

## **The Fiction Lab: Overview/Abstract**

Fictionality—the principle that makes fiction fiction—has been debated across multiple fields in the last few decades. The subject’s most obvious home is literary studies, but discussions of it belong to other fields as well: psychology; philosophy; media studies; art; computer science and artificial intelligence; political science; legal studies; philosophy of science. Fictionality also connects to related topics of inquiry: studies of imagination and creativity, empathy and emotion, cognition and modeling. To study how and why we make and consume fictions is to study core aspects of the human mind especially as those relate to the human social imagination.

The Fiction Lab will bring together scholars from across departments with the aim of meeting the challenge of this interdisciplinarity. The goal will be to ask whether “fiction” really does constitute one common object of study across all relevant fields or whether each field construes it differently; to think about how these fields might speak to each other; and to ask how fictionality might generate productive new conversations across fields. This is a chance to reshape the map of the disciplines and to find new interdisciplinary alignments. This proposal is for a workshop that, if successful, will inaugurate an ongoing effort to promote interdisciplinary research on fictionality.

### Stakeholders at Stony Brook

Anyone from the fields indicated above would have a stake in this event: essentially, the intersection of departments that take literature or other media as a key object of study (English, Hispanic Languages and Literature, Languages and Cultural Studies, Art, etc.) with departments that study cognition (Psychology, Philosophy, Computer Science, etc.).

### Size

Ten talks, ending with a roundtable aimed at sketching principles for the interdisciplinary study of fictionality. Participants will be asked not to present their research in detail but to focus on the aims of the study of fictionality and what their field of study can contribute.

### Potential outside speakers

Monika Fludernik (English, University of Freiburg)  
Stacie Friend (Philosophy, University of Edinburgh)  
Thalia Goldstein (Psychology, George Mason University)  
Ming Dong Gu (Chinese, University of Texas, Dallas)  
Carrie Lambert-Beatty (Art, Harvard)  
Françoise Lavocat (French, Sorbonne)  
Raymond Mar (Psychology, York University, Canada)  
Nick Montfort (Digital Media, MIT)  
Rafael Pérez y Pérez (Computer Science, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Mexico)  
Karen Petroski (Law, St. Louis University)  
Amie Thomasson (Philosophy, Dartmouth College)  
Blakey Vermeule (English, Stanford)  
Richard Walsh (English, York University, U.K.)  
Simona Zetterberg-Nielsen (Scandinavian Studies, Aarhus University)