

FRIENDSHIP

Portrayals in modern novels

COURSE #:

22F-FRD

FORMAT:

Seminar

MODERATOR:

Bobbie Reitt
Joan McKelvey

DATE & TIME:

Mon - 9:30 - 11:30 AM
10 Weeks
Starting on 9/26/2022

LOCATION:

UWW Building, UMass
Hadley

MAX NO. OF PARTICIPANTS:

18

AUDITORS ACCEPTED:

Yes

MAX NO. OF AUDITORS:

2

PURPOSE:

We will explore the concept of friendship in the modern Western world, using eight novels as case studies to refine our thinking about this deceptively simple idea. "Friend"—being one, having one, defining one—can be harder than it looks.

DESCRIPTION:

We often use "friend" casually, referring to someone we barely know. But we could be referring to someone as important as family. In this seminar, we will confront questions that have engrossed thinkers for centuries and have been subjects of controversy: Is it true that only good persons could be friends? Can women be friends? Children? Can friendship cross gender divides? Does competition destroy friendship? Can your spouse also be your friend? Your parent, or child?

Our sessions will be structured like those of previous seminars on portrayals of illness, marriage, and family. Each session will focus on one novel, which we will approach in two ways: one member will lead our discussion of its literary qualities and the second member will lead our discussion of its views of friendship.

Our first and final sessions will be devoted to our beginning and then our ending views of friendship, directing our attention to ways that seminar discussions have affected our thinking.

ROLE OF PARTICIPANTS:

Participants will (1) read all the works on the reading list and (2) prepare to lead a discussion either on the literary aspects of one of these works or on the kind of friendship it has portrayed and what the portrayal adds to our understanding of friendship.

RESOURCES:

Any edition is acceptable for the following: Margaret Atwood, *Cat's Eye*; Fannie Flagg, *Fried Green Tomatoes*; Gail Godwin, *Old Lovegood Girls*; John Knowles, *A Separate Peace*; R. J. Palacio, *Wonder*; Sarah Perry, *The Essex Serpent*; Wallace Stegner, *Crossing to Safety*; Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited*.

ABOUT THE MODERATORS:

Bobbie Reitt is a retired book editor who has led seminars every year since joining LIR in 2004. Joan McKelvey, a retired social worker who practiced family therapy for 32 years, has co-moderated several previous seminars.