



## About the Course

Instructor: Mitchell Green, University of Virginia Dates: March 4 to May 10, 2013

Welcome to the University of Virginia and our course, Know Thyself. We are excited to be learning with you! In this document you will find a general overview of the course, course requirements, a schedule, suggested readings, and guidelines for participation.

### Overview:

The Delphic Oracle is said to have had two premier injunctions: NOTHING IN EXCESS, and KNOW THYSELF. This course will be an examination of the latter injunction. Our central questions fall into two categories. First, What is it? We shall inquire into just what self-knowledge is: Is it a form of inner perception, somewhat like proprioception, by virtue of which our minds (and hearts) have internal scanners of their own states? Or should we construe self-knowledge in a way not crucially relying on a perceptual model? In that case, what other model might we use? Second, Why is it such a big deal? We shall inquire into the question why self-knowledge should be thought so important. Just what, if anything, is missing from a person lacking in self-knowledge that makes her significantly less wise, virtuous, or able than others who have this capacity? Our exploration will take us into research in Western philosophy, psychoanalysis, current experimental psychology, neuroscience, aesthetics, and Eastern philosophy as well. In aid of these investigation we will become students of our own dreams, and cultivate some meditative practices.

### Course Requirements:

Our course will run for ten weeks, from March 4 to May 10, 2013. Each week you will be expected to watch two Lectures, with each lecture bring broken up into a number of smaller segments, usually about 5-10 minutes long. At the end of each week you will be asked to take a brief quiz, which will reflect the material covered in that week's lectures. The quiz is not intended to be terribly challenging. Instead, it is intended simply to help ensure that you have absorbed and retained the ideas that were covered in that week's lecture.

### To Pass the Class and achieve a Statement of Accomplishment:

To pass this class, you need to take each of the ten quizzes, and to earn an average grade, on all the quizzes collectively, of at least 70%. Quizzes will be available two days after video content is

available and you will only be able to take each quiz once. The best way to prepare for the quizzes is to make sure to follow the lectures carefully, and to answer the study questions that we will post. By answering the study questions correctly, you will ensure that you are prepared to take the quiz. If you get stumped by a study question, we suggest that you go back to that week's lectures to review the material that was covered. If you pass the class based on the above parameters, you will earn a Statement of Accomplishment which will be issued by Coursera. There is no Distinguished Statement of Accomplishment for this course.

### **Suggested Readings:**

Students are not required to complete any outside readings to pass the course. ALL quiz material will derive directly from the video content. Nevertheless, should you wish to explore the class topics to the fullest extent or engage in some digital discussion on the forums, we have prepared a list of "suggested readings," texts that accompany and supplement the content covered in the videos. Again, these texts are completely, entirely, 100% OPTIONAL, but we would recommend reading them if you are able. The suggested readings can be located under the weekly topic on the [Course Schedule](#).

### **Discussion Forums:**

All students are encouraged, but not required, to participate actively in the [discussion forums](#) that will be created for the course. These will be opportunities to share your thoughts with others and to hear their comments on yours. You are also very likely to learn from what others have to say. In addition, engaging in a discussion forum is a great way of engaging in the examined life!

### **Discussion Forum Etiquette:**

The discussion forums are excellent tools for fostering engagement, connection, and discussion among the students in this course. You are encouraged to make ample use of them to respond to study questions, contribute your ideas, raise concerns, and interact with your peers from around the globe. The course staff will be monitoring these discussion forums, and we will try to take part in discussions and answer questions as much as we can.

While these open forums offer great possibility, they can also be easily abused. Such abuse will not be tolerated. We expect students to be respectful, tactful, and open-minded on these forums. We will be discussing some big ideas in this course, including some controversial ones. This experiment in global learning and open dialogue only works when ideas can be discussed in a civil manner, free of invective, ridicule, or reprisal. **Any instance of inappropriate posting on the forums, including but not limited to spamming, trolling, and bullying, will be immediately removed by the course staff. Very serious or repeat offenses will be grounds for removal from the course.**

Please help us to ensure a positive, open, and smooth forum experience by flagging posts to report inappropriate content, consulting existing threads before creating new ones, and by posting only in the labeled sub-forum that is appropriate to each of your comments/questions. See the top of the "Discussion Forums" page for further information on forum etiquette.

## **How To Get Help:**

While we wish we were able to answer each and every question from all of our course attendees, the sheer scale of the class makes this unfeasible. We encourage everyone to utilize the discussion forums to ask your fellow students for assistance (about concepts, not quiz questions of course).

## **About The Instructor: Prof. Mitchell Green**

Mitch Green is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Virginia, where he has taught since 1993. He holds an undergraduate degree from U.C. Berkeley, a B.Phil. degree from Oxford University and a Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh. His research concerns the nature of cognition and emotion, and the relation of both to communication in our own species and in others. He has published *Engaging Philosophy: A Brief Introduction*, and *Self-Expression*, and has co-edited *Moore's Paradox: New Essays on Belief, Rationality and the First Person*. He has held grants or fellowships from the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Humanities Center, the Andrew Mellon Foundation, the National Science Foundation and the Squire Family Foundation. He is also founding director of Project High-Phi , which supports philosophical inquiry in America's high schools, and a panelist on AskPhilosophers.org, where anyone in the world can pose a philosophical question and one of the panelists will try to find an answer.