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Office Hours: W & F 3:00 – 4:30 pm and by appointment

Writing Fellow: Bryan Hearn

American Representations of Friendship and the Platonic Tradition

English 151:03

MWF 10:00 – 10:50 am

Palmer Hall 203

Fall 2008

Throughout Western philosophy, from Plato onwards, friendship has been figured as the ideal mode of human interaction. While erotic, familial, financial, or ethnic relations are inextricable from obligation or self-interest, friendship, the argument typically goes, offers the promise of free and disinterested love. But, as Jacques Derrida has shown, each time a philosopher has posited a version of perfect or true friendship, it has turned out to be a relationship that would be compromised with its enactment. In other words, friendship as an ideal and friendship as a practice are two very different things. Is true friendship a theoretical abstraction or fantasy, therefore, with no correlation to actual experience? In this writing-intensive course, we'll explore the ways in which American essays, short stories, novels, and films about friendship answer this question. Readings will include philosophical texts by Plato, Emerson, and Montaigne, literary works by Sherman Alexie, Herman Melville, and Alice Walker, and magazine articles from *The Atlantic* and *The New Yorker*. We will also discuss and write about the films *Men in Black* and *Mean Girls*.

Course Objectives

The goal of this course is to develop your ability to think, read, and write critically. In particular, I want you to learn to produce clear and compelling prose in support of a thesis. We will emphasize successive stages of the writing process, including pre-writing, drafting, and revision. Your final paper will involve the use of the library and research material and proper documentation.

Texts

Rebecca Finlayson, *A Guide to Effective Paper Writing* (2007)

Alice Walker, *The Color Purple* (1982)

The Oxford English Dictionary (<http://dictionary.oed.com/>)

Xeroxed Handouts and Texts Online

Films

Men in Black

Mean Girls

Syllabus:

Wed. Aug. 27	Introduction
Fri. Aug. 29	Montaigne, "Of Friendship" (1580) GPW: 11-15
Mon. Sept. 1	Labor Day: No Class
Wed. Sept. 3	Montaigne
Fri. Sept. 5	<i>Brideshead Revisited</i> (1981)
Mon. Sept. 8	Plato on Friendship, <i>Phaedrus</i> (circa 370 B.C.) GPW: 41-45 Text available at http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext99/phdrs10.txt
Wed. Sept. 10	Plato GPW: 45-51
Fri. Sept. 12	Plato
Mon. Sept. 15	Speed editing for Paper 1 GPW: 3-5; 9-20 (you have already read 11-15 but be sure to read them again) Bring <i>two</i> proposed thesis statements on separate sheets of paper (i.e. for two potential, different papers).
Wed. Sept. 17	Workshop for Group A. Group A must bring to class a draft of Paper 1 (1,000 words). Members of Group A must e-mail me a copy of their draft by 8 am (9/17).

Groups B, C, and D must produce an outline of Paper 1.
Group C (only) must create a draft and meet with Bryan by Sunday evening (9/21)

- Fri. Sept. 19 Plato
GPW: 20-32.
- Mon. Sept. 22 Paper # 1 due (1,000 words). Include with your final paper your marked/edited theses from Speed Editing day. Groups A and C should also include the rough draft (from the workshop or the conference with Bryan).
- Wed. Sept. 24 Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Self-Reliance" (1841) and "Friendship" (1841)
- Fri. Sept. 26 Emerson
Work on Structuring Arguments
- Mon. Sept. 29 Henry David Thoreau: "Wednesday" from *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849); a selection from Herman Melville, *The Confidence-Man* (1857)
- Wed. Oct. 1 Speed editing for Paper 2
Bring two copies of your proposed thesis and three main supporting points.
- Fri. Oct. 3 Workshop for Group B.
Members of Group B must bring a draft of Paper 2 (1,500 words) to class and they must e-mail me a copy of their draft by 8 am (10/3).
Groups A, C, and D must bring an Introduction/thesis paragraph and outline to class (200 words).

Group D (only) must create a draft and meet with Bryan before Sunday evening (10/5).
- Mon. Oct. 6 Paper # 2 due (1,500 words).
Be sure to include your work from Speed Editing day with your final paper. Groups B and D should also include the rough draft (from workshop or your conference with Bryan).

