

Ethics, Aesthetics, Politics Reading Group

Michaelmas 2022/23

Thursdays 1-2pm

Chris Cowie's Office in Old Elvet 50-51

We will be reading through Thi Nguyen's really influential new book *Games: Agency as Art*, as well as some contemporary articles, in alternating weeks. The schedule and some information on the readings is below

Schedule

- Term week 2: Hilary Greaves and Will MacAskill, 'The Case for Strong Longtermism' *GPI Working Paper* (2021).
- Term week 3: *Games: Agency as Art*, Chapters 1&2
- Term week 4: Justin Tosi and Brandon Warme. 'Moral Grandstanding'. *Philosophy and Public Affairs* (2016).
- Term week 5: *Games: Agency as Art*, Chapter 3
- Term week 6: Johann Frick. 'National Partiality, Immigration and the Problem of Double-Jeopardy.' In *Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy* (2020).
- Term week 7: *Games: Agency as Art*, Chapter 4
- Term week 8: Pauline Kleingeld. 'A Kantian Solution to the Trolley Problem' in *Oxford Studies in Normative Ethics* (2020).
- Term week 9: *Games: Agency as Art*, Chapter 5

On Games: Agency of Art

Thi Nguyen's *Games: Agency as Art*. The book was published in 2020 and has made a really significant splash in ludology, aesthetics, and the philosophy of sport. Indeed, it has already been influential enough to warrant the issuing of a special edition of the Journal of the Philosophy of Sport dedicated to Nguyen's book (<https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rjps20/48/3>).

Nguyen argues that games are the artform of *agency*. His novel claim is that in playing games, we take up 'disposable ends' (for instance, my end when playing football is to score goals) that our motivational structures then temporarily form around. This simple claim raises a host of interesting questions that Nguyen goes on to consider: what is the relationship between these alternate agencies and our aesthetic experience of games? What does our ability to take up these alternative agencies tell us about the nature of human autonomy? And what is the social significance of this fluid conception of agency?

Hope to see you there,

Charles Coatsworth and Chris Cowie