

UNDERSTANDING WEB3

LESSON 1: BECOMING YOUR OWN PRISON PROFESSOR

A Prison Professors Self-Directed Course

Estimated time: 65–100 minutes

Educational Boundary:

This course provides general education about technology and preparation. It does not provide individualized financial, investment, legal, or tax advice. It does not recommend any network, company, product, or digital asset. You do not need internet access, an account, a wallet, or a digital asset to complete this lesson.

OPENING GUIDANCE

While serving 26 years in federal prison, I realized that if I wanted a better life after release, I would have to pursue a self-directed learning path. The world was changing, but I could not depend on classrooms, teachers, or access to evolving technology. I had to learn by reading, developing a vocabulary, asking questions, and practicing how to communicate.

In essence, I had to create a curriculum that would help me overcome the obstacles I expected to face. The lessons I learned through that process helped me grow. I may introduce the ideas in this course as a Prison Professor, but my goal is for you to become your own prison professor. You can build a personal curriculum, develop useful skills, and document the work you are doing to prepare for the future.

This course does not ask you to accept every claim about Web3. It asks you to learn the language, understand the basic systems, recognize risks, compare alternatives, and explain your conclusions. That is how knowledge becomes judgment.

PURPOSE AND ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Lesson 1 introduces the purpose, structure, learning method, and boundaries of Understanding Web3. It also explains how your reading, reflection, and writing can create evidence of sustained preparation.

Essential Question:

- » How can I use this course to strengthen my judgment, develop useful learning habits, and document the preparation I am making for the future?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, you should be able to:

- » Describe the purpose and six-section structure of the course.
- » Distinguish technology education from financial, investment, legal, or tax advice.
- » Explain how reading, reflection, and journal writing can document preparation.
- » Identify learning habits that support critical thinking and self-directed study.
- » State a personal reason for studying Web3 without relying on promises or promotional claims.

KEY TERMS

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

Definition: A learning process in which a person takes active responsibility for setting goals, using available resources, monitoring progress, and evaluating understanding.

Sample sentence: My self-directed learning plan includes reading carefully, defining new terms, and reviewing what I wrote.

CRITICAL THINKING

Definition: The disciplined practice of asking questions, examining evidence, recognizing assumptions, and reaching a reasoned conclusion.

Sample sentence: Critical thinking helped the learner separate a verified fact from an exciting prediction.

DIGITAL ECONOMY

Definition: Economic activity that depends on or is significantly shaped by digital technologies, services, infrastructure, and data.

Sample sentence: Online communication, electronic payments, digital records, and remote work are parts of the digital economy.

PROFILE

Definition: In this course, a Prison Professors record that may include dated journal entries documenting a participant's learning, preparation, goals, and growth.



Sample sentence: She added a journal entry to her Profile to document what she learned and how she evaluated the lesson.

PREPARATION

Definition: Deliberate action taken before an opportunity, responsibility, or challenge arises.

Sample sentence: Completing each lesson and explaining it in his own words became evidence of preparation.

MAIN LESSON

WHY THIS COURSE BEGINS WITH LEARNING

You may expect a Web3 course to begin with cryptocurrency, blockchain, or technical vocabulary. Those subjects are coming. First, however, we need to establish how you will learn.

Web3 can be difficult to study because the subject combines technology, finance, business, law, and social organization. People also use the term in different ways. Some explain it carefully. Others use it to advertise products, predict the future, or create excitement. If you begin by memorizing slogans, you may repeat words without understanding what they mean. If you begin with a sound learning method, you can examine unfamiliar claims without being controlled by them.

The method in this course is simple: read, define, question, apply, write, and re-view. None of those actions requires a smartphone or an account. Each one can be completed with a printed lesson, separate paper, and a pencil. Access to technology may expand your resources, but limited access does not prevent serious learning.

BECOMING YOUR OWN PRISON PROFESSOR

Becoming your own prison professor means accepting responsibility for your education while using whatever lawful resources are available. It does not mean pretending that you already know the answers. It does not mean rejecting teachers, feedback, or expertise. It means that you do not wait passively for ideal conditions before you begin preparing.

During my years in prison, I could not control the sentence, the schedule, or the technology available to me. I could control whether I read, whether I thought about what I read, and whether I practiced communicating what I learned. Those repeated choices helped me build skills that remained useful when circumstances changed.

Your circumstances may be different from mine. Your goals may also be different. The principle remains useful: identify what you can control and act on it consistently. You may control when you read, how you organize notes, whether you define unfamiliar words, how honestly you evaluate your understanding, and whether you complete the journal entry. Small actions repeated across 20 lessons can create a meaningful record.

