“County and township are not constituted everywhere in the same way, but one can say that the organization of every township and county in the United States everywhere depends on the same idea, viz., that each man is the best judge of his own interest and the best able to satisfy his private needs....In Europe the criminal is a luckless man fighting to save his head from the authorities; in a sense the population are mere spectators of the struggle. In America he is an enemy of the human race and every human being is against him.”

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (c. 1830)

“...[A]lthough [Crestwood Heights] is literally a city built upon a hill, the closest investigation of the terrain from the air would fail to reveal definite boundaries. Should an intruder from outside wander its streets, he would find little, except a slight difference in sign-posts, to distinguish Crestwood Heights from Big City— or from other suburbs near it.”


“Suburbia is...fascinating just because it reveals the ‘eclipse’ of community at one of its darkest moments while still hinting at the light that may follow.”


“The country, of course, was founded by visionaries. ‘We must consider that we shall be a City Upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us,’ John Winthrop told his Puritan company crossing the Atlantic to found the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The remarkable thing was that four centuries later Americans were still self-consciously building cities on a hill.”


“For the first two thirds of the twentieth century a powerful tide bore Americans into ever deeper engagement in the life of their communities, but a few decades ago— silently, without warning— that tide reversed and we were overtaken by a treacherous rip current. Without at first noticing, we have been pulled apart from one another and from our communities over the last third of the century.”

Course Description:
What is community and how do we define it? Do we describe our communities by saying what they are or what they are not? What kind of communities do we create and live in today and who we are within and outside of them? Do our identities shift as we move in and out of various communities in our everyday routines? What 'interaction membranes' define the actual and virtual boundaries of our communities? How are our identities formed by the communities in which we are reared? How do we match those identities to or separate them from the communities in which we live as adults? These are the organizing questions of this course. Overall, we will approach them from the sociological perspective that human character is formed ultimately by the social forces around us as much if not more than by individuals in our lives.

Final Grade: Participation = 20%
Reaction Essays = 40%
Presentation = 20%
Final Paper = 20%

NOTE: Any work which you do not complete will be worth 0 points. Guidelines for all projects will be distributed in advance.

Important Dates:
Feb. 12 (Tues.) = Presentations begin
Feb. 14 (Thurs.) = Reaction essay due
March 20 (Thurs.) = Reaction essay due
April 24 (Thurs.) = Final paper due

Office Location: Maguire 12

Office Hours:
Mon.: 11:15-12:15
Tues.: 11:15-1:15
Wed.: 11:15-12:15

Office Telephone #: (845) 398 – 4387

E-mail: cchurchi@stac.edu
Dr. Churchill’s Web Site: Go to http://stacweb.stac.edu/~cchurchi/ for links to this syllabus (bottom of page), additional course material, and for links to sociology web sites and other sociology courses.

Required Texts (available in STAC bookstore):

[We will read some of these in their entirety; from others we will read only selections.]


Readings to be distributed in class:

*Selections from the following may also be assigned:*


Films & Documentaries:

[Others TBD]

*Capturing the Friedmans* (Director: Andrew Jarecki; 2003; 108 min. Documentary) The Friedman's seem to be a typical family from affluent Great Neck, Long Island. One Thanksgiving, as the family gathers for a quiet holiday dinner, a police battering ram splinters the front door and officers rush inside. The police charge Arnold and his son Jesse with hundreds of shocking crimes. As police investigate, and the community reacts, the fabric of the family begins to disintegrate, revealing questions about justice, family and finally the truth.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- For students to think critically about their communities of origin and their current communities.
- For students to develop an historically and sociologically informed understanding of the meaning of community in American society.
- For students to develop the ability to write in a critical and creative way about community.
- For students to examine their college campus as its own community.
- For students to debate whether their identities are shaped primarily or partially by their communities.
- For students to explore ways in which their identities shift as they move between different community milieux.
Community & Identity
St. Thomas Aquinas College

Requirements & Policies:

1) Participation: You are required to make comments, ask questions, and participate in debate during class sessions.

2) Special Accommodations: If you are entitled to special accommodations such as extra time for testing, in class note takers, etc., it is your obligation to let me know in advance of each test or relevant assignment and to show me proof of your entitlement each time.

3) Reading: To be done as assigned.

4) Papers: Follow guidelines distributed in class. Papers are acceptable in hard copy only.

5) Attendance: Be in class. If you can not attend, explain why. More than three absences will harm your grade. Students who engage in disruptive behavior, who read newspapers, or who sit in a manner indicating they are asleep during class will be marked absent. Coming into class late and leaving early will also be noted and will harm your grade.

6) E-mail: Do not email me with questions about assignments, scheduling, or grades. These must be addressed to me directly in class or during office hours.

