

Feedback on Ignorance! MOOC (from the Discussion Forum)

June-August 2015

Having a Taxonomy and Language of ignorance, not only helps to identify different aspects but also on how to communicate it effectively to others in simple terms. A Carry forward to this (if possible) would be a downloadable PDF or a document with a small glossary of terms used of the course come week five. This would serve as a simple aide memoire to the contents, and understanding.

I enjoyed all the reading materials offered, but it would be interesting to see short examples or articles of sort of ignorance in question from media beside them to put high brow information into a real world context.

I want to think that by learning more, I'm chipping away at my ignorance and reducing it, but there are more constructive ways to accept, process, use, enjoy, and live with my ignorance (and others') than trying to throw it out with the trash. As could have been predicted, I now have a whole raft of new and exciting questions I'd like to pursue!

It was very relevant for me information on representation of complex problem in three dimensions. During the course I understand the importance of understanding and managing diverse known and unknown in scoping in boundaries setting. I understand that we should associate ignorance with our motivations for learning, avenues for creativity, entertainment, decision-making. It was very interesting to me also the information on role of ignorance in society and culture (it is nice now to analyze in media use of ambiguity and vagueness, as well as of conflict aversion for presentation of information related with politics), and yes will be very interesting to learn in Ignorance II course on more methods for dealing with ignorance.

This was a great course which I enjoyed a lot, it was challenging and interesting. I particularly enjoyed the introduction of improvisation and creativity with John Mackey and again Sasha Grishin and his take on random elements and Art. It was all good and I am looking forward to Ignorance 2.

The typology of ignorance(s) is well thought through and explained; it already helped me to see clearer now and then, what kind of ignorance problem there may be, and consequently what or how I could explore or explain to diminish the gap.

Then I find myself very much motivated to question some of my knowledge about the huge sphere of ignorance always around. By the way this can be much more fun than sticking

with the impossibility to know all or nearly all about something. It really rounds up an image. The limits become clearer and even less strict.

I found it very inspiring to think about how incredibly often we make decisions based on one or another type of ignorance. No reason to worry: Most things on earth continue to work. Sometimes it is real fun to explicitly "decide" without knowing.

Absolutely great for me was the information how well teams from diverse disciplines or backgrounds can work together or even find solutions if they do not start with comparing verbal definitions. This finding gives hope. I am more from the definition premise generation (if one can say so).

A word about knowledge and ignorance: Sure they are not absolute. I see them on a continuum, or better, I start to see lots of continua right now between the different versions of both.

Very hard was the following finding for me: I liked the lectures so much that I had to tell about the content to my dear partner many times. But doing the quizzes I often realized that I did not even understand the question and answers clearly. I do not know: Are the formulations "too" complicated for me? If only for me (and perhaps others that do not speak English so well): What then does this mean for my understanding of the video contents?

Conclusion: Knowledge, also or even when it is about ignorance, is unlimited fun.

I have been bad in the topic of probability when taking maths in school. Hence I think I did the worse on probability, which is probably the most important aspect of making decisions. In many cases, like buying insurance or investment products, we are often subjected to fine prints of probability studies with which we must decide if we should take the risk. More often than not, I would rather rely on the experts, ignoring the fact that they have seller biases, and make my decision based on trust.

This is highlighted to me after taking the course. But will I change my way? Probably not, since it has served me well thus far.

What I wished the course has highlighted though, it's the relationship between religion and ignorance, rather than art.

I gained some solid knowledge from this course. I shown interest in this course because of knowledge I gained in the past, especially from Chanakya who wrote 'The Arthashastra'. Chanakya (350 - 275 BCE) was an Indian teacher, philosopher, economist, jurist and royal advisor. The Arthashastra is an ancient Indian treatise on statecraft, economic policy and military strategy, written in Sanskrit. He says that "Vices are corruptions due to ignorance and indiscipline; an

unlearned man does not perceive the injurious consequences of his vices. He summarizes: subject to the qualification that gambling is most dangerous in cases where power is shared, the vice with the most serious consequence is addiction to drink, followed by, lusting after women, gambling, and lastly hunting.” This course provided me a very solid view on ignorance. But does ignorance and indiscipline are related? That’s what I want to learn next!

For me, the most helpful part is the explanation of the various concepts related to ignorance.

I also think that learning about these new concepts has been amazing!

I learned how to deal with complex problems in a better way by knowing that the persons that are in my group deal these problems with different kinds of ignorance.

First of all I also would like to thank for preparing this course. Every weak of the course was interesting and very informative. I have some studies in psychology and decision making topics, the last book I've read was "Thinking fast and slow", but this course's perspective was quite new for me. Actually I haven't thought that there would be such theories and definitions of ignorance. At first, definitions and theories of ignorance were great to understand the concept of ignorance and that time I found a scientific and new view. The most important thing for me was that ignorance could be good and bad. The use at doubt was interesting for me and I saw it a lot around me, and also different kinds of ignorance was very useful. Knowing more lead to worse decisions and knowing that sometimes it is futile to seek greater certainty were very informative.

