

# The Metaphysics of Fiction

## Fall 2007

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### Course Description:

We will carefully examine some metaphysical issues (and a few moral and epistemological ones too) which arise when we think about fiction. For instance, (a) the difference between fiction and non-fiction, (b) whether fictional objects exist, (c) what *existence* is, (d) whether fictional objects are *possible* objects and fictional world are possible worlds, (e) what possible worlds are, (f) what makes fictional objects peculiar and unlike anything else, (g) whether we are or can be really frightened/saddened/elated, etc. by fiction, (h) the ontological status of *works* of fiction, (i) the relationship between the author and the work of fiction, (j) whether we can imagine what an author's work intends to have us imagine.

### Books:

- (1) Kendall Walton, *Mimesis As Make-Believe*
- (2) Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*
- (3) James Lasdun, *The Horned Man*

### Requirements:

- (1) Class attendance and participation in discussion (15%)
- (2) Five 1-2 page papers on an assigned topic. (35%)
- (3) Student presentations (20%)
- (4) Take-home final examination (30%)

<b>August</b>	
<b>28</b>	<b>30 What is Fiction?</b> Walton, <i>Mimesis</i> p. 35 - 43, 70-89, 95-102, Martinich, "A Theory of Fiction" Currie, <i>Nature of Fiction</i> , ch. 1 Searle, "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse"

<b>September</b>	
<b>4</b> <b>Cont'd</b>	<b>6 Existence and Non-Existence</b> Quine, "On What There Is" van Inwagen, "Existence, Ontological Commitment, and Fictional Entities" Salmon, "Nonexistence"
<b>11</b> <b>Cont'd</b>	<b>13 Possible Worlds</b> Lewis, "Possible Worlds" Kripke, <i>Naming &amp; Necessity</i> , Lecture 1, 2, & Addenda

	Thomasson, <i>Fictional and Metaphysics</i> , ch. 4
<b>18</b> <b>Cont'd</b>	<b>20 Ontological Status of Fictional Things</b> Thomasson, <i>Fiction and Metaphysics</i> , ch. 1, 2, 3, 5 Walton, "How Remote are Fictional Worlds from the Real World?" Crittenden, ch. 2, 4, 6 Walton, <i>Mimesis</i> 57-69, 130-137 Currie, <i>The Nature of Fiction</i> , ch. 4
<b>25</b> <b>Cont'd</b>	<b>27</b> <b>Cont'd</b>

<b>October</b>	
<b>2 More about Ontological Status</b> Yagisawa, "Against Creationism in Fiction" Brock, "Fictionalism about Fictional Characters" Friend, "Fictional Characters" Pavel, <i>Fictional Worlds</i> ch. 2 & 4 Ronen, "Completing the Incompleteness of Fictional Entities"	<b>4</b> <b>Cont'd</b>
<b>9 Truth in Fiction</b> Jubien, <i>Contemporary Metaphysics</i> , ch. 10 Thomasson, <i>Fiction and Metaphysics</i> , ch. 7 Lewis, "Truth in Fiction" van Inwagen, "Creatures of Fiction" Parsons, selections Evans, Selections from <i>The Varieties of Reference</i> Hospers, "Implied Truths in Literature" Currie, <i>The Nature of Fiction</i> , ch. 2	<b>11</b> <b>Cont'd</b>
<b>16</b> <b>Cont'd</b>	<b>18 *No Class*</b>
<b>23 Emotional Reactions to Fiction</b> [emotional responses] Walton, 191-208, 240-289 <i>The Exorcist</i> Currie, <i>The Nature of Fiction</i> , ch. 5 Joyce, "Rational Fear of Monsters"	<b>25</b>
<b>30</b>	

<b>November</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>13 Authorial Issues</b> Lamarque, "The Death of the Author" in <i>Fictional Points of View</i> Currie, <i>An Ontology of Art</i> , ch. 3 & 4 Walton, <i>Mimesis</i> 353-382 Thomasson, Borges, "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote" Lasdun, <i>The Horned Man</i>	<b>15</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>

27	29
December	
<b>4 Imaginative Resistance and Morality in Fiction</b> Gendler, "The Puzzle of Imaginitive Resistence" Weatherson, "Morality, Fiction, and Possibility" Walton, "Morals in Fiction and Fictional Morality"	<b>6</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>