

# **Sociology 498 ST: Theories of Friendship**

## **St. Francis Xavier University**

### **Department of Sociology**

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#### **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 sociological research on friendship practices as well as the original works of ancient and early modern social and political theorists whose ideas on friendship are still generating lively debate in sociology. The course will cover the work of philosophers such as Aristotle and Montaigne, the writings of early social theorists such as Adam Smith, Tocqueville, Durkheim and Simmel, as well as the contemporary work on friendship by Arendt and Foucault. As we read the different theorists 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, 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. Pahl, Ray. 2000. *On Friendship*. Malden, MA: Polity Press. Available at the campus store.
2. Selected readings on reserve at the MacDonald library.
3. Several journal articles are not on reserve, but you can find them online through the library's academic journal databases. They are labelled "Online".

#### **Course Evaluation**

- 25% Critical Reflection Papers (5 at 5% each)
  - 5% Proposal for Essay
- 35% Essay
- 20% Take Home Exam
- 15% Seminar Contributions

#### ***Critical Reflection Papers:***

You will be expected to write five papers on five of the 12 weeks of 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 papers should be between 500 to 750 words. In each paper you will be expected to, a) present a summary of the author's arguments and discuss the strengths and weaknesses; b) offer your own reflection on an issue or theme in the readings which you believe deserves attention; c) relate ideas in the readings to themes in the course; and d) raise questions which you would like to see discussed in the seminar. Students will be expected to discuss their critical reflection papers in class.

### *Paper Proposal:*

An essay proposal will be due in class no later than March 21. You are welcome to hand it in earlier. 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 in Annex Room 9D by 1:00pm on Tuesday, April 10<sup>th</sup>. You are welcome to hand it in earlier. 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 ethics approval from Department of Sociology. Each paper will be around 3000 – 3500 words (12 pages) and formatted according to ASA style guidelines.

### *Seminar Contribution and 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. You will be called on to share your reflections on the readings. Students submitting critical reflection papers will be asked to read sections of 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 scheduled during the regular exam period. The due date will be announced in class.

## **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. A professor's job is not solely to help you to learn, but also to maintain the integrity of your degree. 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 participation in the course, please contact me **as soon as the problem becomes apparent**. Your best strategy for dealing with anything that may prevent you from completing the course in a way that is satisfactory to you is to discuss your concerns with me as soon as they become apparent so that we can work out a way of responding to them.

**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.

*Welcome to the Course!*

## LECTURE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

### Jan 4 Introduction to the Course—Why study Friendship?

Pahl, Ray. 2000. Preface and Introduction, Pp. vii-12

### Jan 11 What is Friendship? Classical and Contemporary Views

Aristotle. 1991. "Nicomachean Ethics (Books VIII and IX)." Pp. 27-50 in *Other Selves: Philosophers on Friendship*, edited by M. Pakaluk. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company. (Read up to page 50 only) **(On Reserve – look for the edited book)**

Pahl, Ray. 2000. Chapter One: What is Friendship?, Pp. 13-44

### Jan 18 Friendship and Modernity

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. **(Reserve)**

Pahl, Ray. 2000. Chapter Two: Friendship, Modernity and Trust, Pp. 45-67.

### Jan 25 Friendship and the Self

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

Pahl, Ray. 2000. Chapter Three: Friendship and the Self. Pp 68-96.

### Feb 1 Friendship in Context

Meilaender, Gilbert. 1997. "When Harry and Sally Read the *Nicomachean Ethics*: Friendship between Men and Women." Pp.375-88 in *Friendship: Philosophic Reflections on a Perennial Concern*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, edited by P. Blosser and M. C. Bradley. New York: University Press of America. **(Reserve)**

Pahl, Ray. 2000. Chapter Four: Friendship in Context. Pp 97-142.

### Feb 8 Love and Friendship

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. **(Reserve)**

Hardt, Michael. 2011. "For Love or Money." *Cultural Anthropology* 26(4): 676-682. **(Online)**

Berlant, Lauren. 2011. "A Properly Political Concept of Love: Three Approaches in Ten Pages." *Cultural Anthropology* 26(4): 683-691. **(Online)**

Cohen, Lawrence. 2011. "Love and the Little Line." *Cultural Anthropology* 26(4): 692-696. **(Online)**

**Feb 15      The Commercialization of Personal Relations**

Hochschild, Arlie. 2003. "The Commodity Frontier." Pp. 30-44 in *The Commercialization of Intimate Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. **(Reserve – look for the whole book)**

Hochschild, Arlie. 1983. "Feeling Management: From Private to Commercial Uses." Pp. 89-136 in *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. **(Reserve)**

**Feb 22      Spring Recess – No Classes**

**Feb 29      Gifts and Exchange**

Mauss, Marcel. 1990 [original 1923]. *The Gift: The Form and Reason For Exchange in Archaic Societies*. New York: Routledge. Read pages 1-46 **(Reserve)**

Hochschild, Arlie. 2003. "The Economy of Gratitude." Pp. 104-118. *The Commercialization of Intimate Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. **(Reserve – look for the full book)**

**Mar 7      Friendship and Social Solidarity**

Wallace, Ruth and Shirley Hartley (1988) 'Religious Elements in Friendship: Durkheimian Theory in an Empirical Context.' Pp. 93-106 in *Durkheimian Sociology: Cultural Studies*, edited by Jeffrey Alexander. New York: Cambridge University Press. **(Reserve)**

Durkheim, Emile. 1984 [original 1893]. "Preface to the Second Edition: Some Remarks on Professional Groups." Pp. xxxvi-lix in *The Division of Labor in Society*. New York: The Free Press. **(Reserve)**

**Mar 14 Friends and Strangers**

Simmel, Georg. 1971 [original 1908]. *The Stranger*. Pp. 143-179 in *On Individuality and Social Forms*, edited by D. N. Levine. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. **(Reserve)**

Schutz, Alfred. 1944. "The Stranger." *American Journal of Sociology* 49(6): 499-507. **(Online)**

Horgan, Mervyn. Reading To be Announced and Distributed in Class

**Mar 21 Political Friendship**

Pakaluk, Michael. 1994. "Political Friendship." Pp. 197-214 in *The Changing Face of Friendship*, edited by L. S. Rouner. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press. **(Reserve)**

Pahl, Ray. 2000. Chapter Five: Social Capital and the Politics of Friendship. Pp. 143-165.

**Mar 28 Political Friendship**

Arendt, Hannah. 1955. "On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts on Lessing." Pp. 3-31 in *Men in Dark Times*. New York: Harcourt Brace. **(Reserve)**

Schwarzenbach, Sibyl. 2005. "Democracy and Friendship." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 36(2): 233-254. **(Online)**

**Apr 4 Tocqueville and Political Friendship**

Tocqueville, Alexis de. 1969 [original 1835/1840]. *Democracy in America*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press. Read pages 505-508, 509-517, 572-580, 604-605, 690-695. Note that the table of contents for the second part of the book begins on page 419. **(Reserve)**

Mallory, Peter. 2012. "Political Friendship in the era of 'the Social': Theorizing Personal Relations with Alexis de Tocqueville." *Journal of Classical Sociology* 12(1). (distributed in class)