

Focal Point Seminar
ISP 112
The Truth and Beauty of Friendship
Winter 2011

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Introduction: University students, particularly in the first year, are engaged in the all-important process of establishing an adult identity. Many of them find a sense of freedom in the college experience, and take that opportunity to explore new territory. One phenomenon of the first year experience is the opportunity to make new friends and forge new relationships, often for the first time since elementary school. Perhaps they are discarding “old” friends, and attaching themselves to a new set of cohorts. Maybe they find themselves clinging to the old, rejecting the new. Critical questions for first year students—indeed for everyone sharing the human experience—include: What makes a friend? Why are we drawn to certain individuals? What repels us? What reasons do we have for discarding friends and how difficult is it to move on? Do issues of ability or disability, class, gender, race, ethnicity, age, and experience influence our relationships? Why or why not?

The course will pose questions such as: what brings humans together, binds them, tears them apart? What role do issues such as differing abilities, gender, age, ethnicity, and class play in human friendship? Through Socratic student-led dialogue, large and small group discussion, in-class writing assignments, homework assignments, and research, the members of the class will formulate answers to some of the concerns posed. In all likelihood, the course will simply open up areas for participants to think about, read about, and research further.

Course Goals:

Reflection: Reading memoir causes readers to reflect naturally on their own lives. Each reading response will ask for a reflection of the issues addressed in the reading assignments. The final project will reflect students’ individual interests, and the final reflective essay will ask students to reflect on the totality of the course.

Building Values: The issue of how to be a good friend is central to the course. Becoming friends with another person causes us to put aside differences.

Critical and creative thinking: Students will be asked to read critically and analyze texts. You will be expected to do this for the assigned texts and the work of your classmates. You will be challenged to create a final project of your own design, with my guidance and assistance.

Multicultural perspective: Friendship is the hope we have for a more peaceful future.

Evaluation and Grading:

Reading Responses and pop quizzes	25%
Writing Portfolio	25%
Student research and discussion	25%
Final Reflective Essay	25%

100-90=A

89-80=B

79-70=C

69-60=D

59-0=F

Books/Reading:

Books: *Autobiography of a Face* by Lucy Grealy and *Truth and Beauty: A Friendship* by Ann Patchett (available at the Loop Campus bookstore and in any library or online). I expect you to bring the books to class on the day we discuss them.

Readings: all the other readings in the course will be available on D2L. I expect you to print out the readings and bring them to class on the day we discuss them. You should bring the readings to class on paper, as I do not allow laptops open in class.

Course Schedule

Week One: Introduction

Wednesday Jan 5: Syllabus review and course introduction.

Reading Response Instructions

Week Two: Making a “Different” Kind of Friend

Monday Jan10:

Readings:

“Friendship is the invisible thread running through society” by Richards Reeves from the New Statesman, 2 pp.

“Friendship: The Laws of Attraction” by Karen Karbo, in Psychology Today, 5 pp.

One reading response due.

Wednesday Jan 12:

Reading: Grealy’s Autobiography of a Face, through chapter 6.

Weeks Three and Four: Making a “Different” Kind of Friend, continued

Monday, Jan 1: Reading: Grealy’s Autobiography of a Face, chapter 7 to end.
One reading response due.

Wednesday, Jan 19:

Reading: Patchett, Ann, Truth and Beauty: A Friendship, chapters 1-5.

Monday, Jan 24:

Reading: Patchett, Ann, Truth and Beauty: A Friendship, chapter 6-13.

Wednesday, Jan 26:

Readings: Patchett, Ann, Truth and Beauty: A Friendship, chapter 14-end.

Grealy, Suellen. “Hijacked by Grief” The Guardian, 2351 words

One reading response due on Patchett.

Week Five: Famous Writers Make Famous Friends and “The End.” What happens when relationships crash and burn?

Monday, Jan 31:

Reading: Johnson, et. al. “The Process of Relationship Development and Deteterioration: Turning Points in Friendships that have Terminated” Communication Quarterly, 13 pp.

Wednesday, Feb 2:

Writing Portfolio discussions/assignments.

Research proposal due.

Week Six: Surfing the ‘Net with our Friends

Monday, Feb 7:

Reading: Seymour and Lupton, “Holding the line online: exploring wired relationships for people with disabilities” in Disability and Society, 5 pp.

Last reading response due.

Wednesday, Feb 9:

Bring all graded reading responses to class.

Bring outline for research project to class.