7) Cell phones and laptops: Use of cell phones or any other electronic means of communication (email, text messaging, etc.) are prohibited in this class. If you have a laptop which you plan to use during class, you are not permitted to use it for anything other than taking class notes; connecting to the Internet during class is prohibited. If you plan to use a laptop during class for note taking, you are required to see me about this at the beginning of the semester. **Five (5) points will be deducted from your overall semester participation grade for each infraction of these rules.**

8) Grading: The standard in grading all student work in this course can be found in the St. Thomas Aquinas College Catalog; it is duplicated on the next to last page of this syllabus. These standards will be adhered to strictly. It is your obligation and to your advantage to be completely familiar with them. While the STAC grading scale does not include minuses (e.g. A -, B -, C -), my own scale does include these designations. See back of this syllabus for a conversion chart.

All grade questions must be discussed with me in person, not by telephone or by email. Athletic obligations and vacation plans are your burden to accommodate. Tests and due dates will not be altered to fit these external activities. A test missed because of a valid, documented excuse will be replaced with a make up test. Absences without a valid excuse during a test result in 0 points for that test.
WRITING GUIDE

The most important rule to remember in writing papers is to be clear and to the point. If you read your paper aloud to yourself, you will hear whether what you have written is clear or garbled. Reread your written work a couple of times before handing it in. Any sentences or paragraphs which do not make sense to you will make even less sense to me. An excellent guide for clear writing is *The Elements of Style* by Strunk & White. This is a slim and inexpensive paperback available in most bookstores.

The following rules apply to all writing:

1) **Plagiarism: DO NOT PLAGIARIZE.** Plagiarism is a serious offense. If you use anyone else’s writing in your papers without quoting and citing them properly, you will receive an F on your paper and you may receive an F for the entire course. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated under any circumstances in this course.

2) **Format:** All papers must be typed and double-spaced. Do not use excessive margins or font sizes to extend the length of your paper. If you do, your grade will suffer.

3) **Cover Page:** All papers must have a cover page which contains the following: (a) paper title, (b) your name, (c) the course and section for which the paper is written, and (d) the date on which the paper is handed in. The cover page does not count toward the length of the paper.

4) **Numbering:** Number all pages except for the cover page.

5) **Contractions:** Do not use contractions. For example, instead of writing “don’t” or “haven’t” write “do not” or “have not”. Contractions are informal and do not belong in academic writing.

6) **References and Citations:** Any time you quote or reference work which is not your own, you must provide a full citation for that work in a footnote or endnote as well as provide a full bibliographical reference. This pertains to any printed or spoken idea or words you are using which are not your own. If you are quoting a source from the Internet, you are required to provide proof that the source is reliable (that is, show me that it is an academic or mass media source). It is your obligation to prove that any Internet site is a legitimate source of information.

For guides on formatting footnotes, endnotes, and bibliographies, go to the library and locate the citation guidelines of the Modern Language Association (MLA). You may also use *The Chicago Manual of Style* as a guide.
STAC Grading Standards
(Excerpted from College catalogue; emphasis added.)

GRADING SYSTEM

A (94-100%)
Excellent. Indicates unusually high achievement. Students who merit A, in addition to fulfilling the minimum requirements, give evidence of the ability to work independently, read rather widely on their own initiative, organize the materials of the course in relation to its wider implications, give evidence in skill subjects of habitual errorless mastery.

B+ (87-93%)
Very good-superior. Indicates achievement demonstrably above average and an intelligent fulfillment of course requirements in a manner that approaches the excellence of the highest grade.

B (80-86%)
Good. Signifies a consistently high level of achievement and indicates that the course requirements have been fulfilled in an intelligent and above-average manner.

C+ (75-79%)
Very satisfactory. Signifies a more acceptable degree of understanding and consistent achievement than a C. Indicates that a student has mastered the basic course material, attended classes regularly, fulfilled assignments as required, and given evidence of mastery of the skills required for the course.

C (70-74%)
Satisfactory. Signifies acceptable understanding & consistent achievement of quality that satisfies the required graduation grade.

D (65-69%)
Inferior-passing. Indicates understanding and achievement below the average level expected of students and therefore warrants only minimum approval.

F
Failure. Indicates that the student's work does not merit a passing grade.
**GRADING CONVERSION CHART**  
STAC to Dr. Churchill

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAC Letter</th>
<th>STAC %</th>
<th>Dr. Churchill Letter</th>
<th>Dr. Churchill %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 - 100</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>95 - 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 - 93</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 - 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80 - 86</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>84 - 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 - 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>75 - 79</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>75 - 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 - 74</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 - 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>65 - 69</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67 - 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>65 - 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 - 64</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 - 64*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NOTE:*

If you hand in work which earns an F, the percentage equivalent for that F is usually 64%. If you fail to hand in an assignment, the F you receive for it has the percentage equivalent of 0%. In the latter case, the F is technically worth far less than an F for a completed assignment and will have far more damaging consequences for your overall grade. **In all cases of plagiarism and cheating, an F is worth 0% and the violation is recorded in a permanent file in the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Depending on the severity of the incident, you may also fail the entire course.**