

The 75th Annual Mountain-Plains Philosophy Conference
Utah State University
October 1-3, 2021

Keynote Address

Saturday, October 2
5:00-6:30pm
Online

The Role of Fiction in Fictionalism

**Bradley Armour-Garb &
James Woodbridge**

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“Fictionalism” is a banner flying over a significant number of philosophical accounts currently on offer. Various philosophers have proposed different versions of mathematical fictionalism, modal fictionalism, moral fictionalism, alethic fictionalism, fictionalism about propositions, and fictionalism about fictional characters. But despite the production and discussion of theories classified as fictionalist accounts, there is still a need for clarification on how best to understand the classification itself. In much of the literature on

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James Woodbridge is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. His research areas include philosophy of language, metaphysics, and philosophical logic. His paper “Truth as a Pretense” presented one of the earliest versions of *alethic fictionalism*. In collaboration with Bradley Armour-Garb, he has further developed this fictionalist approach (and applied it to (dis)solving the Liar Paradox and

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fictionalism, the relationships between various ideas surrounding it have been muddled, with a fair degree of confusion resulting. To address this, we will set out some of the details of some different species within the genus of fictionalism and motivate a preference for one in particular. Our aim is both to clarify what we see as the most promising sort of fictionalist approach and to indicate how one could employ it as a means for resolving certain puzzles, problems, and paradoxes that are familiar from metaphysics, epistemology, and the philosophies of language and mind.

(co-edited with Fred Kroon, 2020), and *Deflationary Approaches to Truth: A Guide* (with James Woodbridge), which will be published through OUP in 2022. Also with Fred Kroon, he is a series editor for the Logic and Philosophy Elements series (Cambridge University Press). Much of his work has regarded truth and paradox. For a list of his papers and books, see his website: <https://barmourgarb.com>

other apparent semantic pathology across publications in *Noûs*, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *Analysis*, *Philosophical Studies*, and *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*. Woodbridge and Armour-Garb unified and extended this work in their first book, *Pretense and Pathology: Philosophical Fictionalism and its Applications* (Cambridge University Press, 2015). Their forthcoming second book, *Deflationary Approaches to Truth: A Guide* (Oxford University Press), will be published in 2022.