

SOCI 427: Sociology of Friendship
St. Francis Xavier University
Department of Sociology
Fall 2014

Instructor: Dr. Peter Mallory

Office Hours (Fall Term): Tues. 12:00-1:00;

Wed. 12:00-4:00; Thurs. 11:00-12:00

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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 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 (available at the campus store)

1. Illouz, Eva. 2012. *Why Love Hurts*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
2. A course pack of readings prepared by Canadian Scholars Press.

Course Evaluation

25% Short Analytical Papers (5 at 5% each)

5% Essay Proposal

35% Essay

25% Take-Home Exam

10% Seminar Participation

Short Analytical Papers:

You will be expected to write papers on five of the twelve 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 concise summary of the arguments of the readings; b) offer a detailed analysis of at least one issue or 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. Students will be expected to discuss their papers in class, and will be called upon to do so.

Essay Proposal:

An essay proposal will be due in class no later than October 29. 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, preferably in ASA style.

Essay:

The essay will be due no later than Tuesday, December 2nd. 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 12 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 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 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 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.

LECTURE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Sept 3 Introduction to the Course – Why study Friendship?

Recommended Reading:

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

Sept 10 Aristotle on Friendship

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.

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.

Sept 17 Is Friendship Universal?

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.

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: Berg.

Sept 24 The Suffusion of Friends and Family

Pahl, Ray and Liz Spencer. 2004. "Personal Communities: Not Simply Families of 'Fate' or 'Choice'." *Current Sociology*. 52(2): 199-221.

Roseneil, Sasha and Shelley Budgeon. 2004. "Cultures of Intimacy and Care beyond 'the Family': Personal Life and Social Change in the Early 21st Century." *Current Sociology* 52 (2): 135–59.

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

Oct 1 Transformations of Intimacy and the "Pure Relationship"

Seidman, Steven. 2013. "Intimate Life in the 'West'." Pp. 318-29 in *Contested Knowledge: Social Theory Today*, fifth edition. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Giddens, Anthony. 1991. "The Theory and Practice of The Pure Relationship." Pp. 88-98 in *Modernity and Self-Identity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2003. "Falling in and out of Love." Pp. 1-37 in *Liquid Love*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Oct 8 Friendship, Sex 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.

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.

Oct 15 Individualism, Community and Friendships

Bellah, Robert, et. al. 1985. *Habits of the Heart*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Pp. 1-51.

Tocqueville, Alexis de. 2003 [original 1835/1840]. *Democracy in America*. New York: Penguin. Pp. 587-589 and 677-683

Oct 22 Durkheim: Can Friendship be Sacred?

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 J. Alexander. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Durkheim, Émile. 2008 [original 1912]. "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life." Pp. 72-80 in *Readings in Social Theory: The Classic Tradition to Post-Modernism*, edited by J. Farganis. Toronto: McGraw Hill.

Durkheim, Émile. 1973 [original 1898]. "Individualism and the Intellectuals." Pp. 43-57 in *Emile Durkheim on Morality and Society*, edited by R. Bellah. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Oct 29 Failed Friendships

Smart, Carol, Katherine Davies, Brian Heaphy, and Jennifer Mason. 2012. "Difficult Friendships and Ontological Insecurity." *The Sociological Review* 60(1): 91–109.

Heaphy, Brian, and Katherine Davies. 2012. "Critical Friendships." *Families, Relationships and Societies* 1 (3): 311–26.

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

Nov 5 The Commercialization of Personal Relations

Wittel, Andreas. 2001. "Toward a Network Sociality." *Theory, Culture & 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.

Van Dijck, José. 2013. "'You Have One Identity': Performing the Self on Facebook and LinkedIn." *Media, Culture and Society* 35(2): 199-215.

Nov 12 **Eva Illouz's *Why Love Hurts***

Illouz, Eva. 2012. *Why Love Hurts*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Pp. 1-58.

Nov 19 **Eva Illouz's *Why Love Hurts***

Illouz. Pp. 60-109.

Nov 26 **Eva Illouz's *Why Love Hurts***

Illouz. Pp. 109 - 155, plus selections from final sections.