First of all, I would like to express thanks to the lecturers for delivering the course. I also would like to extend my gratitude to the course team for preparing the video, quizzes, readings etc. In my humble opinion, the course deserves a very high mark.

I take three big things from the course.

First, I take classification of types of ignorance (the taxonomy) with me. Once you know *what* is it you can select an appropriate tactics of dealing with it. Knowing the common meaning of the word “ignorance” I was really surprised in how many forms it comes, and now I am eager to know more about it.

Second, I take a valuable (for me) insight into reasoning in social sciences and psychology. Being an engineer I was trained in a particular way of disputing validity of a statement or building evidence in support of a statement, the way “hard” science does it. This approach

doesn't work here for many reasons, and one might be tempted to think about sociologists as charlatans. I must confess, once I was one of these "ones" thanks to my... well, ignorance. Since I got interest in history and social dynamics, things changed, and for me this course was an important step in getting better understanding of once alien area of knowledge.

Third, I take with me a higher appreciation of role of gap-filling in our decisions. It surfaced in many lectures under many disguises; just in the last week, we had the recognition heuristic, the Gambler's fallacy, and the hot hand phenomenon, to name a few. Putting the everyday life aside, gap-filling is extremely important in dealing with ignorance in engineering practice (eg lack of knowledge, ambiguity in requirements). Gap-filling may be a conscious choice, like designing from a prototype, and in this case it is rather harmless. However, gap-filling may be subconscious, like arguments "from experience", and it is a way more dangerous thing, as it removes one unknown (how do we do this?) on expense of introducing another unknown (is this "from experience" assumption valid?). If unchecked this second unknown might turn up to be very, very costly. So next time before saying "from experience..." I will stop and think carefully, could I prove that this "experience" is applicable here?

And the last question: where could I enrol in Ignorance 2?

I have learned many things from this course. Some of them were things I already knew or suspected, but having them pointed out makes a difference in remembering them. The following is just a sample of these factors.

First, being aware of what I know and don't know, and what I will never know. This can make a difference in what to take into consideration when seeking more information to make a decision.

Then, taking into account what information is relevant and trying to ignore information that is not relevant.

Also, when taking into account the benefits of taking a medical test or when reading a medical study, to be aware of the parameters.

Last, never go to a casino!

Thank you, fellow classmates, for a roaring good time in the intellectual stratosphere. I enjoyed all your brilliant thoughts very much!

I found this course to be deeply profound philosophically. It blew me away to consider ignorance at all. I think as I contemplate what I have learned I will become more comfortable with the notion. I think of ignorance as analogous as a decimal point or the zero in mathematics. They are nothing in

themselves but assist in calculating more effectively. Thank you my colleagues for your comments, insights, and perceptions. You made the content of this course more rounded and realistic.

By taking this MOOC, I have learned that ignorance is a much deeper topic than I had imagined.

The course has led me to appreciate that more careful handling of my ignorance will improve my life. I am now more comfortable with some of my everyday choices to remain ignorant. To give a trivial example: if I am happy with something I have made, I do not need to prise out of other people whether they think it's good ... if they volunteer a comment, that's fine, and it's also fine if they don't.

The course covered a huge amount of material, and I would need to spend more time on the readings, and on writing my own notes, to get the maximum benefit from the course. It is an excellent starting point, helping to launch me on a long journey towards the better understanding of ignorance.

I had a piecemeal knowledge of parts of the course, with more formal studies in statistics and none in psychology. Now I have more info on issues I ignored but what's most important is I have a backdrop which helps me to see/guess the whole picture.

Besides, the Course offered me plenty occasions to try transforming knowledge into behavior.

The Course has been extremely interesting and attractive. Thank you. Planning on signing up for Ignorance 2.

:~)

I'm very satisfied with this course and eager for the beginning of Ignorance 2. The lessons helped me to look to the situations I face in my life – both professional and personal – from different perspectives.

Next week I will make a short presentation to my coworkers about this course. Hopefully many of them will decide to take Igno101 in next edition!

This course has changed my perception of myself. It has shifted my beliefs to thinking I am not such a rarity for making the kind of miscalculations described in the course. In this sense, the course has been a relief!

Secondly, the course has also demystified in my mind the certainty-based expert occupations.

After such salutary deconstruction of negative and positive prejudice respectively, I am now looking forward to some constructive up-skilling in the second course, "Ignorance2".

Thanks very much for all the effort put into the course.

If I've learnt anything in this course, it has been how my autopilot brain overtakes my focused brain, so to speak.

I found the quizzes quite frustrating for the most part (although I have been rushing it all a bit) and I think the main reason is almost an on-cue ability to fall for fallacies (hot hand and gamblers) because my brain doesn't want to focus on details. It has been an eye-opening exercise in how to slow down, look at the detail, separate the necessary from the unnecessary and assess what's need and not. It seems to me though, that I'm allergic to unknowns and just jump to conclusions in order to avoid them, when in reality, I can do so much better than that.

Bring on Ignorance 2!

This course has given me much to ponder. The terminology was certainly helpful, as this gives a vocabulary for thinking about ignorance. The positives about ignorance were also interesting, particularly the relationship with improvisation, chance and art/jazz.