Weeks Seven and Eight: Researching and Reflecting on Friendship

Monday, Feb 14:

Focus: Research Projects and Field Research

Be ready to discuss your research project in depth.

Wednesday, Feb 16:

Writing portfolio peer review. You must bring a rough draft of your portfolio to class on this day. Failure to do so will result in a lowering of your final grade by 20 points.

Week Nine: Students will lead a discussion and give a presentation on the topic of their research.

Week Ten: Students will lead a discussion and give a presentation on the topic of their research.

Writing portfolio due.

Final exam: Reflective Essay due by Tuesday, March 15 at 11:00 a.m. through the D2L Dropbox.

Additional Information:

The Writing Center

Consider visiting the Writing Center to discuss your assignments for this course or any others. You may schedule appointments (30 or 50 minutes) on an as-needed or weekly basis, scheduling up to 3 hours worth of appointments per week. Online services include Feedback-by-Email and IM conferencing (with or without a webcam). All writing center services are free.

Writing Center tutors are specially selected and trained graduate and undergraduate students who can help you at almost any stage of your writing. They will not do your work for you, but they can help you focus and develop your ideas, review your drafts, and polish your writing. They can answer questions about grammar, mechanics, different kinds of writing styles, and documentation formats. They also can answer questions and provide feedback online, through IM/webcam chats and email. Obviously, the tutors will not necessarily be familiar with every class or subject, but they are able to provide valuable help from the perspective of an interested and careful reader as well as a serious and experienced student-writer.

Schedule your appointments with enough time to think about and use the feedback you'll receive. Bring your assignment handout and other relevant materials to your appointments.

Quick Links & Locations:

- To schedule an appointment at the Center's LPC and Loop locations: <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/html/sched/WCOnline.html>
- To schedule Real-time conversations with IM and/or webcam: <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/html/sched/im.htm>
- To request Feedback by Email: <http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/html/sched/email.html>
- Loop Campus Office: 1620 Lewis Center, 312.362.6726
- Lincoln Park Office: 250 McGaw, 773.325.4272
- For more information, visit: <http://www.depaul.edu./writing/>

Exceptional Students

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact

of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted:

- * The PLS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-1677, Student Center #370, and/or
- * The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-1677, Student Center #370

Attendance and Tardiness

Attendance is crucial to your success in this class, and in your life. If you are absent more than three times, you run the risk of failing this class. Coming to class late twice equals an absence. I take attendance and I keep track of latecomers. Students who have not attended class by the first regular class meeting after the last day to add will not be admitted to this class.

Academic Integrity

Please review the university guidelines on student integrity found in the Student Handbook. If you plagiarize anything for this class, you will automatically fail. I will also be forced to sanction you formally through the University Academic Integrity office, which keeps a record of all such violations.

Other Issues of Note

1. Only one person at a time should be speaking during class. If we are having a class discussion, participants should expect others to listen with respect. During the infrequent lectures, I will be passing on vital information for your success in the class. I do not tolerate students who carry on separate conversations or whisper. Students who engage in such activity will leave the class and their next graded assignment reduced by one letter grade.
2. **Turn off and put away your cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before class begins. You must keep your electronic devices in your bag at all times. Students who display or use such devices in class will have their next graded assignment reduced by one letter grade and they will leave the class.**

Bibliography of Course Readings:

Grealy, Lucy. Autobiography of a Face. New York: Perennial, 2005, 257 pp.

Grealy, Suellen. "Hijacked by Grief" The Guardian August 7, 2004, 2351 words.

Johnson, Amy Janan, Elaine Wittenberg, Michael Haigh, Shelly Wigley, Jennifer Becker, Ken Brown, and Elizabeth Craig. "The Process of Relationship Development and Deterioration: Turning Points in Friendships that have Terminated" Communication Quarterly Vol. 52 No 1 Winter 2004, 54-67.

Karbo, Karen. "Friendship: The Laws of Attraction" Psychology Today Vol. 39 No 6 Nov/Dec 2006, 90-5.

Patchett, Ann. Truth and Beauty: A Friendship. New York: Perennial, 2003, 236 pp.

Reeves, Richard. "Friendship is the Invisible Thread Running Through Society" New Statesman Vol. 133 April 19, 2004, 29-31.

Seymour, Wendy and Deborah Lupton. "Holding the line online: exploring wired relationships for people with disabilities" Disability & Society Vol. 19 No 4 June 2004, 291-6.