



Yale-New Haven
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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2013 Volume II: Immigration and Migration and the Making of a Modern American City

Cityscapes and the American Identity

Guide for Curriculum Unit 13.02.07
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This unit, born out of the immigration and migration seminar and the guiding questions in my American Studies course, will combine real-world actions with historical research. The guiding questions are: What role do cityscapes play in forming our individual and communal identities? What is our role in shaping and reshaping the ever-changing urban landscape? Nineteenth and 20th century New York is the main area of study, but also serves as a comparison for understanding New Haven. In New York, it is evident that the changing value systems of the various classes and ethnicities are revealed through the landscape. Starting with the Five Points and moving through periods of urban renewal to future visions of the city, we will explore the progression and interconnection of landscapes, values, and people. Some poetry, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, along with the films *West Side Story* and *I Am Legend*, can help to hone students' close reading skills and help them evaluate landscapes' role in forming cultural identities and personal identities as well as exposing power dynamics. This will all work toward the students' final project that focuses on a part of the New Haven cityscape or a film that tackles the cityscape.

(Recommended for English and American Studies, grade 11)

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