

**Essay One**  
HMXP102  
Prof. Oakes  
Winthrop University

Section I: Self Study

Central Question: What is the nature of and what are the prospects for self-study?

In this first section of the course, we have read materials that shed some light on the nature of human thought and knowledge generally. Plato tells us that reality is remote, that we must work to move past appearances in order to learn it, and that it is reason, ultimately, that provides us a grasp of reality. Bohm tells us that there are significant psychological obstacles to our creating the communication events that are nevertheless of great value to us. Mill suggests that the truth is easily suppressed, and that it may be complex – so complex that it takes many perspectives to reveal it, which entails that no one individual's understanding may be complete. And Socrates argues that we are essentially ignorant of the most important things – justice, right and wrong, how to live properly – and that the height of human wisdom is recognizing this fact.

In this exercise, you are to state and explain one of the central ideas developed by one of the authors in this section, and relate it to the process or possibility of self-knowledge. In writing about the process or possibility of self-knowledge, you should consider not simply your own case, but self-knowledge in general. You may refer to your own case, and it may be useful to do so, in order to find specific application of your general remarks. But your essay should concern self-knowledge as it exists for humans generally, not simply for you.

So, here's what to do:

- State and explain a main claim or idea of one of our authors (Plato, Bohm, Mill, Socrates). In order to state and explain an idea of substance, you should do the following:
  - o State the idea and explain generally what it means;
  - o Provide some concrete example or illustration of the idea;
  - o Integrate specifically the general idea with the specific illustration.
- Evaluate that claim or idea in the context of Self-Study. I.e., what does the author help us to see about the project of self-study, our capacity to know ourselves? How should one respond to what the author says about knowledge, truth, reality, etc., in one's quest to acquire an understanding of the self? In our pursuit of self-knowledge, what lesson should we draw from the author's work?
- The *thesis* or *main idea* of your discussion should be the evaluative claim linking what your author says with what that means for self-study. Here is a rough template for such a claim:

Since, as <name of author> observes, <central claim of author>, therefore, in our quest for self-knowledge, <claim about how we should respond>.

- We will spend some time in class on writing instruction preparatory to completing this exercise.

Size and Shape:

- Worth: 7.5% of your course grade (75 points).
- Maximum 500 words. Place a word-count in the heading of your paper. Over-limit essays will not be graded. Papers without word-counts will not be graded.
- Typed and double-spaced, please.
- Follow proper citation and works-cited format.
- Due in class (hard-copy) and to Turnitin.com as follows on **Friday, Sept. 9**.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is a change from the syllabus.