A crucial strand in recent gender/sexuality/queer studies (exemplified by, among others, Adam Phillips, Leo Bersani, Judith Halberstam, Michael Warner and Lauren Berlant) has focused on promoting and exploring what might be called an expanded field of relational possibilities and histories: moving theoretically to (in Foucault’s words) “reopen affective and relational virtualities,” such work has also aimed to recover and rethink the multiplicitous forms of intimacy historically privileged, but also historically suppressed, ignored, taken-for-granted or otherwise de-privileged, by dominant institutions and discourses, especially the ideological structures of heterosexual romance, monogamy, marriage, the couple, and the novel itself. Focused on expanding and reconsidering the range of intimacies represented, imagined, enacted or concealed in late nineteenth- and twentieth-century British and American literature and culture, this course will focus on such topics as: marriage and its others (Boston marriages, open marriages, polygamy, prostitution); friendship in all its forms, including friendships between members of the same sex and friendships between men and women; intimacies (erotic and otherwise) across race, class and generational boundaries; utopian intimacies; transnational/global intimacies; the public and private spaces of intimacy; literary forms in relation to the forms of intimacy. The course would be centered on fictions by writers including George Eliot, Mark Twain, Henry James, Émile Zola, D. H. Lawrence, William Faulkner, Willa Cather, Virginia Woolf, Alan Hollinghurst, Amitav Ghosh and Jhumpa Lahir, but will also (time permitting) incorporate some glances at contemporary popular culture. Texts will include extensive secondary readings in queer theory – Foucault (including selections from The History of Sexuality), Bersani (Intimacies and selected essays), Phillips (On Flirtation), Tom Roach (Friendship as a Way of Life) Tim Dean (Unlimited Intimacy), and Heather Love (Feeling Backward) – and, more broadly, theories/accounts of relationality, intimacy and friendship both canonical (for example, Cicero, Emerson, Montaigne) and contemporary (Derrida, Blanchot). The main work for the class will be a 20-25 page term paper, with subsidiary assignments (proposal, bibliography, self-critique); students will also present oral reports on instances of alternative intimacies in contemporary culture.