

FRIENDSHIP

Instructor: Emily Kress

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Friendship is one of the good things in life. But what exactly is it? Why is it important? What duties do we have to our friends? In this class, we will consider these questions from a philosophical perspective. We will ask what makes two people count as friends. Is it that they share certain activities and feel affection towards one another? That they share personal information? That they shape or influence one another in particular ways? Next, we will ask about the place of friendship in our moral theories. Can these theories accommodate relationships with and duties to friends? How does acting on the basis of friendship differ from acting on the basis of other moral reasons? Can we privilege our duties to friends over those to other people? What should we do when morality seems to conflict with friendship? These questions are intertwined; in trying to answer one of them, we will often end up considering answers to the others. One of the goals of the class will be to see how these questions are connected to one another.

This class takes a historical, philosophical, and psychological approach to these questions. We will begin with discussions of friendship in the ancient world, with readings from Plato, Aristotle, the Epicureans, and the Stoics. In reading these ancient sources, we will be engaged in both interpretive and philosophical projects: we will be asking both how we should understand their claims and also what they contribute to contemporary discussions. In the second part of the class, we will bring these ancient sources into dialogue with contemporary arguments. As we will see, many contemporary philosophers of friendship have been strongly influenced by Aristotle's views of friendship; we will ask whether this influence has been fruitful and whether further insight can be gained from engagement with the other ancient philosophers we have examined. We will also consider the place of friendship in more recent moral theories, including deontology and consequentialism. In the last part of the class, we will ask what recent psychological research can contribute to the philosophical questions we are trying to answer.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

This may be taken by students with no prior experience in philosophy, although it is also suited for students with some prior knowledge of the subject. Lectures, assignments, and classroom activities are designed to help students develop or continue to develop the philosophical skills necessary for success.

COURSE MATERIALS

Michael Pakaluk, *Other Selves: Philosophers on Friendship*. (contains many of our ancient sources)
Additional readings will be made available on the course server.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

- 10% Attendance, Preparation, and Participation
- 10% Reading Responses
- 15% Short Writing Assignment
- 30% Paper #1
- 35% Paper #2

ATTENDANCE, PREPARATION, AND PARTICIPATION: Attendance is mandatory. If extenuating circumstances require you to miss class, please contact me in advance. You are expected to come to class having done the readings and prepared to discuss them. Since the readings are difficult, you might have to read parts of them more than once. I've tried to choose readings that are short enough to leave you the time to do this. When reading them, pay attention to the structure of the author's argument: what is the author's *main conclusion* and *how does she support it*? Make a note of places where the argument is confusing, or where you disagree. Good in-class participation will draw on this preparation. It can involve asking thoughtful questions, listening carefully to your classmates' ideas, asking for or introducing clarifications, or making objections. Civility and respect are essential. I invite you to meet with me if you have any questions about what good participation looks like or to develop strategies for participating.

READING RESPONSES: You are required to post *five* short reading responses to the forums on the course server. These should be no longer than one *short* paragraph. They should raise a question or make a point (big or small!) about the assigned reading. In writing them, make sure to say clearly what claim or argument in the reading you are responding to. You are also strongly encouraged to respond to other students' reading responses: if you are not the first student to post about a particular reading, read what others have written and try to respond to their concerns. These responses are designed to get you thinking about the readings and about your classmates' ideas before coming to class. Writing and reading them will help you get ready to make good contributions in the classroom. *Please try to get these responses posted by 9 p.m. the night before the class so your classmates can read them.*

Please reserve one of your five responses for the final two sessions. For this response: (1) choose a claim from the psychological readings that you take to bear on some issue from the earlier parts of the class, (2) locate and read one of the studies cited in support of that claim, and (3) briefly describe the implications of that study for our philosophical investigation into the nature and value of friendship.

SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENT: Choose one passage from our ancient sources (from a list to be distributed in class). Identify what *conclusion* the author is trying to establish. Then, identify what *premises* they use to support this conclusion. (This isn't always obvious, so it might take a few tries.) Finally, say whether you think the argument does or does not establish the intended conclusion, and why. Are all the premises true, or are some of them false? If some are false, explain why. If all the premises are true, is the argument valid? If not, why not? Can you add additional premises to make it valid? Are these premises plausible? If all the premises are true and the argument is valid, explain where someone else might disagree and how you would respond. *This assignment is a maximum of 3 pages, double-spaced. Since the point of this assignment is just to help you get used to working with philosophical arguments and not to write a formal paper, no introduction, conclusion, or other polish are necessary.*

PAPERS: Detailed instructions will be distributed in class. You will be invited to make your own argument on one of the themes we have discussed in class, using an argument from the readings as a jumping-off point. You will have to choose a thesis and defend it with an argument. *Papers should be 6-7 pages, double-spaced, and polished. You are required to meet with me to discuss your argument prior to submitting the paper; feel free to bring along part of your draft. We will also workshop the papers during class time; on these occasions, please bring a page or so of your paper for peer feedback.*

