

## **COMMUNES, KIBBUTZIM, AND OTHER UTOPIAS (188)**

Mondays, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m., (3 Classes 2/19 thru 3/4) in Room 30

**Tuition \$30**

**Walk-in \$12 Pay prior to the class in the Center 4Life Learning office.**

This course will look at the history of people intentionally gathering together to create a new life, focusing on communes and intentional communities. These organizations often entail some degree of local governance, communal ownership, and cultural cohesion. Some of the communities that will be examined are the Shakers, the Oneida Community, the Amana Colonies, and a surprising number of modern intentional communities in Florida and other states. There will be a specific focus on two of the most well-known groups – the Hutterites in the United States and Kibbutzim in Israel. Some of the specific questions we will be examining are: Why do people want to form these organizations and live in a communal setting? What have been the major problems they have faced over the years such as a reaction against the rule of equal sharing by all members? How have these organizations attempted to solve these issues? What is the future of communes in the U.S. and in the world? Ran Abramitzky, who grew up in a Kibbutz and wrote a book titled *The Mystery of the Kibbutz: Egalitarian Principles in a Capitalist World*, had this to say: “Equality is natural and desirable for many people, but it is difficult to manage in light of the forces that undermine it. The kibbutzim as we know them worked in a moment in time in Israeli history; they might (or might not) be gone in fifty years. But the desire to self-organize in supportive societies will remain.” The course will shine a bright light on our conflicting values. Equal sharing vs. reward for personal effort. Lack of privacy vs. having your own space and possessions. This comes down to the idea of which is more important – the individual who is in a group but maintains their autonomy or the group which consists of individuals but determines their behavior according to the norms of the group?

**Frank Slesnick, PhD** is a Professor Emeritus of Economics at Bellarmine University, where he taught for 30 years. He is Vice-Chair of the Center 4Life Learning and has lived in Kings Point for a number of years.