Wed. Oct. 8	Selections from Adriana Cavarero, <i>Relating Narratives</i> (2000).
Fri. Oct. 10	Cavarero
Mon. Oct. 13	Cavarero Midterm Evaluations
Wed. Oct. 15	Cavarero *Screening of <i>Men in Black</i> at 7 pm. (Location TBA)
Fri. Oct. 17	Discussion of <i>Men in Black</i>
Mon. Oct. 20	Fall Break: No Class
Wed. Oct. 22	Group Editing for Paper 3 Bring to class four copies of your full outline, including thesis, body points, and evidence.
Fri. Oct. 24	Workshop for Group C. Group C must bring a draft of Paper 3 (1, 800 words) to class and e-mail me a copy of their draft by 8 am (10/24). Groups A, B, and D must bring Page 1 of their papers, including introduction, thesis, and first body paragraph. Group A (only) must create a draft and meet with Bryan by Sunday evening (10/26).
Mon. Oct. 27	Paper # 3 due (1,800 words). Research Paper Instructions.
Wed. Oct. 29	Paper Demonstration GPW: 5-8; 26-32 (again); 35-40. *Screening of <i>Mean Girls</i> at 7 pm. (Location TBA)
Fri. Oct. 31	Discussion of <i>Mean Girls</i> .
Mon. Nov. 3	Researching (Online Databases)

Wed. Nov. 5	The Rhodes College Library
Fri. Nov. 7	Alice Walker, <i>The Color Purple</i> (1982)
Mon. Nov. 10	Walker
Wed. Nov. 12	Walker
Fri. Nov. 14	Walker
Mon. Nov. 17	Walker
Wed. Nov. 19	Intellectual Property, Using and Documenting Sources
Fri. Nov. 21	Sherman Alexie, "This is what it means to say Phoenix, Arizona" (1993)
Mon. Nov. 24	Alexie
Wed. Nov. 26	Thanksgiving Break: No Class
Fri. Nov. 28	Thanksgiving Break: No Class
Mon. Dec. 1	<i>The New Yorker</i>
Wed. Dec. 3	<i>The Atlantic</i>
Fri. Dec. 5	Workshop for Group D. Group D must bring a draft of Paper 4 (2,500 words) to class and e-mail me a copy of their draft by 8 am (12/5). Group B (only) must create a draft and meet with Bryan by Tuesday evening (12/9)
Mon. Dec. 8	Review
Wed. Dec. 10	Paper 4 due (2,500 words).

Be sure to include all earlier versions of your essay, thesis, and outline with your final paper. Also, please turn in your final drafts of Papers 1, 2 and 3 with my comments and grade on them.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

PAPERS—70%

There are 4 formal papers for this class. They should be typed with approximately *330 words per page* (i.e. Times New Roman 12; 1" margins), double-spaced, pledged in full, and *must* include a word count, your name, my name, and a critical title. Proofread your papers for typos and grammar errors. For every error, your paper grade will suffer 0.1 point on a 4.0 scale. (A=4.0, A-=3.7, B+=3.3, etc.) Your first three papers will not include any outside sources, excepting your class text where appropriate. Only your final research paper will include outside sources, which should be documented in MLA format. All other paper formatting (spacing, quoting, etc.) should also follow MLA style, which can be found in your copy of the *Rhodes College Guide to Effective Paper Writing*. Submit *only* hard copies of final drafts and *always* keep a spare hard copy of your paper.

Late papers: All papers are due *in class* on the day stipulated on the syllabus. Any unexcused late paper will be penalized **1/3 of a letter grade for every day late** (A becomes A-, B+ becomes B). I will grant extensions in special circumstances. If you need an extension, you must contact me at least one class period before the paper is due. Failure to complete any of the four major papers for this class may result in failure of the class.

- Paper 1: 10% (1000 words ~ 3 pages)
- Paper 2: 15% (1500 words ~ 5 pages)
- Paper 3: 20% (1800 words ~ 6 pages)
- Paper 4: 25% (2500 words ~ 8 pages)

WORKSHOPS AND DRAFTS

Everyone is required to participate in a full class “draft” workshop and to work on at least one draft with the Writing Fellow. Failure to meet either of these requirements will result in a **full-grade deduction from your participation grade**.

If your paper is to be critiqued in a class workshop, you will need to submit an electronic copy of the essay draft to me via email no later than 8 AM on the day of the workshop. If your draft is not in at that time, your final grade on that paper will suffer. There are no formal “extensions” for drafts due to the nature of the assignment/workshop; however, you may switch with someone if you are unable to write your draft for the workshop for which you have signed up. Just keep me informed about any changes.

CLASS PARTICIPATION/HOMEWORK —30%

Class participation is an integral part of ENG 151. Actively participating means the following: completing homework assignments, engaging in in-class writing (group or individual), joining frequently in class or group discussions with significant comments and questions. For most class days, you will be asked to complete a brief writing assignment of 50-300 words. All of these assignments should be typed and brought to class on the day stipulated on the syllabus. Grades on these assignments will be check +/- . These assignments will not be counted if turned in late.

ABSENCES

I grant you **three** unexcused absences over the course of the semester. Beyond those three, *each* additional absence will cost your final course average three tenths of a point.