

**St. Francis Xavier University**  
**Department of Sociology**  
**Fall 2022**

**Course:** SOC1 427 Friendship and Personal Life  
**Instructor:** Dr. Peter Mallory  
**Email:** pmallory@stfx.ca  
**Lecture Schedule:** E5 Block, Tuesdays, 6:30-9:30

**Office Hours (In Person):** Monday 2:00-3:00PM; Tuesday 1:00-4:00PM  
Wednesday 10:00-12:00 Noon. Online and phone appointments are also available.

**Course Description**

This course invites you to engage with scholarly debates on the meaning and significance of friendship in contemporary societies. Throughout the course you will have the opportunity to consider recent scholarship on the sociology of friendship as well as classic accounts of friendship by social theorists. As we read the different writers we will not focus on friendship in isolation, but instead investigate how the theme of friendship opens us to broader questions with a bearing on human bonds such as intimacy, the self, gender, sexuality, the meaning of the public and the private, social solidarity, exchange and reciprocity, and social inequality. The problem of friendship will also raise the question of other forms of social bonds such as strangerhood, acquaintanceship, enmity, and love relations.

**Course Evaluation**

20% Short Analytical Papers (4 at 5% each)  
5% Essay Proposal  
25% Essay  
10% Seminar Participation  
10% Class presentation  
5% Note-taking assignment  
25% Take-home Exam

*Short Analytical Papers:*

You will be expected to write four short analytical papers on the course readings. Each paper will consist of a concise and careful examination of the readings assigned for the week and will be due by 5PM on the day the readings are discussed. They should be submitted through Moodle. You must complete all four analytical papers during the first 8 weeks of class (i.e. by October 25), and they will be used to calculate your midterm mark. The purpose of these papers is to help you prepare for class, and they cannot be submitted if they are late.

The analytical papers should be between 500 to 750 words. In each paper you will be expected to, a) present a concise summary of the arguments of the readings; b) offer a detailed analysis of at least one central issue or main idea in the readings which you believe

deserves attention; c) discuss the significance of the readings for developing our course themes; and d) raise questions which you would like to see discussed in the seminar.

*Essay Proposal:*

An essay proposal will be due by 12 noon on November 1. You are welcome to hand it in earlier (if you do, you will receive it back sooner). Proposals should be about one page long, with an additional page for a bibliography. The proposal should offer an overview of the topic or problem you have chosen for your essay, provide a description of your argument, state how your essay will be organized or structured into sections, and list between 5 and 10 scholarly sources in ASA style.

*Essay:*

The essay will be due no later than 12 Noon on Tuesday, December 6. You will be able to choose and develop your own topic, but it must be related to course themes. Your essay may address either a theoretical problem related to friendship and social bonds, or you may take a more empirical focus on a specific topic. If you wish to do original research (such as interviews) you need to apply for ethics approval through the Department of Sociology. Each paper will be around 8 to 10 pages and formatted according to ASA style guidelines.

*Seminar Participation:*

Much of this course will be conducted in seminar format, which means that careful preparation of the readings is required and participation in discussions is strongly encouraged. While students making presentations will be responsible for raising questions and issues for discussion each week, I ask that all of you come each week with at least two talking points (for example, on what you found most interesting, striking, troubling, inspiring, controversial, confusing, unconvincing, etc. from the readings). Participation comprises attendance (including arriving to class on time and not leaving early), raising and responding to questions in class, contributing to general seminar discussion, active and engaged listening, and giving other students the opportunity to speak. Note that you will be assessed not on the quantity of your contributions to discussion, but on the quality of them and the degree to which they are grounded in the readings and course themes.

*Class Presentation:*

Each student will be responsible for introducing us to and framing issues for discussion in the readings for one week. Presentations should provide an overview of central themes and arguments in the readings, offer critical and thoughtful analysis, and raise questions for class discussion. Students will choose their week to present at the start of the course. Your presentation should last no more than fifteen minutes. Your task is NOT to summarize the articles (i.e. do not go through and tell us about each section of each paper), since we will all have done the readings. You must go beyond summarizing the articles to receive a passing grade. To do so successfully, you should focus on the following:

- Provide any background (historical, contextual, etc.) that you think might be relevant for better understanding your topic (this may require a little research on your part)
- An overview of what you think are the main arguments and most important issues in

the readings that we should take up as a class (and why they matter from the point of view of our course themes); *think about what is compelling about the readings in your week, and try to convey your enthusiasm to your audience*

- A short discussion of how you see the week's readings linking into our emergent and ongoing course themes (here it helps to refer specifically to previous authors or in-class discussion topics to show how you see the readings fitting in or contrasting with previous course material)
- Any other critical insights you wish to raise to frame our thinking about the week's readings (remember that critical does not always mean negative)
- Raise at least three relevant discussion questions for the class based on the readings. Strong discussion questions are clearly written; engage directly with the authors' main findings rather than tangential issues; are open-ended and invite discussion; and ask us to think carefully and critically about the authors' work and how and why it matters

You should aim to be clear and engaging in your presentation. If you require audio or visual aids such as PowerPoint slides for your presentation, please arrive early to class so that we can set them up and avoid delays. Using PowerPoint slides or other aids is not a requirement, and you should think carefully about whether they will be useful in communicating your ideas.

