

**PHILOSOPHY 232**  
**ADVANCED TOPICS**  
**IN VALUE THEORY**  
**UCSC SPRING 2020**

# PHILOSOPHY AND FICTION

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. E. Hande Tuna

**EMAIL:** ehtuna@ucsc.edu

**CLASS MEETINGS:**

M 2:00 am - 5:00 pm

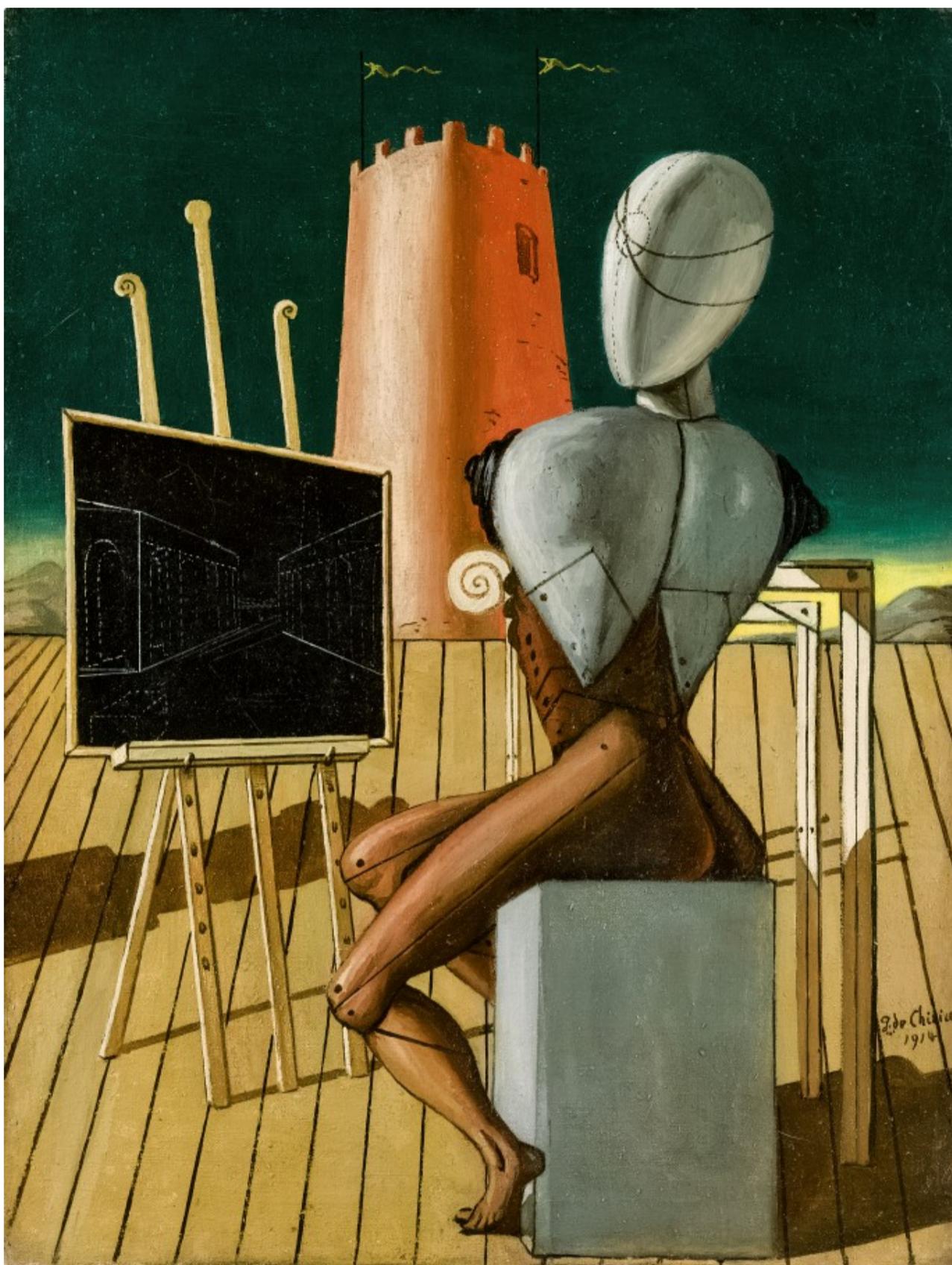
**OFFICE HOURS:**

F 10:00 am

## Course description and objectives

Fiction occupies a central place in our lives, especially in these times of crisis when we find ourselves spending all of our time in our homes. We all read novels, stories, plays; watch movies, TV shows, operas; look at pictures. While we're all familiar with fictional works, it has proven phenomenally difficult to state precisely what the boundaries of fiction are. What's the difference, for instance, between Hopper's *Nighthawks* and a picture on the front page of the *New York Times*? What difference would it make if a work such as James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*, a first-person account of drug addiction, were published as fiction? We are quick to correct people if they tell us that Sherlock Holmes lives at 221b Banker Street or that Will Riker is no good at poker, but what is truth in the context of fiction?