I'm going to have to reflect considerably before thinking about how to apply this to complex problem solving.

Many thanks for an interesting, stimulating and reflective course.

All in all, it was a great mooc. I regret not having had time to do the required reading, which I believe would've helped me have a better understanding of its content. In short, I'm a happier ignoramus after taking this mooc!

I agree, I'm also a happier ignoramus :) I'm glad I took this course and I feel I did learn quite a bit, but feel I didn't dedicate enough time to it. I also had a lot of trouble understanding the statistics and probability section, but I never really learned statistics, so I would've liked to have a general overview of it first (but that is something that I am ignorant of). I also feel like this course will help me problem solve a little better, now that I know there will be some things that I don't know or can

never know. I feel that I will be able to look at situations differently and that makes me feel a little less ignorant (but not much).

one 3rd happier ignoramus :-)

I imagined that this course would be opposite in terms of content , and thus I have learned that problems are only really problems if we deem them to be. There are countless ways, probabilities and certainties when faced with examining and subsequently managing a problem. For me it has opened up my mind to new disciplines and ways to perceive issues. I'm looking forward to going over the course content again slowly but surely, particularly those areas that I genuinely found thought provoking, or rather vague, ambiguous, mathematical or scientific and spend time to reflect and think about why I found things so difficult. Was it laziness, lack of disciplinary knowledge, stubbornness in my thinking, or an alternative realm of thinking altogether.

This course has made me realise just how ignorant I am, but at the same time gaining new knowledge in this area, will I'm sure in the future, make me think twice about how I act on the decisions I make. I may perhaps being more risky or leave things more to chance. Being ignorant and leaving things to chance is not a bad thing it at times it may evolve into greater inspiration and creativity

Having never before taken a class in psychology, logic, or statistics, this was quite a challenge, but an enjoyable one!

While this is a topic I had already thought about much on my own, the different views and structure contained in this course were wonderful. I have a much better grasp on how to go about dealing with unknowns in the future, including, now, the possibility that knowing some things could even make my decisions harder or worse. It's been eye-opening, and I'll definitely be joining Ignorance 2. Thanks again!

The course has been very inspiring. I have decided to focus to my cognitive biases, attitudes and habits to find new perspectives.

Igno101x was great!

I would like to thank all of you from Igno101x! That was a great experience. I started well, lost track a little bit but finally got to the 5th week.

Unfortunately I did not read most of the reading materials I planned to! The course material and discussions will be accessible throughout the rest of 2015? Or at least throughout Igno 2?

My overall view on the course is very positive. I learned a lot and you guys made me see things from a completely different angle than that of my usual one. I am very grateful for that, as it is very important for me in my research. I even experienced a few moments of epiphany regarding my own work, but those are a bit too personal to share here. :)

All in all, I want to thank you for this excellent and interesting course and hoping to have time to participate in the follow-up course as well. :)

Thank you for taking the time to share your knowledge and expertise.

Can I say that the video interview was amazing! I would never have thought about the role of the unknown in musical composition and improvisation, although now it seems obvious. A lovely a-ha moment for me!

Does this Mooc come from Australia? Do I live in Europe? What is "real"?

I love this mooc. I love the idea that I study material that is provided at the other side of our round (:-)) earth, but how do I know? These people from edX, or who else, can prove it directly to me? - I have a good will to believe it, because I think it would be complicated to make some of us (or even only me) believe it is true. Lots of costs etc, and no advantage for anybody to be seen from my point of view. It seems plausible, that my professors really are in Australia, at least some times. Plausibility, well, one of these concepts that are also learned, depending on so many factors (culture, personal biography, education, accidents, so called logic...)

One can question any of these third hand certainties that surround us. Finally we can question the concept of reality itself and in general. Then one of the questions to be lead off, could be this - as philosopher asked: "Are we only a dream (of god)"?

We should stay sceptic. And on the other hand we should preserve a certain trust and innocence: to enjoy anyway, to go the way we think that is ours with open mind and following an intuitive way of "good". - That slipped to third hand thought again,

unavoidable. The best is to try to be aware or "mindful", and probably to train to become even more mindful.

And do things just because they feel like fun and "better world attempt".

My greetings and thankfulness to you Australian professors over there or anywhere! "Don't worry, be happy."

Ah, by the way, I believe in bus schedules, too :-) It's so much easier to trust, many times.

Great thanks!

I would like to thank you Prof. Gabriele Bammer and Prof. Michael Smithson for this interesting and enlightening course. The course helped me look at surrounding life from another angle. I look forward to joining the Ignorance II mooc.

I would like to add in my thanks for this course. It has been an interesting study into the opposite of information that many philosophers argue about. Actually, arguing and pursuing ignorance seems to be a lot more fun! Well, philosophically speaking. :)

Yes. This has been really interesting, at first I did not know what exactly to expect, but found most parts really worthwhile and enlightening.

Yes, I would also like to thank the Professors, the course was well presented and very interesting, I learnt a lot. Thankyou.