sense Approach to Mental Health*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall  
ISBN: 0-13-083341-X

Torrey, E.F. (2001). *Surviving Schizophrenia*. New York: Harper-Collins  
ISBN: 0-06-095919-3

Winerip, M. (1994). *9 Highland Road*. New York: Random House  
ISBN: 0-679-76160-8

## **XI . Resources**

No additional resources are required.