

## PHILOSOPHY 761

FIRST TERM, 2018-19

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## TOPICS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

In 1974 John Woods published *The Logic of Fiction*, a pioneering work on the semantics of fiction. Dismissed in mere sentences by Frege and Russell, the semantic treatment of fiction is an important adequacy test for semantic theories – one which most of them fail. Woods was one of the first to take it seriously. His book was republished a few years ago together with a long later survey article by Woods, ‘Fictions and the Logics’ (London: College Publications, 2009). I want to spend the first five weeks going through Woods’ book, one chapter a week, and then spend one or two weeks considering the alternative accounts that Woods surveys in ‘Fictions and their Logics’. The remaining weeks will be devoted to a more recent alternative account, now known (not entirely accurately) as ‘modal Meinongianism’, championed by Graham Priest, Francesco Berto, and your humble professor.

The required text for the course will be John Woods, *The Logic of Fiction* (London: College Publications, 2009). Priest’s main text *Towards Non-Being. The Logic and Metaphysics of Intentionality* (Oxford, 2005; 2nd edn. 2016) is too expensive to be required reading, but I will supply notes on a simplified version of its formal system and will put the book itself on reserve in Mills. I will also supply copies of my own ‘Rethinking Item Theory’, in Griffin and Jacquette (eds.) *Russell vs Meinong: The Legacy of ‘On Denoting’* (Routledge, 2008).

Each student will be expected to lead the discussion in one seminar by presenting material from that week’s reading. Assessment will be by a final research paper of 6,000-8,000 words to be handed in at the final class.