

Philosophy of Friendship (PHIL10195)

Course Organiser: Dr Damian Caluori
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Office Hours: By Appointment. Please send me an email a couple of days before you'd like to meet.
Location: Online on Microsoft Teams

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1. Course Aims and Objectives

The aim of this course is to gain an understanding of friendship and to critically evaluate theories about various aspects in the philosophy of friendship.

2. Intended Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Grasp and analyse central concepts of the philosophy of friendship.
2. Improve core philosophical skills, in particular engage with philosophical texts, evaluate arguments and develop original counterarguments
3. Connect topics in the philosophy of friendship to other areas of philosophy
4. Critically reflect on the role of friendship in their lives.

3. Structure

The course involves a weekly seminar/lecture and a weekly tutorial. In tutorials, we will discuss material covered in the lecture. Details on the course structure will be available on Learn later. Information about which part of the course will be online and which part (if any) in person, will also be available on Learn later.

4. Assessment

1,500-word midterm essay (40%), due 22nd October, at noon
2,500-word final essay (55%), due 10th December, at noon.
Essay topics to be distributed via Learn.

Participation (5%): 6 quizzes on Learn. Each quiz must be completed by Friday at noon of the week of the corresponding seminar/lecture. Quizzes will test your understanding of the content of the lecture. I will drop the least successful quiz and count only the top 5.

5. Course Description

Friendship seems to be an indispensable part of a good life. If it is part of a good life, what precisely is its value? In addition to its value, we will discuss the nature of friendship: what is friendship? One crucial feature of friendship is the fact that it unites some, but not all, people and thus brings about a distinction between friends and non-friends. What is it that unites friends? The partiality of friendship in this sense leads to problems with regard to the impartiality of rationality and of morality: We will discuss epistemic and practical tensions between friendship and rationality. We will also consider how moral theories that require impartiality deal with the partiality of friendship and ask whether conflicts between friendship and morality can be resolved by deontologists and by consequentialists.

6. Schedule of Lectures

In preparation of each class, please read all the *Core Readings* in advance. Among *Further Readings*, I have marked those that I recommend with an asterisk. *Recommended Readings* are recommended but not required. They are, as far as possible, listed in the order of relevance. If you have time to read one piece beyond the core readings, read the first recommended reading (etc.). For your essays, I recommend you read all recommended readings about your topic. Further readings that are without asterisk may be helpful, depending on your project. All texts are available via *Resource List*. Most of the Core Readings can be found in D. Caluori (ed.), *Thinking about Friendship. Historical and Contemporary Philosophical Perspectives* (New York 2013).

1. The Nature of Friendship

Week 1. Aristotle on Friendship

- *Core Readings*
 - D. Caluori: 'Introduction' in Caluori.
 - Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.1-4; *Eudemian Ethics* VII.2.1-8; VII.2.14-37.
 - S. Benetatos: 'Aristotle's Notion of Friendship' in Caluori.

- *Further Readings*
 - *J. M. Cooper: 'Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship'. *Review of Metaphysics* 30 (1976/7) 619-48. (A classic paper; criticized by Benetatos).
 - Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII-IX; *Eudemian Ethics* VII (if you want to read the whole treatises on friendship).
 - M. Pakaluk: *Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics Books VIII and IX* (translation and commentary; helpful to get clearer about particular passages).

Week 2. Self-disclosure and Trust

- *Core Readings*
 - L. Thomas: 'The Character of Friendship' in Caluori.
 - I. Kant: *Metaphysics of Morals. Elements of Ethics*, §§46-47.

- *Further Readings*
 - *O. Sensen: ‘Kant’s conception of friendship’ section 2, in: Caluori. (We will read the full paper in week 8.)
 - A. C. Baier: *Trust. The Tanner Lectures on Human Values* 1991.

Week 3. Mirror view and drawing view

- *Core Readings*
 - Aristotle (?): *Magna Moralia* II.15.
 - Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.4.
 - D. Cocking & J. Kennett: ‘Friendship and the Self’.
- *Further Readings*
 - N. Sherman, ‘Aristotle and the Shared Life’.

2. The unity of friendship: friends and non-friends

Week 4. Plato and Montaigne on the unity of friendship

- *Core Readings*
 - D. Caluori: ‘Friendship in Kallipolis’ in: Caluori.
 - Plato: *Republic* 462a-466d (= pp. 1089-1093 in Cooper).
 - Montaigne: ‘On Affectionate Relationships’ in Montaigne: *Essays* (I.28; usually translated as ‘On Friendship’).
- *Further Readings*
 - *U. Langer: ‘Montaigne’s Perfect Friendship’ in: Caluori.
 - *N. Kolodny: ‘Love as Valuing a Relationship’.
 - B. Helm: *Love, Friendship and the Self*, ch. 8.
 - Plato: *Lysis* (a dialogue on *philia*).

3. Friendship and Reason

Week 5. Friendship and epistemic bias

- *Core Readings*
 - M. Slote: ‘Relationships and Emotions’, in: Caluori.
 - S. Stroud: ‘Epistemic Partiality in Friendship’.
- *Further Readings*
 - *S. Keller: ‘Friendship and Belief’.
 - W. K. Clifford: *The Ethics of Belief*.

Week 6. Epistemic partiality is not necessarily irrational

- *Core Readings*
 - C. Brown: ‘Friendships: Epistemically Dangerous Liaisons?’, in: Caluori.
- *Further Readings*
 - <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology-bayesian/>

Week 7. Reasons of Friendship

- *Core Reading*
 - J. Seidman: 'How to Be a Non-Reductionist About Reasons of Friendship', in: Caluori.
- *Further Readings*
 - *S. Scheffler: 'Relationships and Responsibilities'.
 - *S. Scheffler: 'Morality and Reasonable Partiality'.
 - D. Parfitt: *On What Matters*, vol. 1, Appendix A.

4. Friendship and Morality

Week 8. Are Kantian deontology and friendship compatible?

- *Core Readings*
 - J. Timmermann: 'Acting from Duty: Inclination, Reason and Moral Worth' (an introduction to Kant's Moral Thought that should help you understand why friendship may be a problem for Kant).
 - O. Sensen: 'Friendship in Kant's Moral Thought', in: Caluori.
- *Further Readings*
 - *B. Williams: 'Persons, Character, and Morality'.
 - I. Kant: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*.

Week 9. Are consequentialism and friendship compatible?

- *Core Readings*
 - A. Norcross: 'Consequentialism and Friendship' in: Caluori.
- *Further Readings*
 - *P. Railton: 'Alienation, Consequentialism and the Demands of Morality'.
 - *M. Stocker: 'Values and Purposes: The Limits of Teleology and the Ends of Friendship'.
 - B. Williams: 'A Critique of Utilitarianism', in: *Utilitarianism: For and Against*.
 - H. Sidgwick: *The Methods of Ethics*, book III, ch. 4: 'Benevolence'.

5. Friendship and the Good Life

Week 10. The goods of friendship

- *Core Readings*
 - T. Hurka: 'The Goods of Friendship', in: Caluori.
- *Further Readings*
 - *T. Hurka: 'The Justification of National Partiality'.
 - D. Jeske: *Friends and Social Media*, ch. 4. 'What Good are Friends?'.

Week 11. The art of friendship

- *Core Reading*

- S. Lintott: 'Aesthetics and the Art of Friendship', in: Caluori.
- *Further Readings*
 - *D. Novitz: 'Love, Friendship, and the Aesthetics of Character'.
 - N. Carroll: 'Art and Friendship'.