



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2014 Volume II: Exploring Community through Ethnographic Nonfiction, Fiction, and Film

Defining the American Community: Drama and the Other

Guide for Curriculum Unit 14.02.08
by Eric W. Maroney

This unit explores the concept of community using ethnography and drama. Students will investigate documentary (ethnography-based) theater to examine how authors' choices regarding the representation of community are imbued with political consequence. Students will analyze diction, tone, selection of detail (including costuming and positioning on stage) to determine the implicit and explicit messages an artist is creating when representing a particular community. Students will use this same approach when operating as writers of their own ethnographic monologues, thinking carefully and critically about the ways they choose to represent their subjects. The unit is designed for a grade-12 English course and draws heavily on Marxist, feminist and critical race theories as lenses for investigating literature. The principal texts used in the unit are *Laramie Project* by Moises Kaufman and *Fires in the Mirror* by Anna Deavere Smith.

(Recommended for English, grades 11 and 12)

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