

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

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Hours M, W, F, 11:00 - 12:00  
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### **Week of October 1**

For **Monday, October 1**

#### **No New Readings.**

We will be spending the day discussing the assignment I have in mind for the novel, *Samaritan*. I've provided some demographic information for you, plus a chance to use some tools to explore the neighborhoods of Dempsey (Jersey City) New Jersey. To prepare for the class, look around and record your thoughts about "Dempsey", and also think a bit about your reaction to one or two of the characters in the book. Record those in the journal, as well.

For **Wednesday, October 3**

**Read, in *Shipler***

#6, *Sins of the Fathers* pp. 142 - 173

**Chapter 6** isolates a problem which runs throughout American culture but has special ramifications in the lower economic classes. The problem is child abuse, and the particular focus is on ways that child abuse interacts with poverty to perpetuate it from generation to generation. I know that numbers of you are psychology majors and may have taken one or more courses which are pertinent...classes in child or adolescent psychology, or perhaps classes in abnormal psychology. IF so, you're more expert than I am, and I'll try to draw on you for comments about Shipler's observations. Be ready to volunteer.

There are some rays of hope here, as was the case in the previous chapter. Pay special attention to programs which make an effort to break the cycle of poverty. Note what motivated those who created the more successful programs, and what led to their particular insights. For further information, visit the [Prevent Child Abuse. America](http://www.preventchildabuse.org) Website.

For **Friday, October 5**

**Read**, in ***Shipler***,  
# 7, *Kinship* pp. 174 - 200

A few years back it was not unusual for graduating seniors to decorate their caps and occasionally their gowns with signs like Thanks, Mom and Dad, and You've Always been There for Me. Chapter 7 brings home the importance of kinship as an asset when life takes a horrific turn. Note that kin as Shipler uses the term extends beyond relatives by blood or marriage into the larger network of friends, church members, and others who provide support in times of need.

When those networks fail we can find ourselves in dire times, indeed. Some of this chapter may bring some of you close to tears, but it may also give you a sense of how, occasionally, persons rise to bad occasions through noble actions.

How important is friendship, and how have concepts of friendship changed across the centuries? How does a person's concept of friendship change across the span of his or her life? The illustration at the left is linked to an interesting article on this. Friendship may have different aspects in different social classes, as well, and to change one's class may require changing one's friends. Is it worth it?