Self-directed learning is not the same as learning alone. A book can guide you. A facilitator can offer feedback. A family member can encourage you. A knowledgeable person can correct an error. The learner's responsibility is to use support thoughtfully rather than surrendering judgment. A serious learner can say, "I do not understand this yet," and then decide what question to ask next.

HOW THE 20 LESSONS ARE ORGANIZED

The course contains six sections that build from foundations toward responsible application.

1. Understanding the Internet and Web3 introduces changes in the internet, the idea of Web3, and the tradeoffs between centralized and decentralized systems.
2. Blockchain Foundations explains shared ledgers, transactions, blocks, hashes, networks, consensus, and blockchain layers.
3. Digital Assets and Tokenization distinguishes cryptocurrencies, tokens, stablecoins, non-fungible tokens, and tokenized assets.
4. Wallets, Transactions, Custody, and Safety explains how people interact with blockchain systems and why security, privacy, and careful verification matter.
5. Smart Contracts, Applications, Finance, and Governance introduces programmable agreements and the applications, risks, and decision-making systems built around them.
6. Applications, Skills, Careers, and Responsible Participation connects technical understanding to ethical judgment, transferable skills, continuing education, and future preparation.

I encourage participants to work through the sequence in order. Each lesson will build upon the previous lesson. Later lessons will depend on words and ideas introduced earlier. You are not expected to master every detail on the first reading. Your responsibility is to build an accurate foundation and notice where your understanding needs work.

USE A REPEATABLE LEARNING CYCLE

Each lesson follows a recurring cycle.

1. Read: Move slowly enough to identify the main idea and supporting details.
2. Define: Study the vocabulary and use each important word in context.
3. Question: Ask what evidence supports a claim, what may be missing, and what alternatives exist.
4. Apply: Complete a scenario, comparison, exercise, or paper simulation.
5. Write: Explain the concept in your own words and connect it to responsible preparation.
6. Review: Check your reasoning, identify errors, and decide what needs further study.

This cycle turns reading into active work. A person may look at every page and still learn very little. Active reading requires decisions. You may underline a definition, place a question mark beside an unclear sentence, summarize a paragraph in a few words, or list a benefit beside a limitation. The physical mark is not the goal. The goal is to make your thinking visible so you can examine it.

VOCABULARY CREATES ACCESS

Specialized words can create barriers. They can also become tools. When you learn a term such as blockchain, wallet, or smart contract, you gain the ability to understand a discussion that may once have seemed closed to you.

Vocabulary should improve communication, not create a performance. Using a complicated word does not prove understanding. You should be able to define a term plainly, use it in a sentence, recognize an incorrect use, and explain how it connects with other ideas. If you cannot do those things yet, return to the definition and example.

This course introduces a small group of terms in each lesson. Keep a personal vocabulary list if your circumstances permit. Write the date, the term, a short definition, and your own sentence. Over time, the list will show growth that may be difficult to notice from one day to the next.

CRITICAL THINKING IN A NOISY SUBJECT

Critical thinking does not mean criticizing everything. It means evaluating a claim before deciding how much confidence to place in it. A careful learner asks questions such as:

- » Who made this claim, and what does that person or organization want me to believe or do?
- » What evidence supports the claim?
- » Is the statement a fact, an opinion, a forecast, or a promotion?



- » What assumptions does the statement depend upon?
- » What are the possible benefits, limitations, costs, and risks?
- » What simpler alternative should be considered?
- » What information would change my conclusion?

These questions are especially important in Web3. A description may explain a real capability while leaving out cost, complexity, concentration of power, privacy concerns, security failures, or legal uncertainty. Another description may focus only on problems and ignore useful experiments. Your responsibility is not to become automatically enthusiastic or automatically hostile. Your responsibility is to develop a reasoned position based on the best information available.

WEB3 IS ONLY ONE PART OF THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

The digital economy includes many activities shaped by digital technology and data. Online marketplaces, digital records, remote services, software, electronic communication, and digital payments are examples. Web3 is one part of that broader environment. It does not represent every digital activity, and it does not replace every useful system that came before it.

Studying Web3 can still be valuable even if you never purchase a digital asset or use a blockchain application. The subject can help you practice evaluating technical claims, comparing systems, recognizing security risks, and communicating about change. Those abilities can transfer to many forms of learning and work.

The course does not promise that Web3 will create a job, income, investment return, or opportunity for any particular participant. Technology changes. Organizations change. Laws and markets change. Durable preparation comes from developing skills that remain useful when a prediction turns out to be wrong.

DOCUMENTING PREPARATION THROUGH YOUR PROFILE

At the end of every lesson, you will receive prompts for a Profile journal entry. The purpose is not to produce a perfect essay. The purpose is to create a dated record of thought, effort, and improvement.

