Phil 290 SEM 004: Graduate Seminar

Prof. Olivia Bailey

UC Berkeley Department of Philosophy

Spring 2021

**Imagination and its Morals**

*Our imagination flies: we are its shadow, on the earth.*

Vladimir Nabokov (attr.) in Robert Bly (ed.), *The Sea and the Honeycomb* (1966).

**Course description:** This course is broadly concerned with the following two-part question: What is imagination, and what roles does imagination play in our lives as agents, practical reasoners, aspirants to virtue, and selves that care and are cared for? We will begin with an exploration of what imagination actually is, drawing on both contemporary and historical sources. We will consider questions such as: What are the objects of imagination? Does imagining something sometimes or always involve mentally picturing that thing? Is imagination a kind of imitation? Does it really make sense to speak of imagination as a single faculty or activity? Once we have a better sense of the principal puzzles and possibilities concerning imagination’s nature, we will advance to questions about its import. Questions we will take up include: in what sense, if any, is our self-understanding (or even self-constitution) dependent upon imagination? What is the relationship between practical reason and imagination? Does moral understanding or motivation require imagination? We will also ask about the morality *of* imagination: are there things it is morally bad or wrong to imagine or fantasize about, and if so, why? Readings range across philosophy of mind, epistemology, moral psychology, philosophy of art, and political philosophy. Requirements (detailed below): regular participation, weekly posting of questions, brief term paper prospectus, term paper.

**Meeting time and location: W** 4pm - 6pm Pacific Time, **via Zoom.** Meeting ID: 921 5890 1603. Password: 298776.

**Open office hours:** (provisionally) **M** 12-2 pm Pacific Time, **via Zoom.** Meeting ID: 997 4313 2345. Password: 801983. Also by appointment.

**Course Materials:** All materials, both primary and supplementary, will be loaded to bcourses, linked in this syllabus. In addition to the materials included here, a useful first port of call is:

[*The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Imagination*](https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315657905) ed. [Amy Kind](https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/author/Amy_Kind) (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

**Inclusive Learning:** We all learn differently, and your success in this course is important to me. If there are aspects of this course that you worry might prevent you from learning or otherwise exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we’ll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

**Assignments and Requirements:**

**Participation:** All course attendees, enrolled or otherwise, are expected to participate fully in class discussion.

**Weekly Questions:** Enrolled students should submit 1-3 questions about the week’s reading material under the relevant “Discussion” section on bcourses. Questions to be uploaded by 12pm Pacific on Wednesdays when the course meets. This does not apply to the first week.

**Discussion Leadership:** 1-2 times over the course of the semester (depending upon enrollment) each student will lead off discussion with a brief précis/1-2 questions about the reading.

**Prospectus:** You must submit a one-page prospectus detailing a final paper topic by midnight on April 20. Your prospectus should contain the question you plan to address, the literature you intend to engage, and a brief summary of your argument. One meeting of the course will (provisionally) be devoted to the sharing and discussion of your prospectuses.

**Term paper:** You must submit a 15-20-page paper by 5 PM on May 15.

**A note about grading:** Your grade in the course will be determined in the following fashion:

*30%: Participation, broadly construed to include your written questions, oral participation, and discussion leadership*

*70%: Term Paper*

**Provisional Reading Schedule**

**(very much subject to change! All readings are available on the bCourses site)**

**NB: readings are ranked in priority order, and I’ve included a second section to indicate supplemental readings.**

1.20.21 **Introduction, some classical accounts**

MAIN READINGS

* Aristotle, *De Anima*, 3.3, 3.8.
* Hume, David. *Treatise of Human Nature*, I.i.1-4.
* Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason,* A76-80/B102-106, B150-152, A140-142/B179-181 (lower priority)

1.27.21 **Imagination in the history of philosophy Part II: Sartre and Ryle**

MAIN READINGS

* Sartre, Jean-Paul. *The Imaginary,* I.1: “The Intentional Structure of the Image.”
* Ryle, Gilbert. *The Concept of Mind*, Ch. VIII: “Imagination.”

