

Fall 2020

Johnston Seminar 000K: Living Together

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HOL 103

MW 11:00-12:20pm

In this seminar, we will reflect on various modes of communal living, to examine how alternative forms of *living together* serve to interrogate, disrupt, and critique heteronormative and other institutionally sanctioned structures of domesticity. What does it mean to *live together*? How can alternative modes of *living together* offer multiple possibilities for intimacy, stability, and care? What unique challenges present difficulties for marginalized forms of *living together*?

In his seminal lectures entitled *How to Live Together*, theorist Roland Barthes turns his attention to *friend groups* as forms of kinship and relation that fall outside coupling and family. Our reflections will depart from his modest-yet-ambitious proposition: that structures of amity, nurturing, desire, and compassion that deviate from the neo-liberal, bourgeois ideal of the nuclear family unit have been historically overlooked but deserve careful attention.

Sources to launch our inquiry may include excerpts from: Barthes's lectures; Marcelle Clement's book *The Improvised Woman*; Lukas Moodysson's film *Together*; Olivia Laing's book *The Lonely City*; the television series *Tales of the City* (Armistead Maupin); Greta Gerwig's film *Little Women*; Rebecca Traister's book *All the Single Ladies*; Jennie Livingston's film *Paris Is Burning*; Kate Bolick's book *Spinster: Making a Life of One's Own*; Samuel Delaney's essays in *Heavenly Breakfast*; the television series *Pose* (Ryan Murphy); Jo Freeman's essay "The Tyranny of Structurelessness"; and extended study of sites of intentional communal living, such as Transition House, Black Mountain College, and the Rainbow Family.

Coursework will include both critical and creative written responses to source materials, and reflection on how these source materials may resonate with the culture of communal living in the Johnston community.