Our whole culture and political environment are permeated with notions such as ‘fake news’, ‘post-truth’, ‘truthiness’ and the like. Our social media propagate the most absurd conspiracy theories, misinformation and fictions presented as facts. The root of the disease is the notion that all opinions are equal and everyone is entitled to their own opinions. Sadly, I think contemporary philosophy has helped to land us in such a quagmire. Maybe it can also help us to get out as well!!

This course on human understanding and knowing focusses on understanding correctly, judging reasonably and valuing authentically. It aims to rehabilitate our notion of truth and value, not based on some arbitrary philosophical concepts, but on the spontaneous workings of your own mind.

I like to think of our course in Philosophical Inquiry as pursuing the noble aim of Know Thyself first embarked on by the Greek philosophers. We aim at self-discovery, particularly of the power of the human mind to ask questions, to understand, to distinguish true and false, and to ask the fundamental questions about human life and death.

We will start the course with some introduction to what is philosophy and how it differs from empirical science. We will follow that with a short historical review of some great philosophers. Then we will start on our journey of philosophical self-discovery.

I use a method of self-appropriation. If you want to learn about frogs then find yourself some frogs and study them. If you want to study human knowing then get yourself examples of human knowing and study them. These examples are to be found, not in a book, but in your own mind. You have already learned so much of mathematics, languages, history, science, common sense; you have attained knowledge in various areas. You already know the difference between true and false. The trick is to bring that to light, make it explicit, and put it into practice.

Our teaching will be by way of projects, puzzles, exercises, presentations, discussion, and dialogue. Luckily, we have an excellent text-book to guide us on our way, namely, Brian Cronin, *Phenomenology of Human Understanding*, (Pickwick, Oregon, 2017). This will be required reading and we will follow it chapter by chapter.