HISTORY OF INTIMACY: FAMILY, FRIENDSHIP, ROMANCE

Lecturer: Tamar Rozett

What shapes our emotional connections? Are the people we care about, and the ways in which we show that we care, the same today as they were in the past?

In this class, we will closely examine the ways in which race, class, gender, sexuality, emerging technologies and changing distances shaped intimate connections in the West between children and servants, spouses and siblings, parents and prostitutes from the early modern era to our times. We will pause to consider the frayed edges of intimacy as they appear in slaveholding households, colonial encounters, cross-distance migrations or adoption agencies. Looking over the shoulder of men and women of the past, we will see them at their most intimate moments through their diaries and their census data, their correspondences and conduct books, their newspaper articles and parliamentary proceedings.

Students attending this class will gain a fresh perspective on intimate relations from the sixteenth century to the present, as well as enhance their critical reading and academic writing skills. Students will also learn how to analyze historical sources, how to dissect a scholarly argument, and how to present a persuading historical claim.

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