

SOCI 427: Friendship and Personal Life
St. Francis Xavier University
Department of Sociology
Winter 2018

Instructor: Dr. Peter Mallory
Office Hours: Tues. 12:00-1:00;
Wed. 12:00-3:00; Thurs. 11:00-1:00
Office: Annex 9D
Email: pmallory@stfx.ca
Phone: 902-867-2445

Course Description

This advanced course in social theory 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 philosophers and 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.

Required Texts

1. Bellah, Robert, Richard Madsen, William Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven Tipton. 1985. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California press.
2. Illouz, Eva. 2011. *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Course Evaluation

- 25% Short Analytical Papers (5 at 5% each)
- 5% Essay Proposal
- 30% Essay
- 30% Take-Home Exam
- 10% Seminar Participation

Short Analytical Papers:

You will be expected to write five 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 in class on the day the readings are discussed. Papers will not be accepted outside of class. The first four papers are due in the first seven weeks of class (i.e. by February 14), and they will be used to calculate your midterm mark. The 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. You will be expected to discuss your papers in class.

Essay Proposal:

An essay proposal will be due in class no later than March 7th. You are welcome to hand it in earlier (if you do, you will receive it back sooner). 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 Friday, April 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. 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:

Seminar classes require a high level of participation from students. Unlike a lecture class, you and your fellow students will be providing much of the content of the course. Please bring the readings to class, and be prepared to offer your questions and insights. Being prepared for class with thoughtful comments on the day's readings is a requirement for this course. Students submitting critical reflection papers will be asked to share their responses, but all students should have questions and comments prepared on the day's readings.

Take-Home Exam:

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

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.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Since this course requires you to complete a written assignment, you should familiarize yourself with standards for proper referencing of all materials cited (i.e. books, journals, newspaper articles, internet resources etc.). 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. Please ensure that you fully understand this policy (see section 3.8 in the calendar).

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 speak with me early in the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

LECTURE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Jan 3 Introduction to the Course – Why study Friendship?

Jan 10 Sociologists and Philosophers on Friendship

Allan, Graham. 1989. *Friendship: Developing a Sociological Perspective*. San Francisco, CA: Westview Press. Pp: 13-29.

Silver, Alan. 1997. "Two Different Sorts of Commerce: Friendship and Strangership in Civil Society." Pp. 43-76 in *Public and Private in Thought and Practice*, edited by Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Lewis, C.S. 1993. "Friendship—The Least Necessary Love." Pp. 39-47 in *Friendship: A Philosophical Reader*, edited by N. Badhwar. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Jan 17 Friendship, Personhood, and the Self

Carrier, James. 1999. "People Who Can Be Friends: Selves and Social Relationships." Pp. 21-38 in *The Anthropology of Friendship*, edited by S. Bell and S. Coleman. New York: Berghahn Books.

Cocking, Dean, and Jeanette Kennett. 1998. "Friendship and the Self." *Ethics* 108(3): 502–527.

Montaigne, Michel de. 1958 [original 1580]. "On Friendship." Pp. 91-105 in *Essays*. Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books.

Jan 24 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, 323–341. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

- Jan 31 Individualism, Community, and Friendships**
- Bellah, Robert, et. al. 1985. *Habits of the Heart*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Pp. 1-51.
- Feb 7 Individualism, Community, and Friendships**
- Bellah, Robert, et. al. 1985. *Habits of the Heart*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Pp. 55-112.
- Feb 14 Individualism, Community, and Friendships**
- Bellah, Robert, et. al. 1985. *Habits of the Heart*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Pp. 113-166.
- Tocqueville, Alexis de. 2003 [original 1835/1840]. *Democracy in America*. New York: Penguin. Pp. 587-589.
- Feb 21 No Class – Winter Study Break**
- Enjoy!
- Feb 28* Difficult and Failed Friendships**
- Smart, Carol, Katherine Davies, Brian Heaphy, and Jennifer Mason. 2012. “Difficult Friendships and Ontological Insecurity.” *The Sociological Review* 60(1): 91–109.
- Fehr, Beverley. 1996. “Deterioration and Dissolution.” Pp. 178-201 in *Friendship Processes*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- *Last day to drop the course
- March 7 The Commercialization of Intimate Life**
- Wittel, Andreas. 2001. “Toward a Network Sociality.” *Theory, Culture, and Society* 18(6): 51–76.
- Hochschild, Arlie. 2003. “The Commodity Frontier.” Pp. 30-44 in *The Commercialization of Intimate Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. 2003. *Liquid Love*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Pp. vii-xiii
- March 14 Illouz on Intimacy and Capitalism**
- Illouz, Eva. 2011. *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism*. Malden, MA: Polity Press. Pp 1-62

March 21 **Illouz on Intimacy and Capitalism**

Illouz, Eva. 2011. *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism*. Malden, MA: Polity Press. Pp. 62-114

March 28 **The New Singletons**

Klinenberg, Eric. 2012. *Going Solo: The Extraordinary Rise and Surprising Appeal of Living Alone*. New York: Penguin. Pp. 1-27.

Maitland, Sara. 2014. "The Joys of Solitude." *The Guardian Weekly*, Feb 14, pp 26-29.

April 4 **Conclusion to the course**