Technologies of Friendship

Instructor
Randall Cream   **randall.cream@gmail.com**   **Office:** Humanities Office Bldg 300
Open Hours: T/R 8-9 am in Cool Beans (College Street across from Horseshoe); other times by appt.

The Course
This course investigates the technologies that enable friendship as a component of ethical life. Working on a trans-historical perspective, from ancient Greece to contemporary networked culture—from writing letters to making txts and sharing flickr sets—we'll read, think, and write about the ways in which available technologies structure and define the relationships that comprise our inner experience. Using friendship as a focus and technology as a methodology, we'll strive to read slowly and critically, think carefully and rigorously, and write creatively and clearly.

There are two foundational principles guiding the pedagogy of this course. First of all, I believe that the instruction of writing requires practice–regular, repeated, reflected practice. We'll write this semester from beginning to end, weekly, and with an eye to continued development of analytical and interpretive forms. Writing is not a skill that can be developed through a theoretical understanding; the only way to develop oneself as a writer is to write. Class sessions, therefore, will not devote much time to articulating a theory of writing, or to lectures on writing. Instead, writing instruction will occur during conferences and in the form of written comments. Ultimately, I want you to be a self-reflexive, self-critical writer.

The second principle guiding the pedagogy of this course is the notion that good writing requires good thinking. One can't write well without thinking well. Accordingly, we will spend a considerable amount of time this semester thinking—thinking through reading, thinking through writing, and thinking through the discussions. Since there can be no writing in the absence of thinking, your ability to think, critically and creatively, in response to the themes of the course will drive the writing that you do this semester.

The class this semester looks at the topic of friendship in and as a human technology. We'll begin by thinking about friendship from a philosophical point of view, and then use that work to analyze writing as a technology of friendship. We'll end the semester by turning to more familiar internet technologies.

Major Assignments
1. **Weekly analytic responses to course readings/issues/content** (20%)
2. **Participation, measured online** (20%)
3. **Essays (3)**, encompassing the issues and topics of the course (60%):

Course Website for Readings, Discussion, Writing Assignments, etc: thinkingtogether.org/rcream

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the submission of someone else's work as though it were your own. Plagiarism is dishonest. Plagiarism is especially troublesome in a collaborative and/or online class. The distinction between plagiarism and collaboration is quite clear: whereas collaboration engages, responds to and incorporates others' ideas, plagiarism dishonestly hides its use of others' work. Before the essays are due, we will speak at length about the ways in which you can engage in collaboration and avoid the danger of plagiarism. Any instance of plagiarism will result in an F for this course.

Class Policies
Regular Attendance is required in order to do the work of the class. Missed work cannot be made up without an extraordinary excuse. I use a standard 10-pt scale (90=A, 80=B, etc).