

The Department of Philosophy Colloquium Series Presents

EQUALITY & ELITISM: Early Modern Women and the Philosophy of Friendship



Presented by:

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Location: Sakamaki Hall
C-308

Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* famously restricts the ideal form of friendship to subjects that are "alike in virtue" (1156b6-8), which entails that "such friendships should be infrequent; for such men are rare" (1156b25). Critics highlight counterexamples showing genuine friendship requires neither high degrees of similarity (odd couples), nor even a minimum of virtue (partners in crime). Call this the elitism objection. The charge of elitism is especially forceful in considering how women historically have been thought to be incapable of achieving true friendship. In this talk, I argue that accounts of friendship of some early modern women philosophers formulate the ideal of friendship in a way that averts the elitism objection while preserving commitments to virtue and similarity.