On the day of your presentation, you will hand in your presentation notes and your three discussion questions for grading. Please make sure your notes are typed and intelligible to readers other than you (although they can be in point form). They are due at the start of class.

*Note Taking Assignment:*

Each student will serve as a notetaker for one class, and those notes will be posted on Moodle and available for everyone to use. Since these notes will be a resource for everyone in the class, please try your best to make a good set of notes. Strong class notes are not a close transcript of the class and what people say, but rather aim to distill the key ideas, concepts and problems that are raised in the class. Please submit your note-taking assignment to me by email within 24 hours after the class.

*Take-Home Exam:*

There will be a take-home exam during the regular exam period.

## LECTURE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

### September 6. Welcome and Introductions – Why Study Friendship?

No readings

Students will choose their topics for seminar presentations

### Part I: Friendship and its Perils

#### September 13. Friendship and the Heterosexual Couple

- Cronin, Anne M. 2015. “Gendering Friendship: Couple Culture, Heteronormativity and the Production of Gender.” *Sociology* 49(6):1167–82.
- Aeby, Gaëlle, and Jenny van Hooff. 2019. “Who Gets Custody of the Friends? Online Narratives of Changes in Friendship Networks Following Relationship Breakdown.” *Families, Relationships and Societies* 8(3):411–26.
- Gay, Roxanne. 2014. “How to Be Friends with Another Woman.” Pp. 47-50 in *Bad Feminist: Essays*. New York: Harper Perennial.

#### September 20. Friendship, Sexuality, and Gender

- Blatterer, Harry. 2013. “Friendship’s Freedom and Gendered Limits.” *European Journal of Social Theory* 16(4): 435–456.
- Roseneil, Sasha. 2006. “Foregrounding Friendship: Feminist Pasts, Feminist Futures.” Pp. 323-341 in *The Sage Handbook of Gender and Women’s Studies*, edited by K. Davis, M. Evans and J. Lorber. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Foucault, Michel. 1997. “Friendship as a Way of Life.” Pp. 135-40 in *Michel Foucault: Ethics, Subjectivity, and Truth*, edited by Paul Rabinow. New York: The Free Press.

#### September 27. Difficult Friendships

- Smart, Carol, Katherine Davies, Brian Heaphy, and Jennifer Mason. 2012. “Difficult Friendships and Ontological Insecurity.” *The Sociological Review* 60(1): 91–109.
- Eramian, Laura, and Peter Mallory. 2021. “Unclear Endings: Difficult Friendships and the Limits of the Therapeutic Ethic.” *Families, Relationships, and Societies* 10(2):359–73.

#### October 4. Inequality and Recognition between Friends

- Pellandini-Simányi, Léna. 2017. “How Do Friends Manage Income Differences? The Role of Lay Concepts of Justice in the Erosion of Income-Bridging Friendships and Social Segregation.” *Sociology* 51(3): 592-607.

- Eramian, Laura, and Peter Mallory. 2022. "Inequality, Rules of Irrelevance, and Recognition in Broken Friendships." *Symbolic Interaction* 45(3):403-424.

## **Part II: Personal Life beyond the Private Realm**

### **October 11. Power and Informality in the Workplace**

- Costas, Jana. 2012. "'We Are All Friends Here:' Reinforcing Paradoxes of Normative Control in a Culture of Friendship." *Journal of Management Inquiry* 21(4):377–95.
- Leighton, Mary. 2020. "Myths of Meritocracy, Friendship, and Fun Work: Class and Gender in North American Academic Communities." *American Anthropologist* 122(3):444–58.
- Freeman, Jo. 2013 [original 1970]. "The Tyranny of Structurelessness." *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 41(3):231–46.

### **October 18. Sociability between Strangers**

- Anderson, Elijah. 2004. "The Cosmopolitan Canopy." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 595(1):14–31.
- Horgan, Mervyn, Saara Liinamaa, Amanda Dakin, Sofia Meligrana, and Meng Xu. 2020. "A Shared Everyday Ethic of Public Sociability: Outdoor Public Ice Rinks as Spaces for Encounter." *Urban Planning* 5(4):143–54.
- May, Vanessa. "Personal Life in Public Spaces." Pp. 144-155 in *The Sociology of Personal Life*, 2nd Edition, edited by V. May and P. Nordqvist. London: Red Globe Press.

