Friendship, Trust, & Love: 200/300 Level PHIL Course

Fall/Spring: Year

Instructor Information

Instructor	Email	Office Location & Hours
Prof. Kelly Cunningham	kelly.cunningham.1 @vanderbilt.edu	Furman Hall: 108 Monday: 12:30-1:30pm Thursday (via Zoom): 3:30-4:30pm

"A good friend is a connection to life, a tie to the past, a road to the future and the key to sanity in a totally insane world"

– Lois Wyse

"You know a real friend? Someone who will look after your cat when you are gone."

-William S. Burroughs

"A friend is one who knows all about you and still loves you"

-Elbert Hubbard

General Information

Description

There's a lot one could say about friendships—it's the subject of films, novels, songs, and even children's books. Many philosophers have argued that friendships are essential to our moral development. Others focus instead on how friendships form our identity. Other still expose the risks of friendship. Most agree that the best friendships involve love and trust, but how are these three concepts related? In this course, we'll explore the answer to this and other questions about friendship through historical and contemporary philosophical perspectives, films, and novels.

Expectations and Goals

Attendance and participation in class discussions are expected. Student are also expected to conduct independent research for their final paper assignment. Disrespectful and disruptive behavior in class discussions will not be tolerated.

In addition to developing a familiarity with the literature on trust, love and friedship, goals for this course include the refinement of argumentative writing and critical thinking skills. By the end of the course students will be able to explain several philosophical accounts of friendship. They will also develop a perspective on how trust, love and friendship are related. Students will complete

independent research for their final paper, which will provide an answer to a question of their choice about friendship.

Course Materials

Required Materials

When not available through the university library, our materials for this course will be available through on Brigthspace. Students are encouraged to purchase their own copies of the two novels we will read in this course. We will also read several essays from *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Friendship,* which contains sources students mahy find helpful for their final papers.

Course Assignments

Reading Notes

Doing philosophy requires not only respectful discussion and debate, but also personal reflection, close reading, and writing. Over the course of the semester you **must complete 10 reading notes**, which will be graded on ✓-/✓/✓+ scale via Brightspace. For full points, all 10 entries must receive a ✓ or higher. You are welcome to complete more than 10, but only the highest 10 scores will count toward your final grade. Prompts for your journal entries will be available for the following week immediately after Friday's class on Brightspace. Journal entries are due **before** the class when we'll be discussing the reading that you respond to Responses posted for readings after the start of class will not be graded. There are **20+ opportunities** for reading notes throughout the semester.

Short Papers

During the first half of the semester, students will complete two short papers on prompts related to the course readings. Prompts for short papers will be available two weeks before they are due. You should answer *only one* of the prompts. Papers should be no more than 1,000 words. Anything more than 10% over will be marked down by 2 points per 10% over. See final assignment for instructions on citations and formatting. A rubric is available on Brightspace.
Short Paper #1 Due Week 7, upload to Brightspace.
Short Paper #2 Due Week 11, upload to Brightspace.

Annotated Bibliography

Your final paper will be on a question about trust of your choosing. To help guide your research for this paper, you are required to complete an annotated bibliography. Your bibliography should include 5-7 sources, properly cited and accompanied by a one-paragraph description of the source's main ideas and how it might be useful for your final paper. We will go over an example in class two weeks before this assignment is due.
Due Week 12, upload to Brightspace.

Final Paper

Your final paper will be on a question about friendship that makes use of one of the case studies we cover in class. You can choose a different film or novel for a case study with approval from me. A rubric and paper prompts will be made available by week 8.
One- paragraph description of question, case study, and paper idea, due Week 13.

Draft due Week 15, upload to Brightspace
Final Paper due by midnight on scheduled day for final exams, upload to Brightspace.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignments
0	Introduction to Course	N/A	Welcome Survey
1	Friendship in the History of Philosophy	Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book VIII Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* Book IX	Opportunities for Reading Notes
2	Friendship in the History of Philosophy	Blum, *Friendship, Altruism, and Morality* "Altruistic Emotions and the Kantian View" Reeve "Plato's Erotic Friendships" Annas, "Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism"	Opportunities for Reading Notes
3	Friendship in the History of Philosophy	Selections from *The Analects of Confucius* Watch *Stand By Me*	Opportunities for Reading Notes
4	Less Than Virtuous Friendships: Novel Case Study #1	Iris Murdoch, *Under the Net*	Opportunities for Reading Notes Prompt for first paper available on Brightspace

