

<b>Course</b>	<b>PHIL60202</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Issues in Aesthetics: Fiction</b>
<b>Tutor</b>	<b>Dr Catharine Abell</b>

### **Course Content:**

Writers of fiction appear to assert things that are not true and that they know not to be true. Yet fiction making differs from lying. In producing fiction, writers do not generally intend to deceive their audience. Thus, it seems, they are not really making assertions. This raises the question of whether or not fiction making involves the performance of speech acts and, if so, what sorts of speech acts it involves.

Fiction also raises questions about the existence and nature of fictional characters. In writing a work of fiction, writers appear to refer to fictional characters such as Sherlock Holmes. It is not clear whether or not there are such things as fictional characters. On the one hand, the statement "Sherlock Holmes does not exist" seems to be true. On the other, so too do statements such as "Sherlock Holmes is a detective" and "Sherlock Holmes was created by Conan Doyle". The truth of both these latter statements seems to require there to be a fictional character, Sherlock Holmes. Moreover, if there is no such character, it is not clear how we can produce meaningful sentences about Sherlock Holmes.

Finally, there is the problem of determining the content of works of fiction. Much of the story that a work of fiction recounts is not explicitly represented by the fiction. Instead, we must draw inferences about what happens in the story from its explicit representational content. This raises the question of what determines the content of a fiction. We will discuss all three of these issues.

**Teaching Methods:** 1 x 1-hour introductory lecture, 7 x 2-hour seminars

### **Assessment**

1 essay of 5000 Words (100%)

### **Aims:**

The course unit aims to:

- To introduce students to the philosophical issues regarding fiction.
- To introduce students to seminal and recent literature on this topic.
- To equip students with the advanced research skills needed for the MRes dissertation and doctoral research.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

On completion of this unit successful students will be able:

- To complete a substantial piece of research in an area of analytical philosophy.
- To present a substantial piece of research to a critical audience.
- To demonstrate a broad knowledge of seminal and recent literature on an advanced topic in analytical philosophy.
- To conduct independent research, under supervision by an expert supervisor.
- To understand, critically assess, and respond to advanced philosophical writing.

**Preliminary reading**

Currie, Gregory (1990), *The Nature of Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Lewis, David (1983a), 'Postscripts to Truth in Fiction', *Philosophical Papers* (1; Oxford: Oxford University Press), 276-80.

--- (1983b), 'Truth in Fiction', *Philosophical Papers* (1; Oxford: Oxford University Press), 261-75.

Lamarque, Peter and Olsen, Stein Haugom (1994), *Truth, Fiction and Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

Walton, Kendall (1990), *Mimesis as Make-Believe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).