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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Phone: 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 (available at the campus store)
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 2\(^{nd}\). You will be able to chose 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.

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**LECTURE SCHEDULE AND READINGS**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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| Sept 3 | Introduction to the Course – Why study Friendship? | **Recommended Reading:**
Sept 24  The Suffusion of Friends and Family


Oct 1  Transformations of Intimacy and the “Pure Relationship”


Oct 8  Friendship, Sex and Gender


Oct 15  Individualism, Community and Friendships


**Oct 22**  
**Durkheim: Can Friendship be Sacred?**


**Oct 29**  
**Failed Friendships**


**Nov 5**  
**The Commercialization of Personal Relations**


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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Eva Illouz’s <em>Why Love Hurts</em></th>
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