

## Reading Questions for *Electrifying America*

STS.038 Class Discussion: Wednesday, October 18, 2006

- 1) How did electrification change Muncie? And why was Muncie called “Middletown?”
- 2) How did Muncie residents think of electricity versus gas? What were the advantages and disadvantages of each?
- 3) How did consumers encounter electricity? How did engineers and business people?
- 4) What were the different kinds of electrical systems that were built in Muncie?
- 5) Who chose how electrification took place?
- 6) What does Nye mean when he says that “A machine’s social reality is constructed”? (page 85)
- 7) How did electric streetcars change American cities?
- 8) How did streetcars change how Americans *thought about* their cities?
- 9) Was the streetcar an inevitable invention?
- 10) How did the streetcar, as a technological system, get wrapped up in politics? Why?
- 11) What were the different impacts of streetcars in urban versus rural areas?
- 12) Why did trolley companies start building amusement parks? What are the connections between technology, culture, and leisure in industrial America?