A strong entry does more than repeat definitions. It explains an idea, applies it, identifies a limitation, and connects the lesson to a responsible choice or future goal. Over time, the entries can demonstrate that you followed a structured course, practiced writing, considered risks, and sustained a self-directed learning process.

A Profile is evidence of preparation, not a guarantee. A journal entry cannot promise employment, support, release, or success. It can help you show what you chose



to do with your time and how your thinking developed. That record becomes stronger when your writing is specific, honest, organized, and in your own words.

Protect your privacy while documenting your work. Never include passwords, account numbers, authentication codes, private keys, seed phrases, or other sensitive credentials. You also do not need to disclose private financial information or details that could create a personal safety risk. Thoughtful writing can be meaningful without revealing everything about your life.

COURSE BOUNDARIES PROTECT YOUR JUDGMENT

Education explains concepts and helps you ask better questions. Advice tells a specific person what action to take based on that person's circumstances. This course provides education. It does not tell you to buy, sell, hold, borrow, invest, create an account, open a wallet, or use a financial product.

The course also does not provide individualized legal or tax guidance. Rules can depend on jurisdiction, facility policy, personal circumstances, and changes over time. If a real decision requires professional advice, the lesson cannot replace an appropriately qualified adviser.

These boundaries do not weaken the course. They strengthen it by keeping the focus on understanding and judgment. You can study how a wallet works without opening one. You can evaluate a token claim without purchasing anything. You can compare a blockchain with an ordinary database without deciding that either one is always better.

YOUR REASON FOR STUDYING MATTERS

A clear reason can help you continue when the material becomes difficult. Your reason does not need to sound impressive. You may want to understand language you hear in the news. You may want to communicate more effectively with family members or future colleagues. You may want to strengthen your research and writing. You may want to evaluate technology claims more carefully or prepare for a changing workplace.

Avoid building your reason around fear of missing out or a promise of quick wealth. Those motives can encourage rushed decisions and weak judgment. A durable reason focuses on what you can develop: knowledge, discipline, communication, ethical awareness, and evidence of preparation.

At the end of this lesson, you will create a learning commitment. It is not a contract with Prison Professors. It is a statement to yourself about how you intend to approach the work. You may need to adjust the schedule when circumstances change. The important measure is whether you return to the process and continue.

APPLIED SCENARIO: TWO WAYS TO COMPLETE A LESSON

Two learners receive the same printed lesson.

The first learner reads quickly, copies several sentences into a journal entry, and finishes. The response uses technical words but does not explain them. When asked what evidence supports a claim, the learner cannot answer.

The second learner reads more slowly. This learner circles unfamiliar terms, writes plain definitions, identifies one claim that needs evidence, completes the exercise, and explains a conclusion in original words. The response is not perfect, but it shows reasoning and identifies what remains unclear.

Both learners turned in a response. Only the second response provides strong evidence of self-directed learning.

Reasoned conclusion: Completion matters, but the quality of the learning process matters more. A useful Profile entry shows how the learner interpreted, questioned, applied, and evaluated the material. It does not merely prove that the learner reached the last page.

BENEFITS, LIMITATIONS, RISKS, AND MISCONCEPTIONS

POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF THE COURSE METHOD

- » A repeatable process can make unfamiliar material more manageable.
- » Vocabulary practice can improve reading and communication.
- » Scenarios and exercises can reveal gaps that passive reading may hide.
- » Dated journal entries can document sustained effort and developing judgment.
- » Offline design allows meaningful participation without an account or internet access.

IMPORTANT LIMITATIONS AND RISKS

- » A self-directed course cannot answer every question or replace all expert guidance.
- » A learner can misunderstand a concept and repeat the error without careful review or feedback.
- » Technical information can become outdated, especially when it concerns particular networks, laws, or markets.
- » Promotional language may look educational while encouraging a financial action.

- » A Profile entry can create privacy risks if it includes sensitive personal or account information.
- » Course completion does not establish professional expertise or guarantee an opportunity.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

- » “Self-directed learning means I must learn alone.” You remain responsible for your learning, but appropriate guidance, correction, and support can improve it.
- » “Longer writing always proves deeper thinking.” Clear reasoning and relevant examples matter more than unnecessary length.
- » “Finishing the course will make me a Web3 expert.” The course provides an introductory foundation and a method for continued learning.
- » “I must buy cryptocurrency to understand Web3.” Every required activity can be completed without purchasing an asset or creating an account.
- » “A Profile guarantees that someone will support me.” A Profile can document preparation, but other people and institutions make their own decisions.

