ABSTRACT: Significant inequalities persist in the United States today despite a multitude of anti-discrimination laws and virtually everyone’s alleged commitment to egalitarianism. A critical unexamined aspect necessary for a full understanding of the seemingly intractable inequalities that plague the United States is how the personal relationships that ground and shape our lives might contribute to furthering or frustrating the attainment of democratic ideals. Traditional philosophical analysis shows friendship is important largely for the roles it plays in individual lives and for the ethical issues that confront it in that context such as friendship’s apparent unfair privileging. We favor our friends while claiming to believe all people should be treated equally. As a result, friendship helps maintain structural inequities, including systems and arrangements that participate in large-scale institutional racism and sexism. In this talk I explore the possibility that friendship plays a mechanistic role in maintaining and reproducing inequality.

Thursday, September 26, 6:30 pm, Henry Hudson Room (3rd floor Fontaine)

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