**The Meaning of Life, The Universe and Everything**

My most meaningful philosophical moments come from reading books. When I came upon the concept of solipsism in *1984*, I asked my mom the meaning. Her explanation caused my world to come crashing down around my ears, with no way to refute it. Gripping the book tightly against me, I brooded about the problem again: "But I see the world; I see you! I know it exists. It has to." I heard the futility of my logic, and it frustrated me beyond belief. The idea that I could be alone in the world alarmed me. Even having the conversation with another person is like a living paradox.

Such a philosophical crisis of identity and being is as consuming and pertinent for me as any other crisis. I need to understand how these ideas work and relate to my life. Deeply considering a concept, even when there’s no solution, helps me to feel engaged and connected in the world.

This is the feeling I want to share with you in my course, The Meaning of Life, the Universe and Everything: a philosophical and literary symposium. The course is a critical, analytic exploration of classic and modern books and the philosophical topics and implications in each. We will discuss books such as *1984*, and the solipsistic questions as well as the dystopian predictions. In addition, we will discuss *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*, from which the name of the class was derived. In the book, the characters travel to the planet Magrathea and learn of the supercomputer Deep Thought that was designed to calculate the answer to the Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe, and Everything. The answer the computer discovered was 42, which revealed that people did not truly know the question. What is the meaning of life? Is the answer hidden in books or do they simply hold the questions? (And perhaps these questions are more important to understand than the answers?)

The class will involve a lot of reading, and excerpts from many fascinating classic and modern novels that will bring up mind-blowing questions and fantastic class discussions. The majority of the classes will be Socratic seminars that involve class participation.

This class will not only share the exciting experience of reading, but also create a lasting desire to solve the great answers of the world. Philosophy studies everything people wonder about. Books reflect all of this – small relatable stories that make our human experience accessible, and large enigmatic concepts that make us feel small. We get excited about the workings of the world and revel in the experience of unanswered questions. This class will be a rewarding development of the love of learning, curiosity and the discovery of your most burning topics.