Optional/Supplemental

* Sartre, Jean-Paul. *The Imaginary,* I.1: I.2: “The Image Family.”
* Kind, Amy. (2001). “Putting the Image Back in Imagination.” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research,* *62*(1).

2.3.21 **Imagination and Imitation: Mirroring and Quarantining**

MAIN READINGS

* Currie, Gregory and Ian Ravenscroft. *Recreative Minds.* Ch. 1 “Projections and Recreations.”
* Gendler, Tamar Tzabo. *Intuition, Imagination, and Philosophical Methodology.* Ch. 7, “On the relation between pretense and belief.”

Optional/Supplemental

* Currie, Gregory and Ian Ravenscroft. *Recreative Minds.* Ch. 2 “Friends and Relatives”
* Schellenberg, Susanna (2013). “Belief and Desire in Imagination and Immersion.” Journal of Philosophy 110 (9):497-517.

2.10.21 **Imagination and Feeling**

MAIN READINGS

* Walton, Kendall L. (1978). “Fearing fictions.” Journal of Philosophy 75 (1):5-27.
* Moran, Richard (1994). “The expression of feeling in imagination.” Philosophical Review 103 (1):75-106.

Optional/Supplemental

* Radford, Colin & Weston, Michael (1975). “How Can We Be Moved by the Fate of Anna Karenina?” Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume 49 (1):67 - 93.

2.17.21 **Imaginative Resistance**

MAIN READINGS

* Weatherson, Brian (2004). “Morality, fiction, and possibility.” Philosophers' Imprint 4:1-27.
* Gendler, Tamar Szabo (2000). “The puzzle of imaginative resistance.” Journal of Philosophy 97 (2):55-81.

Optional/Supplemental

* Gendler, Tamar Szabo (2006). “Imaginative resistance revisited.” In Shaun Nichols (ed.), The Architecture of the Imagination. Oxford University Press. pp. 149-173.
* Walton, Kendall Lewis (1994/2015). “Morals in Fiction and Fictional Morality (I).” Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 68:27-50.

2.24.21 **Imagination, Action, Self-Conception**

MAIN READINGS

* Velleman, J. David (2002). “Motivation by Ideal.” Philosophical Explorations 5 (2):89-103.
* Mackenzie, Catriona (2008). “Imagination, Identity and Self-Transformation.” In Catriona Mackenzie & Kim Atkins (eds.), Practical Identity and Narrative Agency. New York: Routledge. pp. 121--145.

3.3.21 **Empathy and Mind-Reading**

MAIN READINGS

* Ravenscroft, Ian (1998). “What is it like to be someone else? Simulation and empathy.” Ratio 11 (2):170-185.
* Goldie, Peter (2011). “Anti-empathy.” In Amy Coplan & Peter Goldie (eds.), Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives. Oxford University Press. pp. 302.

Optional/Supplemental

* Gordon, Robert (1986). “Folk psychology as simulation.” Mind and Language 1 (2):158-71.
* Goldman, Alvin I. (1992). “Empathy, Mind, and Morals.” Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association 66 (3):17 - 41.

3.10.21 **Imagining Others: Motivation, Recognition, and Respect**

MAIN READINGS

* Deigh, John (1995). “Empathy and universalizability.” Ethics 105 (4):743-763.
* Darwall, Stephen. “Empathy, Sympathy, Care.” *Philosophical Studies* 89, no. 2–3 (1998): 261–282.

Optional/Supplemental

* Scarry, Elaine. "The difficulty of imagining other people." *For love of country* (1996): 98-110.
* Sherman, Nancy. “Empathy, Respect, and Humanitarian Intervention.” *Ethics & International Affairs.* 12, no. 1 (1998): 103–119.