Aside from these more traditional metaphysical and epistemological concerns, questions arise about the special value of fictional works. What can we learn from them? Are all perspectives or stories up for grabs, or are some stories not ours to tell and some perspectives not ours to speak from? What explains the psychological mindset we find ourselves in when we refuse to engage with works such as Jeanine Cummins' *American Dirt*? These are some of the central questions we will be addressing while engaging with recent philosophical work on fiction. Fiction has a special place in



Giorgio de Chirico, *Il vaticinatore*, 1914

philosophical discussions in virtue of being one of those rare topics that brings philosophers from various fields together. In our discussions will articulate connections between work in aesthetics, metaphysics, epistemology and moral psychology.

**All the readings will be available on Canvas.**

## Grade distribution

Blogposts	30%
Participation	20%
Leading class discussion	15%
Essay (+Revisions)	25% (5%)
Peer Review	5%

## Expectations and evaluation

**Blogposts (30%):** Throughout the quarter, you will be writing weekly blogposts. On the blogposts, you will have the chance to explain the aspects of the reading(s) that attracted your attention most and articulate your reflections. You will have eight opportunities to submit a blogpost (500-750 words, typed). They are due the night before the class. Please make sure you upload them to Canvas with accompanying image(s) if you like by 11:59 pm on the dates marked in the schedule below. I will upload them to the class website. You can choose either to write a new blogpost each week responding to the readings assigned for that week or to submit a revised version of a previous post with substantial revisions based on the new readings assigned for that week. You also have the option of collaborating with your classmates and co-authoring blogposts. For each blogpost you do not submit or did not substantially revise, **3.75 points** will be subtracted from your overall grade. Here are some blogpost examples, [one on imaginative resistance](#), [one on art criticism](#), [one on fake news](#), and [one on incrementalist imagination](#).

Writing blogposts will not only help you to understand and retain the material better but will also prepare you for contributing to classroom discussions. These goals are only attainable if you do the reading and the writing before class. There is no point in doing them after class. Hence, **no late submissions** of blogposts are accepted.

**Participation (20%):** Participation involves attendance, engaging in class discussion, and commenting on your classmates' blogposts on the class website. Indicators of successful participation include the ability to think theoretically and express theoretical ideas in an accessible way but also openness to diverse perspectives and engaging in thoughtful conversation and sometimes respectful criticism, and quite possibly self-criticism. I try hard to make sure the classroom is a positive environment for students of all genders / sexualities and cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and this effort cannot be successful without the good faith, compassion, and generosity of all participants. Satisfactory participation indicates that you

- ▶ Have a strong understanding of course readings and themes: You are not showing off about what you know, but are bringing in nuances from the week's and the quarter's readings where these help to focus and advance conversation.
- ▶ Develop a critical complex stance: You are connecting with nuances of core issues in the course and advancing your own views with an awareness of strong arguments on different sides.
- ▶ Are attuned to what others are saying and draw connections between them and course themes: your contributions show that you've listened well, and you help to clarify, focus, and move the conversation forward.

**Leading Class Discussion (15%):** You will be asked to lead one

class discussion. You will start with a 5-10 minute summary of the reading(s) assigned for the class. Everyone in the classroom is expected to do the readings for each week so your summary should just aim to remind people of what they have already read instead of detailing the article(s) to an audience that is unfamiliar with the piece. You are also encouraged to prepare a set of questions to direct the discussion.

**Essay (+Revisions) (25% (5%)) and Peer-Review (5%):** You will write approximately 3000 words on a topic of your own choosing. You are required to consult with me at least one week prior to the deadline for the draft submission. The essay is due at the beginning of class on **May 25. No late submissions** of your first draft will be accepted since otherwise your classmate will not have enough time to work on their peer-review of your essay.

To encourage collaboration, you are asked to peer-review one of your classmates' essays. It is due on **June 1, 2 pm**. I will provide a checklist to use to do the peer-review. Since most writers – whether they are neophytes or professionals – struggle with the same sorts of problems, you will find the peer review pertinent to your own work, even while you examine that of your classmates. Indeed, responding to your peers' work will help you become a sharper critic of your own writing.

The final draft of your essay is due on **June 8**. The final draft will be partially evaluated on the basis of how well you responded to your classmates comments on your first draft and the improvements you made on it.