ACCOMMODATIONS

If you require any special accommodations or if there is anything I can do to make you more comfortable in class, please let me know. I will be happy to help.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. One of the most severe violations of academic integrity is plagiarism, which is the use of someone else's work, words, or ideas as if they were your own. Thus, if you use a source for a paper, you must acknowledge it. There is no reason to hide the fact that you have relied on others, for the very idea of writing in a university is to trace your participation in a conversation of scholars. Showing how your ideas derive from and comment on the ideas of others is one of the high achievements of mature academic writing. It would be a mistake to downplay this achievement in an attempt to suggest greater originality. What counts as a source and requires citation is a delicate matter. Some things are clear. For instance, anything derived from readings (including those found on-line), either from the syllabus or outside sources, must be cited. What is not clear is whether ideas presented in lecture, discussed in section, or derived from conversations with faculty, TFs, or other students must be cited. If you are unsure, consult with your instructor or TF. In general, it is better to err on the side of caution and cite sources too much rather than too little. Penalties for plagiarism are severe. Students caught plagiarizing can be subject to lowered or failing grades, as well as suspension or expulsion from the University. For more information, please consult Yale's Academic Integrity Policy.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

All required readings should be completed before class. Optional readings provide additional background and may be useful in writing your papers.

INTRODUCTION: PHILOSOPHY, FRIENDSHIP, AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF FRIENDSHIP		
1 M	INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF FRIENDSHIP Read: Thomas Hurka, <i>The Best Things in Life</i> , ch. 6, p. 143-51 Optional: the rest of Thomas Hurka, <i>The Best Things in Life</i> , ch. 6	Skill-Building Workshop: How to Work with Philosophical Arguments
ANCIENT SOURCES: THE NATURE OF FRIENDSHIP AND ITS PLACE IN THE GOOD LIFE		
2 W	PLATO ON FRIENDSHIP Read: Plato, <i>Lysis</i>	
3 F	ARISTOTLE ON FRIENDSHIP Read: Selections from Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> VIII-IX	
4 M	THE EPICUREANS ON FRIENDSHIP Read: Selections from Cicero, <i>De Finibus</i> I Optional: Selections from Epicurus, <i>Vatican Sayings</i> and <i>Principal Doctrines</i>	<i>Short Writing Assignment Due</i>
5 W	THE STOICS ON FRIENDSHIP Read: Cicero, "On Friendship"; Seneca, "On Philosophy and Friendship" Optional: Selections from Diogenes Laertius, <i>Lives of the Philosophers</i> VII; Cicero, <i>De Finibus</i> III	Skill-Building Workshop: How to Write a Philosophy Paper (Part I)

CONTEMPORARY DEBATES: THE NATURE OF FRIENDSHIP		
6 F	SHARED ACTIVITY, AFFECTION, AND DISCLOSURE Read: Elizabeth Telfer, "Friendship" (focus on Part 1); Laurence Thomas, "Friendship"	Skill-Building Workshop: How to Write a Philosophy Paper (Part II)
7 M	THE DRAWING VIEW Read: Dean Cocking and Jeanette Kennett, "Friendship and the Self"	
8 W	PLURAL AGENCY Read: Bennett Helm, "Friends are Other Selves," in <i>Love, Friendship, and the Self: Intimacy, Identification, and the Social Nature of Persons</i>	
CONTEMPORARY DEBATES: FRIENDSHIP, PRACTICAL REASON, AND MORAL THEORY		
9 F	CONTEMPORARY MORAL THEORIES: A PRIMER Read: Russ Shafer-Landau, "Consequentialism: Its Nature and Attractions," "The Kantian Perspective: Fairness and Justice", in <i>The Fundamentals of Ethics</i>	Skill-Building Workshop: Peer Feedback (bring one page of your paper to get feedback on)
10 M	MORAL MOTIVATION Read: Michael Stocker, "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories"; start reading the Railton paper for class 12 Optional: Bernard Williams, "Persons, Character, and Morality"	<i>Paper #1 Due</i>
11 W	IMPARTIALITY Read: Susan Wolf, "Morality and Partiality"; keep reading the Railton paper for next class	Skill-Building Workshop: How to Write a Philosophy Paper (Part III)
12 F	CONSEQUENTIALISM: A CASE STUDY Read: Neera Kapur Badhwar, "Why It Is Wrong to be Always Guided by the Best: Consequentialism and Friendship"; Peter Railton, "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality" (start reading this one early)	
13 M	CONFLICTS BETWEEN FRIENDSHIP AND MORALITY Read: Alexander Nehamas, <i>On Friendship</i> , ch.6; Dean Cocking and Jeanette Kennett, "Friendship and Moral Danger" Optional: Diane Jeske, "Friendship, Virtue, and Impartiality"	
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FRIENDSHIP		
14 W	THE NATURE OF FRIENDSHIP Read: "Foreword"; Cornelia Wrzus, Julia Zimmermann, Marcus Mund, and Franz J. Neyer, "Friendships in Young and Middle Adulthood: Normative Patterns and Personality Differences"; Debra L. Oswald, "Maintaining Long-lasting Friendships", in <i>The Psychology of Friendship</i> (eds. Moyer and Hojjat)	Skill-Building Workshop: Peer Feedback (bring one page of your paper to get feedback on)
15 F	THE BENEFITS AND HARMS OF FRIENDSHIP Read: Alan R. King, Tiffany Russell, and Amy Veith, "Friendship and Mental Health Functioning"; Mahzad Hojjat, Susan D. Boon, Elizabeth Barlow Lozano, "Transgression, Forgiveness, and Revenge in Friendship", in <i>The Psychology of Friendship</i>	<i>Paper #2 Due</i>