

St. Francis Xavier University
Department of Sociology
Winter 2021

Course: SOC1 427 Friendship and Personal Life
Instructor: Dr. Peter Mallory
Email: pmallory@stfx.ca
Lecture Schedule Q1 Block, Mondays, 2:15-5:00PM

Online Office Hours: Monday 10:00-11:00AM; Tuesday 10:00-11:00AM
Wednesday 1:00-3:00PM, or by appointment.

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

- 15% Short Analytical Papers (3 at 5% each)
- 5% Essay Proposal
- 30% Essay
- 10% Seminar Participation
- 10% Class presentation
- 5% Note-taking assignment
- 25% Take-home Exam

Short Analytical Papers:

You will be expected to write three 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 one hour before class on the day the readings are discussed. You must complete all three analytical papers during the first 8 weeks of class (i.e. by March 8), 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 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 12:00 Noon on Monday, March 8. 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 Friday, April 9. 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 one reading this semester. Presentations should provide an overview of central themes and arguments in the reading, offer critical and thoughtful analysis, and raise questions for class

discussion. Students will choose their articles at the start of the course. Your presentation should last no more than fifteen minutes. Your task is NOT to summarize the article (i.e. do not go through and tell us about each section), since we will all have read it. You must go beyond summarizing the article in order 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 article (this may require a little research on your part)
- An overview of what you think are the main arguments and most important issues in your article 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 your article, and try to convey your enthusiasm to your audience*
- A short discussion of how you see the article 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 your article fitting in or contrasting with previous course material)
- Any other critical insights you wish to raise to frame our thinking about the article (remember that critical does not always mean negative)
- Raise at least three relevant discussion questions for the class based on your reading. Strong discussion questions are clearly written; engage directly with the author's main findings rather than tangential issues; are open-ended and invite discussion; and ask us to think carefully and critically about the author's 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 our online classroom so that we can set them up and avoid delays. Using Power Point 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

Week 1: January 18 Introduction to the course – Why study Friendship?

No readings.

Students will choose their articles for seminar presentations

Week 2: January 25 The Meaning of Friendship –Ideals, Ideologies, and Practices

- 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.
- Miller, Daniel. 2017. “The Ideology of Friendship in the Era of Facebook.” *HAAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 7(1):377–95.
- 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.

Week 3: February 1 Friendships 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.
- Roseneil, Sasha. 2020. “It’s Time to End the Tyranny of Coupledness.” *The Guardian*, November 14.

Week 4: February 8 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.
- 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.

Week 5: February 15 No Class – Nova Scotia Heritage Day

enjoy!

Week 6: February 22 Individualism, Community, and Friendships

- Bellah, Robert, et. al. 1985. *Habits of the Heart*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Pp. 3-51, 55-62, 71-81.

Week 7: March 1 Individualism, Community, and Friendships

- Bellah, Robert, et. al. 1985. *Habits of the Heart*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Pp. 81-84, 85-141.

Week 8: March 8 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.
- Eramian, Laura, and Peter Mallory. 2020. "Unclear Endings: Difficult Friendships and the Limits of the Therapeutic Ethic." *Families, Relationships, and Societies*: 1-15.

Essay proposal due by 12:00 Noon on March 8

Week 9: March 15 The Commercialization of Intimate Life

- Hochschild, Arlie. 2003. "The Commodity Frontier." Pp. 30-44 in *The Commercialization of Intimate Life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Zelizer, Viviana. 2006. "Do Markets Poison Intimacy?" *Contexts* 5(2):33–38.
- Mallory, Peter, Jesse Carlson, and Laura Eramian. 2019. "Friendship and the Social Self in Business Success Literature." *European Journal of Cultural Studies*: 1-16.

Friday March 19 -- Last day to drop second-term three-credit courses

Week 10: March 22 Illouz on Intimacy and Capitalism

- Illouz, Eva. 2011. *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism*. Malden, MA: Polity Press. Pp 1-62

Week 11: March 29 Illouz on Intimacy and Capitalism, continued

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

Week 12: April 5 Review and Catch Up

No readings
Essays due April 9

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

All course materials are designed for use as part of Sociology 427 at St. Francis Xavier University and are the intellectual property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Copying this material for distribution (e.g. uploading material to a commercial website)

may lead to a charge of misconduct under StFX's Community Code of Conduct, the StFX Policy on Academic Integrity, and/or legal consequences for violation of copyright law if copyright law has been violated.