### **October 25. Capitalism and Personal Life**

- Wherry, Frederick F., Kristin S. Seefeldt, and Anthony S. Alvarez. 2019. "To Lend or Not to Lend to Friends and Kin: Awkwardness, Obfuscation, and Negative Reciprocity." *Social Forces* 98(2):753–93.
- Crawford, David. 2021. "Inconvenient Friendship: How Successful Cocaine Dealers Manage Social Obligations." *Economic Anthropology* 8(2):259–72.
- Zelizer, Viviana. 2006. "Do Markets Poison Intimacy?" *Contexts* 5(2):33–38.

Midterm grades available on October 26

## **Part III: Selfhood, Personal Relationships, and Social Change**

### **November 1. Singlehood**

- Lahad, Kinneret. 2012. "Singlehood, Waiting, and the Sociology of Time." *Sociological Forum* 27(1):163–86.

- Lahad, Kinneret, and Vanessa May. 2017. “Just One? Solo Dining, Gender and Temporal Belonging in Public Spaces.” *Sociological Research Online* 22(2):176–86.
- Jamieson, Lynn. 2020. “Between the Couple and Living Alone.” Pp. 329–44 in *Couple Relationships in a Global Context*, edited by A. Abela, S. Vella, and S. Piscopo. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Roseneil, Sasha. 2020. “It’s Time to End the Tyranny of Coupledness.” *The Guardian*, November 14.

Essay Proposals due by 12 Noon on November 1.

Wednesday, November 2—last day to drop first-term three-credit courses

### **November 8. No Classes – Fall Break**

### **November 15. Therapeutic Culture and Personal Life**

- Eva, Illouz. 2008. *Saving the Modern Soul: Therapy, Emotions, and The Culture of Self-Help*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Pp. 58-104.

### **November 22. Therapeutic Culture and Personal Life, Continued.**

- Martinussen, Maree, and Margaret Wetherell. 2022. “Friends Tell It like It Is: Therapy Culture, Postfeminism and Friendships between Women.” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 25(4):1174–90.
- Salmenniemi, Suvi. 2017. “‘We Can’t Live without Beliefs’: Self and Society in Therapeutic Engagements.” *The Sociological Review* 65(4):611–27.
- Bellah, Robert, et. al. 1985. *Habits of the Heart*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Pp. 121-138.

### **November 29. Loneliness and Disconnection**

- Wilkinson, Eleanor. 2022. “Loneliness Is a Feminist Issue.” *Feminist Theory* 23(1):23–38.
- Pugh, Allison J. 2013. “The Planned Obsolescence of Other People: Consumer Culture and Connections in a Precarious Age.” *Culture and Organization* 19(4):297–313.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. 2003. *Liquid Love*. Malden, MA: Polity. Pp. vii-xii

### **December 6. Conclusion to the Course**

No readings. Come to class prepared to talk about what you learned in the course.

Essays due at 12:00 Noon. Please submit through Moodle.

## **IMPORTANT COURSE INFORMATION AND POLICIES**

### **Late Policy**

Late papers submitted without prior permission will incur a late penalty of 5% of the total assignment per day, including weekends.

### **Attendance**

Attending all classes is the best way to ensure you do well in the course. Please let me know if you will be absent for a class. If you are unable to attend our class because of a requirement for another course (such as a mandatory class, public lecture, quiz, exam, or class project that is scheduled outside normal class hours), then please contact me as soon as you learn about the requirement.

### **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

Students who attempt to pass off someone else's work as their own (plagiarism) will be dealt with through the university policy on academic honesty (see section 3.8 in the calendar). If you have questions about plagiarism, academic honesty, or how to reference sources, you can speak with me during my office hours.

### **Special Accommodations**

If you develop a prolonged illness or encounter a personal crisis that will impact your progress in the course, please contact me as soon as the problem becomes apparent. If you contact me early, we will have a better chance of developing a plan to help you complete the course in a way that is satisfactory to you.

### **Other Accommodations**

If you are a student with physical, learning, or psychiatric disabilities that require reasonable accommodation in teaching style or evaluation, you should either speak with me or contact the Tramble Centre for Accessible Learning so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

### **Recording of Lectures**

Audio or video recording of classes by students is not permitted. Classes will consist mainly of student presentations and class discussions involving everyone in the class. Please respect your classmates by not making audio or video recordings of their contributions to the class. Class notes will be available on Moodle for anyone who misses a class or wishes to review the day's material.

### **Copyright of Course Materials**

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