“Community” is a central concept in sociology, rife with rich debates about its meaning and relevance for social life. This course will examine the concept of “community” as it informs, shapes, and edifies social inequality. The course will focus on different scales and conceptualization of community (spatially-defined, local, metropolitan, global, race, class, gender, immigrant) and how these conceptions intersect with varying dimensions and types of inequality (e.g., race, class, gender). The course will first investigate the concept of community as it is constituted in the discipline of sociology (and, as you will find out in anthropology, as well), and how the concept came to be located in the study of cities. We will examine the varied ways in which community is defined, measured, and studied. Then we will consider the study of community in its relationship to geographical spaces, social identities, and the social institutions and how the concept is deployed and circulated in its relationship to inequality.

Community is a broad concept around which to frame a course and selection is inevitable to any production. The objectives of the course are to provide a foundational understanding of how community has been studied in sociology while offering a view of the breadth of the concept. Based on the lineage of the concept of community in sociology and anthropology, the first limitation is inbuilt; that is, the readings (as the study of community in sociology and anthropology) are clustered around urban topics. The second limitation is thematic: the weekly themes are jointed and closely aligned in order to dig deeper into the dimensions of community and how it informs inequality. Any limitations of scope, however, should not dissuade you from engaging with those topics that you are eager to discuss. In fact, I hope to learn from and grow with you about more ways to frame the study “community inequality.”

Course Goals:

- Learn the foundational and dominant frames for the study of community in sociology;
- Identify the ways in which the concept of community has been formulated, defined, and measured
- Consider how community informs, shapes, and edifies social inequities.
- Assess different approaches and methods utilized in the study of community
- Critically examine the intellectual and practical promises and limits of the idea of community.
- Develop perspectives and research questions to engage in the study of community

**Diversity Statement**

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING**

I expect you to attend class and to come prepared and ready (may I dare say excited!) to engage in conversation about the week’s readings.

1. **10 Weekly Memo Discussion Questions (10) (30%)**

Asking questions of and to each other is central to the academic enterprise. So, please ask and submit at least one discussion question for eight weeks of the course. You may choose which weeks to submit the questions, just be sure that you’ve completed 8. The discussion questions should be based on the readings and should reflect engagement with, and careful thought about, the readings. As a result, you should consider framing the question with a preamble and brief memo.

Good discussion questions have a perspective. They insinuate links between readings and propose new insights. Think of what is wrong, what you agree with, what can be challenged, what can be defended, and/or what is unexpected in the week’s readings, and ask about it. A good question can lead to a research project, and even to an abundant program of research.

You are to post your questions on Sakai by the MONDAY PRIOR to class, by 5pm. Each week, I will “publish” one or two of the questions in class that best highlight some important and central parts of the readings. These questions will help us navigate the readings and be incorporated in our discussion.

2. **One Critique of the State of the Field Presentation (30%)**

You will prepare a presentation critically discussing the prior week’s readings, adding new material to be considered, and raising questions. The idea is to provide a well-thought-out critique of the readings and discussions of the prior week’s topic. You will choose the week you’d like to be a respondent for, present, and be responsible for facilitating the ensuing discussion.
For these presentations, I encourage you to introduce a piece of your own choosing to add to the discussion. You may choose one of the additional week’s readings, an article (academic, journalistic, or current events), a book, or even a creative literary, art work, or film that illuminates or complements the week’s readings and your critique. Be ready to give sufficient background on the piece so that others can engage with it. You can choose to bring a selection of the piece or an illustration to share, or show a brief clip. I can also suggest readings. Please feel free to consult with me.

4. Final Paper (40%): **DUE in SAKAI DROPBOX on TUESDAY DECEMBER 16**

You will complete a final paper of 18-20 pages. The paper can take different forms, based on what would be most useful to you. You can decide to do a research proposal, an analytic literature review, a theoretical essay examining and combining literatures or identifying new directions or perspectives for racial and ethnic research, or revise an ongoing article or piece with the topics, perspectives, and literatures of the course. A one-page description of the paper topic with five references is **due on October 14**. On the last day of class, you will have the opportunity to briefly present your paper and get feedback and questions that might help completing last-minute revisions to the paper.

**COURSE READINGS**

The following books are required:


Other course readings will be available via Sakai. However, this is a great time to build your personal library, since many of the texts we will be reading are considered classics in the field. You may obtain most of these texts online.
COURSE SCHEDULE

***PART I: COMMUNITY AND SOCIOLOGY***

**WEEK 1:** Sept 2 INTRODUCTION


Nisbet, Robert A. (1993) *The Sociological Tradition* (New Brunswick: Transaction). Ch. 1 “The Units-Ideas of Sociology” (p. 3-20); Ch. 3 “Community” (p. 47-106)

**WEEK 2:** Sept. 9 Community and the Chicago School


Suttles, Gerald (1972) *Social Construction of Communities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press). Ch. 1 “The Natural Community: Its Followers and Revisionists” (p. 3-20); Ch. 2 “Contemporary Urban Communities” (p. 21-110)

**WEEK 3:** Sept. 16 Defining Community


**WEEK 4: Sept. 23 Studying Community**


Rick Granniss: The Importance of Secondary Streets


**WEEK 5: Sept. 30 Promises and Limits in Community and its Study**


**PART II. INEQUALITY AND COMMUNITY**

**WEEK 6: Oct. 7**  
**Race, Ethnicity, and Community**

Jackson, John L., Jr. (2001) *Harlemworld: Doing Race and Class in Contemporary Black America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press). Introduction (p. 1-16); Ch. 1 “Making Harlem Black” (p.17-54); Ch. 2 “Class Histories and Class Theories in a Raceful Social World (p. 55-87); Ch. 5 “White Harlem: Toward the Performative Limits of Blackness” (p. 159-190)


On Rich Benjamin’s “Whitetopia”  

**WEEK 7: Oct. 14**  
**Gender, Sexuality, and Community**


the ‘City of Bachelors’” (p. 131-150); Ch. 9 “Building Gay Neighborhood Enclaves: The Village and Harlem (p. 227-267)


**WEEK 8: Oct. 21 Class, Poverty, and Culture**


**WEEK 9: Oct. 28  Community and/in the “Ghetto”**


**WEEK 10: Nov. 4  The Architecture of Community Inequality**


**WEEK 11: Nov. 11 Class and Privilege Inclusions/Exclusions**


Divided Cities


**WEEK 12: Nov. 18 Community through Borders, Nations, and States**

Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. Chapter I “Introduction” p. 1-8; Ch. 2 Cultural Roots p. 9-38; Ch. 3 The Origins of National Consciousness p. 39-48; Ch. 6: “Official Nationalism and Imperialism”, Ch. 8: “Patriotism and Racism”


**WEEK 13:** Nov. 25 No Class

**WEEK 14:** Dec. 2 Globalization, Community, and New Inequalities


Sassen, S. When the center no longer holds: Cities as frontier zones. J. Cities (2012), http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2012.05.007

Favela chic: http://favelachichosteliguassu.com/


Sassen, Saskia. “Inequality: We need a new word” http://occupiedmedia.us/2012/02/inequality-we-need-a-new-word/


Eric Klinenberg, *Going Solo: The Extraordinary Rise and Surprising Appeal of Living Alone*  
Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*


Sennett, Richard. Una ciudad flexible de extraños / A Flexible City of Strangers. *ARQ* (Santiago)-Arquitectura, Diseño, Urbanismo, Chile, August 2007, Issue 66, p19-23, 5p


**WEEK 15: Dec. 9 Conclusion and Presentations**