ETHICAL LEARNING

Ethical learning requires honesty. Use your own words. Identify uncertainty instead of pretending to know. Credit important sources when appropriate. Do not copy another person’s experience and present it as your own. Respect privacy, facility rules, intellectual property, and the safety boundaries of the course.

OFFLINE EXERCISE: MY 20-LESSON LEARNING COMMITMENT

Estimated time: 15–20 minutes

Materials: Separate paper and a pen or pencil.

Write a one-page learning commitment using the steps below. This is a planning exercise, not the Profile journal assignment.

1. Write one or two honest reasons why you want to study Web3.
2. Identify two abilities you want to strengthen, such as reading, vocabulary, writing, critical thinking, digital safety, or decision-making.
3. Choose a realistic study routine. State when or how often you intend to read, complete exercises, and write journal entries.
4. Identify one likely obstacle, such as interruptions, limited materials, difficult vocabulary, or discouragement.
5. Write one response you can use when that obstacle appears.



6. List two rules for protecting your judgment. Examples include checking the source of a claim, comparing benefits with risks, or refusing to act because of pressure or fear of missing out.
7. List two rules for protecting your privacy. Do not write any real credential or account information.
8. Finish this sentence: Across these 20 lessons, I intend to demonstrate that I can...
9. Date the commitment and keep it with your course materials when circumstances permit.

After every five lessons, reread the commitment. Mark what is working and what needs adjustment. Revising a plan is not a failure. It is part of directing your learning responsibly.

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Which action best demonstrates self-directed learning?
 - a. Repeating a promotional slogan without examining it
 - b. Waiting for perfect conditions before beginning
 - c. Setting a goal, using available resources, checking understanding, and adjusting the plan
 - d. Assuming that completing a page proves mastery
2. Which statement accurately describes a boundary of this course?
 - a. It recommends particular digital assets for each participant.
 - b. It provides general technology education rather than individualized financial, legal, or tax advice.
 - c. It requires every participant to create a wallet.
 - d. It guarantees employment after completion.
3. Which example provides the strongest evidence of preparation?
 - a. A dated journal entry that explains an idea, evaluates a limitation, and applies the lesson
 - b. A copied definition with no explanation
 - c. A claim that the learner already understands everything
 - d. A list of assets the learner hopes will increase in price



TRUE OR FALSE

- » Completing all 20 lessons and creating a Profile guarantees that an employer, court, institution, or supporter will provide an opportunity.

SHORT EXPLANATION

- » In two or three sentences, identify one learning habit you intend to use and explain how it can strengthen your critical thinking or preparation.

SUMMARY AND PRACTICAL TAKEAWAYS

- » The course contains 20 lessons organized into six sections.
- » Self-directed learning requires active responsibility, not isolation or pretending to know everything.
- » A useful learning cycle is to read, define, question, apply, write, and review.
- » Critical thinking weighs evidence, assumptions, benefits, limitations, risks, and alternatives.
- » Web3 is one part of the broader digital economy.
- » The course provides education, not individualized financial, investment, legal, or tax advice.
- » Profile journal entries can document sustained preparation, but they do not guarantee an outcome.
- » No required activity involves purchasing an asset, opening an account, or using the internet.

The practical goal is not to sound like an expert. It is to become a more disciplined learner who can explain what you know, identify what you do not know, and continue preparing responsibly.

PROFILE JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT

Write one coherent journal entry of approximately 300–400 words. Do not submit a disconnected list of answers. Use the prompts below to organize a beginning, middle, and conclusion:

- » Explain why you chose to study Web3 and what you hope to understand.
- » Identify two learning or communication skills you intend to strengthen.
- » Describe the study habits you will use across the 20 lessons.
- » Explain what you want your completed Profile entries to demonstrate about your preparation.

- » Identify one important course boundary and explain why it protects your judgment.
- » End with one commitment you can control, even if your circumstances or access to technology remain limited.

Your response should be honest and specific, but you do not need to disclose private financial, legal, medical, family, or facility information. You are not being asked to support Web3, oppose it, purchase anything, or predict its future.

SUBMISSION REMINDER

Write your response on separate paper or in an approved institutional messaging system. Include your name or approved Profile identifier, Lesson 1: Becoming Your Own Prison Professor, and the date you completed the entry.

Use one of the established Prison Professors Profile methods, subject to your facility's rules:

1. Send it by institutional email to Playbook@PrisonProfessors.org. Suggested subject: Web3 Lesson 1 — [date completed].
2. Send it by postal mail to: Prison Professors, 1205 BMC Drive, Suite 706, Cedar Park, TX 78613.
3. Send it to an approved family member or supporter who can enter it in your Profile at PrisonProfessors.org.

Keep a copy when circumstances permit. Never include passwords, private keys, seed phrases, authentication codes, account numbers, or other sensitive credentials.