3.17.21 **Imagination in Creativity, Creativity in Imagination**

MAIN READINGS

* Wiltsher, Nick. "Imagination: A Lens, Not a Mirror." *Philosophers’ Imprint* (2019).
* Gaut, Berys. "Creativity and imagination." *The creation of art* (2003): 148-173.

Optional/Supplemental

* Stokes, Dustin. "The role of imagination in creativity." *The philosophy of creativity: New essays* (2014): 157-84.
* Carruthers, Peter. "Human creativity: Its cognitive basis, its evolution, and its connections with childhood pretence." *The British journal for the philosophy of science* 53.2 (2002): 225-249.
* Polanyi, Michael. "The creative imagination." *The Concept Of Creativity in Science and Art*. Springer, Dordrecht, 1981. 91-108.

3.24.21 –SPRING BREAK

3.31.21 **Imagination, Literature, and the Work of Moral Philosophy**

MAIN READINGS

* Nussbaum, Martha (1985). "Finely Aware and Richly Responsible": Moral Attention and the Moral Task of Literature. Journal of Philosophy 82 (10):516-529.
* Diamond, Cora (1985). Missing the Adventure: Reply to Martha Nussbaum. Journal of Philosophy 82 (10):530-531.

Optional/Supplemental

* Diamond, Cora (1982). Anything but argument? Philosophical Investigations 5 (1):23-41.
* Nussbaum, Martha. "Steerforth’s arm: Love and the moral point of view." *Love’s Knowledge* (1990).
* Nussbaum, Martha Craven. "Flawed crystals: James's The Golden Bowl and literature as moral philosophy." *New Literary History* 15.1 (1983): 25-50.

4.7.21 **Imagination for social justice?**

MAIN READINGS

* Medina, José (2012). “Resistant Imaginations and Radical Solidarity.” *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and Resistant Imaginations*. Oxford University.
* Lugones, María (1987). Playfulness, “World”-Travelling, and Loving Perception. Hypatia 2 (2):3 - 19.

Optional/Supplemental

* Biss, Mavis (2013). “Radical Moral Imagination: Courage, Hope, and Articulation.” Hypatia 28 (4):937-954.
* *Young, Iris Marion. " CHAPTER II. Asymmetrical Reciprocity: On Moral Respect, Wonder, and Enlarged Thought". Intersecting Voices. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020.* (NB not yet available on course site)
* Mackenzie, Catriona (2006). “Imagining Other Lives.” Philosophical Papers 35 (3):293-325.

4.14.21 **Visit: Shen-Yi Liao**

Readings TBD.

4.21.21 **Visit: Laurie Paul. NB this meeting will, exceptionally, take place at 6pm Pacific.**

MAIN READING:

* Paul, L.A. “Paradoxes of Empathy.”

4.28.21 **(When) is it morally better not to imagine?**

MAIN READINGS:

* Fleischacker, Samuel. “Empathy and Demonization.” From *Being Me Being You.* OUP: 2019.
* Smith, Zadie. “Fascinated to Presume: in defense of fiction.” *New York Review of Books*

Optional/Supplemental

* Cherry, Christopher (1988). When is Fantasising Morally Bad? Philosophical Investigations 11 (2):112-132.
* Corvino, John (2002). Naughty fantasies. Southwest Philosophy Review 18 (1):213-220.

As a bonus:

An “Orphan Week.” Not on the schedule, but the readings are all available online.

**Imagination and the Self**

Williams, Bernard (1973).” Imagination and the self.” In Problems of the Self. Cambridge University Press. pp. 26-45.

Reynolds, Steven L. (1989). “Imagining oneself to be another.” Noûs 23 (5):615-633.

Optional/Supplemental

Velleman, J. David (1996). “Self to Self.” Philosophical Review 105 (1):39 - 76.

Vendler, Zeno (1979). “Vicarious Experience.” Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale 84 (2):161 - 173.