

PLSC 28620 – The Intelligible Self
Rosenwalt Hall, Tuesdays 6:30-9:20 p.m.
Winter 2018 Prof. Eric Oliver
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3 (Pick 518)
coliver@uchicago.edu

Know Thyself. This oft-repeated Delphic maxim prescribes the path to wisdom but it doesn't say how we're actually supposed to do this. This course looks for answers. Drawing on modern psychology, social neuroscience, anthropology, and Buddhism, we will explore different pathways to self-knowledge. Our goal will be to gain perspective on the swirling vortex of emotion and cognition that continually regenerate our conscious minds and sense of being. Students will learn theories about the self and develop practical techniques for generating self-awareness.

This course is designed as an interactive seminar and *active* class participation is expected. The reading load is heavy—expect to read a book a week. In addition, students will write weekly responses on questions pertinent to the material. A final assignment will synthesize the materials from the course. Grades will be based intention and effort. Such qualities will be demonstrated by class participation, the thoughtfulness of weekly assignments, and the final exercise.

The course books are available at the Seminary Co-op.

Week 1: Introduction (January 9)

Singer, Michael. *The Untethered Soul*

Week 2: Anxiety and Guilt: the Psychoanalytic View (January 16)

Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*

Week 3: Life Narratives (January 23)

Campbell, Joseph. *Pathways to Bliss (selections)*

Week 4: The Child's Story (January 30)

Bechdel, Allison. *Are You My Mother?*

Week 5: Independent Explorations (February 6)

Week 6: Love and Attachment (February 13)

Thomas Lewis et. al. *A General Theory of Love*

Week 7: The Emotional Self (February 20)

Barrett, Lisa. *How Emotions are Made* (chapters 1-8)

Week 8: The Non-Self (February 27)

Walpola Sri Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*

Week 9: Engaging the Moment (March 6)

Chodron, Pema. *Living Beautifully with Uncertainty and Change*

******Week 10: The Lucid Self (March 13)

Watts, Alan. *Psychotherapy, East and West*