Final drafts that are handed in late will be docked 5% per day. Essays will not be accepted more than 5 days after the deadline. So please make sure to hand them in on time.

## Grading scale

Percentage	Letter grade	Grade point value	Description
97-100	A+	4.00	Excellent
94-96	A	4.00	
90-93	A-	3.70	
87-89	B+	3.30	Good
84-86	B	3.00	
80-83	B-	2.70	
77-79	C+	2.30	Fair
74-76	C	2.00	
70-73	C-	1.70	
67-69	D+	1.30	Needs work
64-66	D	1.00	
61-63	D-	0.70	
0-60	F	0.00	Fail

## Schedule

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	WHAT TO READ	WHAT'S DUE
1	M 3/30	Introduction		
2	M 4/6	The Nature of Fiction	Kendall Walton, Selections from <i>Mimesis as Make-Believe</i> (1990)	<b>BPD 1</b>
3	M 4/13		Gregory Currie, Selections from <i>Nature of Fiction</i> (1990)  Stacie Friend, "Imagining Fact and Fiction" (2008)	<b>BPD 2</b>
4	M 4/20	Emotions in Fiction	Kendall Walton, "Fearing Fictions" in <i>Mimesis as Make-Believe</i> (1990)  Richard Moran, "The Expression of Feeling in Imagination" (1994)	<b>BPD 3</b>
5	M 4/27	Truth in Fiction	David Lewis, "Truth in Fiction" (1978)  David Lewis, Postscripts to "Truth in Fiction" (1983)  Michel-Antoine Xhignesse, "Exploding Stories and the Limits of Fiction" (forthcoming)	<b>BPD 4</b>
6	M 5/4	Learning Through Fiction	Gregory Currie, Selections from <i>Imagining &amp; Knowing: The Shape of Fiction</i> (2020)  Zoe Cunliffe, "Narrative Fiction and Epistemic Injustice" (2019)	<b>BPD 5</b>
7	M 5/11	Cultural Appropriation	Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, "The Magic of Others" (1990)  C. Thi Nguyen & Matthew Strohl, "Cultural appropriation and the intimacy of groups" (2019)  Erich Hatala Matthes, "Cultural appropriation and oppression" (2019)	<b>BPD 6</b>
8	M 5/18	Imaginative Resistance	Tamar Szabó Gendler, "The Puzzle of Imaginative Resistance" (2000)  Brian Weatherson "Morality, Fiction and Possibility" (2004)	<b>BPD 7</b>
9	M 5/25		Shen-yi Liao, Nina Strohminger, and Chandra Sekhar Sripada, "Empirically Investigating Imaginative Resistance" (2014)  Adriana Clavel-Vazquez, "Sugar and Spice, and Everything Nice: What Rough Heroines Tell Us about Imaginative Resistance" (2018)	<b>ESSAY BPD 8</b>
10	M 6/1		E. Hande Tuna, "Imaginative Resistance and Care"	<b>PEER REVIEW</b>
		<b>TH 6/8</b>	<b>ESSAY - FINAL DRAFT</b>	

**DISCLAIMER:** Information in this syllabus is subject to change and any changes will be announced on Canvas.

## Policies & Resources

**Note on Accessibility:** I aim to create a learning environment that supports its diverse student body. This means that I am committed to providing accessible materials and opportunities for different kinds of engagement. If you experience a barrier to your participation, please bring this to my attention and I will gladly work with you to ensure accessibility. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me by email, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. I would also like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact the DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at [drc@ucsc.edu](mailto:drc@ucsc.edu).

**Note on Academic Honesty:** To use others' ideas either directly or by paraphrasing them without giving proper references constitutes plagiarism. To copy text or ideas from your own previously or concurrently submitted coursework, without providing references also constitutes a case of plagiarism. I have a very strict plagiarism policy. I report each instance without any exceptions to the Academic Tribunal in order to maintain fairness to each student. If you are under stress and not sure what to write or how to write it, come to me directly or consult other resources within the university, such as the writing center or other centers that can provide the help you need to deal with the issues that are preventing you from performing your best. The best way to avoid last minute panic is not to leave things to the last minute but be prepared. If you explain to me what you are going through, I will do my best to help you. Personal problems, the difficulty of the material or the course in general are never excuses for plagiarism. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, please feel free to talk to me.

For additional information on plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and how to avoid it, here are some additional resources:

- ▶ The **UCSC policy** on Academic Dishonesty
- ▶ The UCSC library resources on **source citation, tutorials** on how to avoid plagiarism, **checklists** for ensuring that you have properly cited your sources