

Philosophy 8700—Seminar: Metaphysics
Spring 2015

Instructor: Ben Caplan
Time: Th 3:55 PM – 6:40 PM
Location: 353 University Hall
Office: 372 University Hall
Office hours: Th 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM, or by appointment
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Description

The seminar is on *fictional realism*, the view that there are fictional characters. In particular, it is on *abstract creationism*, the variety of fictional realism according to which fictional characters are actually existing abstract objects.

The seminar will be structured about Lectures I-III and VI of Saul Kripke's *Reference and Existence* and Chapters 6-8 of Anthony Everett's *The Nonexistent*. We will be proceeding slowly and discussing the texts in some detail. Students are expected to have done the reading before seminar and to have access to the texts during seminar. Previous familiarity with Kripke's *Naming and Necessity* would be helpful but won't entirely be assumed. (We'll begin with a crash course.)

Topics to be covered will include some of the following: arguments for and against the existence of fictional characters; arguments for and against the creation of fictional characters; the distinction between *instantiating a property* and *instantiating a property according to a fiction*; the differences, if any, between fictional and mythical objects; negative existentials; the identity and distinctness of fictional characters; and (relatedly) the number of fictional characters.

Requirements

The course grade will be based on one seminar paper (10-15 pages).

Schedule

There is no class on Thursday, 19 February 2015 (Central APA); Thursday, 5 March 2015 (Auburn conference); or Thursday, 19 March 2015 (spring break). Depending on how things go, there might or might not be class on Thursday, 23 April 2015 (last week of the semester). A detailed schedule will be posted and updated on Carmen as we go.

In accordance with Faculty Rule 3335-8-15, which prohibits any change in the time of a scheduled class without the approval of the registrar's office, chairs, and deans, I will not *officially* change the starting time of the seminar to 4 PM.

Academic Misconduct

In accordance with Faculty Rule 3335-5-487, all suspected cases of academic misconduct will be reported to the university's Committee on Academic Misconduct. For further details, see the Code of Student Conduct at studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp.

Disability Services

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform me as soon as possible of their needs. For further information, see the website of the Office of Disability Services at www.ods.ohio-state.edu.

Readings

Main readings

- Kripke, Saul A. 2013. *Reference and Existence: The John Locke Lectures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Everett, Anthony. 2013. *The Nonexistent*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Additional readings

- Braun, David. 2005. "Empty Names, Fictional Names, Mythical Names." *Noûs* 39.4 (Dec.): 596-631.
- Brock, Stuart. 2010. "The Creationist Fiction: The Case against Creationism about Fictional Characters." *Philosophical Review* 119.3 (July): 337-364.
- Cameron, Ross P. 2012. "How to Be a Nominalist and a Fictional Realist." In *Art and Abstract Objects*. Ed. Christy Mag Uidhir. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 179-196.
- Everett, Anthony. 2005. "Against Fictional Realism." *Journal of Philosophy* 102.12 (Dec.): 624-649.
- Goodman, Jeffrey. 2014. "Creatures of Fiction, Objects of Myth." *Analysis* 74.1 (Jan.): 35-40.
- Howell, Robert. 2011a. "Fictional Realism and its Discontents." In *Truth in Fiction*. Ed. Franck Lihoreau. Philosophical Analysis. Frankfurt: Ontos. 153-202.
- . 2011b. "Literary Fictions, Real and Unreal." In *Fictions and Models: New Essays*. Ed. John Woods. Basic Philosophical Concepts. Munich: Philosophia. 27-107.
- Kripke, Saul A. 2011. "Vacuous Names and Fictional Entities." 1973. In *Philosophical Troubles: Collected Papers, Volume 1*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 52-74.
- Murday, Brendan. forthcoming. "Fictional Realism and Indeterminate Identity." *Journal of Philosophical Research*.

- Nolan, Daniel and Alexander Sandgren. 2014. "Cardinality and Creationism." *Analysis* 74.4 (Oct.): 615-622.
- Salmon, Nathan. 1998. "Nonexistence." *Noûs* 32.3 (Sept.): 277-319. Reprinted in *Metaphysics, Mathematics, and Meaning: Philosophical Papers I*. Oxford: Clarendon, 2005. 50-90.
- Schnieder, Benjamin. 2010. "Bad Examples?" *American Philosophical Quarterly* 47.3 (July): 279-286.
- and Tatjana von Solodkoff. 2009. "In Defence of Fictional Realism." *Philosophical Quarterly* 59.234 (Jan.): 138-149.
- Thomasson, Amie L. 1999. *Fiction and Metaphysics*. Cambridge Studies in Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2011. "Fiction, Existence and Indeterminacy." In *Fictions and Models: New Essays*. Ed. John Woods. Basic Philosophical Concepts. Munich: Philosophia. 109-148.
- van Inwagen, Peter. 1977. "Creatures of Fiction." *American Philosophical Quarterly* 14.4 (Oct.): 299-308. Reprinted in *Ontology, Identity, and Modality: Essays in Metaphysics*. Cambridge Studies in Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 37-57.
- . 2003. "Existence, Ontological Commitment, and Fictional Entities." In *The Oxford Handbook of Metaphysics*. Ed. Michael J. Loux and Dean W. Zimmerman. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 131-157.
- von Solodkoff, Tatjana. 2014. "Fictional Realism and Negative Existentials." In *Empty Representations: Reference and Non-Existence*. Ed. Manuel García-Carpintero and Genoveva Martí. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 333-352.