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignments
5	Less Than Virtuous Friendships: Novel Case Study #1	Iris Murdoch, *Under the Net*	Opportunities for Reading Notes
6	Friendship & Reasons	Jeske, "Friendship and Reasons of Intimacy" Jeske, "Feminism, Friendship, and the Grounds of Reasons"	Opportunities for Reading Notes Final Paper Description Available on Brightspace
7	Friendship & Its Risks	Cocking and Kennett "Friendship and Moral Danger" Stroud, "Friendship and Epistemic Partiality" Blum, *Friendship, Altruism, and Morality*, "Friendship, Beneficence and Impartiality"	Opportunities for Reading Notes First Paper Due on Brightspace
8	Friendship & Self-Knowledge	Dover "The Conversational Self" Mason "The epistemic demands of friendship: friendship as inherently knowledge-involving"	Opportunities for Reading Notes Second Paper Prompt Available on Brightspace

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignments
9	Friendship Case Novel Case Study #2	Kerri Maher *All You Have to Do is Call*	Opportunities for Reading Notes
10	Friendship Case Novel Case Study #2	Kerri Maher *All You Have to Do is Call* Watch *Fried Green Tomatoes*	Opportunities for Reading Notes
11	Friendship & Trust	Bennett- "Demoralizing Trust" Niker and Specker Sullivan- "Trusting Relationships and the Ethics of Interpersonal Trust"	Opportunities for Reading Notes Second Paper Due on Brightspace
12	Friendship & Trust	Nys, "Autonomy, Trust and Respect" Biss, "Friendship, Trust, and Moral Self-Perfection"	Opportunities for Reading Notes Annotated Bibliography Due on Brightspace
13	Friendship & Love	Plato *Symposium*	Opportunities for Reading Notes
14	Friendship & Love	Lopez-Cantero, "Non-harmonious Love" Miller and Lopez-Cantero, "Grief, Continuing Bonds, and Unreciprocated Love"	Opportunities for Reading Notes

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignments
15	Varieties of Friendship	Healy, "Friendship Between Children"	Opportunities for Reading Notes
		Betzler, "Friendship and Family	Draft of Final Paper Due on Brightspace
		Talisse, *Overdoing Democracy*, "Civic Friendship"	
16	Varieties of Friendship	Elder, "Friendship and Social Media"	Opportunities for Reading Notes
		Abbate. "Are Our Companion Animals Friends or Family?"	Final Paper Due on Brightspace

Additional Information and Resources

Accessibility and Accommodations

Vanderbilt University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. To receive such accommodations students are to apply for services through the Student Access Center. The Center can be reached at disabilityservices@vanderbilt.edu and is located in the Baker Building, Suite 108.

Technology and AI Use Policy

The use of technology in the classroom (such as laptops or tablets) is often crucial for students with accessibility needs, but it can also be a distraction for some students. Similarity, AI is a powerful tool, but one that we as a society are still establishing norms for its use in educational contexts. To ensure everyone's needs are met to the best of our collective abilities, and that AI tools are used responsibly, we will co-author our technology and AI policy on the first day of class. After which, it will then be posted to Brightspace. Cell phones should be kept away during class.

FERPA Compliance Reminder

To protect student privacy, FERPA guidelines state that professors are not to discuss grades via email. If you would like to discuss your grades, please come to office hours, email me to make an appointment or use your private "journal" discussion board on Brightspace.

Academic Integrity

All students are required to make themselves familiar with and abide by the University Honor Code. I reserve the right to report cases of suspected misconduct, which includes use of AI prohibited by the class policy, will be submitted to the Honor Council for further review. If you are unsure if the way you are using a resource or AI tool is permitted, please consult the University policy and contact me with any further questions *before* turning in your assignment.

Grading Scale   Grading Breakdown

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent	Assignment	% of Final Grade
A A-	93-100 90-92	Participation	5%
B+ B B-	87-89 83-86 80-82	Reading Notes	10%
C+ C C-	77-79 73-76 70-72	Short Paper #1	20%
D+ D D-	67-69 63-66 60-62	Short Paper #2	20%
F	0-59	Annotated Bibliography	15%
		Final Paper Draft	5%
		Final Paper	25%