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office hours: T/R 8-9 am & immediately after class
other times available; email for an appointment

Technologies of Friendship
English 101
Fall 2009
University of South Carolina

Essay II

Write an essay of between 1500 and 2250 words in response to the following prompt:

The topic of the second essay is the technology of the letter within and as a component of *philia*. Every successful essay will introduce an interpretive argument for the relationship between the technology of the letter and *philia*. Here are some fruitful areas of confluence:

1. How does the technology of the letter productively facilitate the dialogue that is intrinsic to the performance of *philia*?
2. In what ways does the technology of the letter construct, facilitate, or frustrate the development of *philia* as an act of knowing?
3. How does desire surface and mature as a component of *philia* through the technology of the letter?
4. How does the problematic nature of reciprocity unfold or develop alongside or within the letter that occurs as a technology or mechanism of *philia*?
5. In what ways does *aporia* develop within the technology of the letter as both an obstacle to and as a fertile ground for *philia*?

You should also feel free, and even encouraged, to develop your own focused question to answer. Whatever topic you select, your essay should use that topic as a means for thinking deeply and substantively about the letter as a technology of friendship.

Whichever prompt you choose, we want you to write a careful, attentive, polished essay that responds directly to the prompt and the issues of the class. Any successful essay will be closely linked to the texts of Plato's *Lysis*, and Seneca's *Letters*, establishing itself as an interpretation of *philia* grounded within the texts discussed. All successful essays will move beyond the action of the texts to develop a thesis-driven interpretation of the philosophical and rhetorical moves accomplished by the letter as a mechanism of *philia*. The best essays will move beyond the letter itself to make an interpretation of *philia* as a significant human technology.

Please attend to separate attachments detailing the format of the essay; obviously unfinished essays will receive an F (50) at best, a 0 at worst.

Tentative Schedule & Due Dates

Topic Discussion Session: Tuesday 10/20
Thesis Proposals due in class, Thursday 10/22
Thesis Proposal Meetings, 10/19-10/23
Drafting and revision week: 10/26-10/30
Essay Due: Tuesday at 5am (11/3) by emailed attachment