

AMST 355  
Class and Culture  
M, W, F, 1:00-1:50  
GHH 208  
Fall Semester, 2012  
Roger Williams University

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### **Week of September 3, 2012**

For **Monday September 3**

**Labor Day, No Classes.**

For most Americans today, Labor Day, amounts to the last gasp of summer, before people return to their day to day routines of work, home, and school. Its beginnings had far more to do with recognizing the rights of labor and what we call "the working class".

Most western developed countries celebrate a day for Labor. Almost universally, the day is May 1. Because May 1 had associations with socialism and socialist parties in Europe, an alternate day was chosen in the United States. The Department of Labor has a page on the history of the holiday. The two photos on the website take one to parts one and two of a pro-labor film created in 1946 following the end of World War II.

For **Wednesday, September 5**

Read, in ***Literature, Class, and Culture***,  
*Proud to Work for the University* (Kovacic) 164 - 169  
*Introduction* 1-15.

I want you to read these in the order listed, the Kovacic essay first. I'd like to have you see if the materials you read give you some insight into the purpose of the larger project of which they're a part. For example, does reading Kovacic give you an insight into why the editors of the anthology wanted to write an anthology of this nature?

The quotation with which I began the introduction to this course concludes the essay I'm asking you to read first today. I want to start here because I want to address class issues on the Roger Williams University Campus. Who would be the Roger Williams University equivalent of Bogdan Kovacic?. Think about the specific job Mr. Kovacic held. Think also about similar jobs on this campus. How do our students interact with our equivalents of Mr. Kovacic? Do students treat them differently than they treat other employees of the University—employees like Faculty? In what ways? Do those differences signify anything? Write about this in your journal, and if you know of an anecdote or story which would illustrate this, please include it in

the journal. I'll be asking volunteers to share their ideas with the class.

For **Friday, September 7**

Read, in *Class Matters*:

*Shadowy Lines that Still Divide* (Scott and Leonhardt) 1-26

*Introduction* (Keller) ix-xviii

Before reading anything, take a look at the photos to the left (website). These four people have assigned themselves to particular social classes: One Upper, one Middle, one Working, and one Lower. Guess which is which? After you've assigned them, write briefly in your journal, first indicating which class, and then, indicating the basis of your assignment. Then click on the illustration (website).

How many did you assign to the right slot? The data for each person will give you a capsule bit of information about each. Are there things in their biographies which surprise you.. Are there any of these you would like to assign differently? Which ones, and on what basis? The salary figures are in 2005 terms, You might need to think of adjusting them to 2012 terms. 2012 figures are not available, but you can check the change 2005-2010. The website has a link to an inflation calculator.

Read the other two essays with the idea of compiling a list of reasons why it is important to study social class. I'd like you to also compile a list of assertions these articles make about the social class system in the United States: myths we believe about the class system, and ways in which reality may differ, to greater or lesser degree, from those myths. Note that this book is an anthology, based on the work of many *New York Times* Reporters.

Visit the book's website, and take the quiz. What does it suggest about you? (We'll also complete our discussion of the film,, assuming we're not discussed out.) Write about this in your journal.

### Looking Ahead

- How's Samaritan coming? Are you enjoying it? Have you figured out what New Jersey city appears disguised as Dempsy? Plug ahead on it.
- In my quest to involve you in the shaping of this course, I'd like to have you help me determine which parts of the Anthology to place on the group reading list.

I've prepared a list of all the readings in the Anthology. You'll find it lurking behind the Anthology Survey Button to the left. You'll notice that the readings are divided into four sections.

Here's what I want you to do:

1. Download the list
2. Read the Introductions to each Section:
  - a. Bread, Land, and Station, Work and Class 17-18
  - b. Clothes Make the Woman: The Social Dimensions of Class 179-80
  - c. "Between the Workers and the Owners": Class Conflict 469-70
  - d. Classic or Classy: Art and Class 593 - 94
3. Browse the list and leaf through book, sampling the readings therein
4. Chose the six from each section, mark these on the list, and turn the list in.

I will use this survey to help decide which of the readings to assign.