

# PHI 474F Problems of Fiction and Representation

HC V207 M 2:30 – 3:30, W 2:30 – 4:30

**Instructor:** Dr. Glen Koehn, Office A202

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**Office Hours:** Mon. 3:30 – 5:30, and by appt.

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**Textbook:** *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts*, by Kendall L. Walton. (Harvard, 1993).

**Course Description:** We will investigate some controversies surrounding existence and nonexistence, with special regard to works of fiction. For example, what exactly does it mean to assert that fictional characters and events do not exist, given that we seem to be able to refer to them and to speak truly about them? After considering some general views about reference and mental representation we will explore Kendall Walton's theory that works of fiction are props in games of make-believe, games which are important to much of our mental life.

**Course Goals:** State some philosophical problems of existence and reference. Set out a range of conflicting solutions which thinkers have offered to these problems. Formulate and argue for a plausible resolution to some of the disputes. Understand Walton's theory of make believe and some of its implications for criticizing works of fiction.

**Grading:** 1. Two papers @ 25%. 2. Class Presentations 25%. 3. Final test 25%.

## Week Rough Schedule of Topics

- 1-5 Problems of Reference and Existence
- 6-8 Representation and Make-Believe  
First paper due: Wk 8.
- 9-12 Participation and Criticism in Fictional Practice  
Second paper due: Last day of class.

**Note on Prerequisites:** Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites. If you do not have the prerequisites for this course, and you do not have written special permission from your Dean to enroll in this course, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**Note on Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is an academic offense and will be treated as such. Students who are in doubt as to the nature of this offence should consult their instructor, Department Chair, or Dean's Office, as well as the Huron University College Statement

on Plagiarism, available at the Reference Desk in the Huron University College Library and at <http://www.huronuc.on.ca/pdf/FASSonPlagiarism.pdf>. In addition, students may seek guidance from a variety of current style manuals available at the Reference Desk in the Huron University College Library.

Information about these resources can be found at [http://www.huronuc.ca/library/research\\_guides\\_and\\_handouts](http://www.huronuc.ca/library/research_guides_and_handouts)

Plagiarism detection software may be used in this course. Students may be required to submit their work in electronic form.

**Note on Technology in the Classroom**

It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited, to laptops, PDAs, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

**Note on Academic Counselling:** Philosophy students registered at Huron who require counselling about their program of study should arrange to meet with Ms. Debbie Chadwick, Academic Counsellor, and on related matters (e.g. appeals, letters of permission, special permission) should contact Dr. D. Conter, Chair of Philosophy, Office V131, Huron University College.