

The Self

The last section of my metaphysics and epistemology class focuses on the question of "the self". As a way to allow them to both explore their "self" and review the meaning of, and difference between, metaphysics and epistemology, I give them the following essay topic.

What Am I? Applying metaphysics and epistemology to your philosophy of self

Develop a personal philosophy of self. Try to make sense of what your intuition tells you about the self. Address both what you are (metaphysics) and how you know what you are (epistemology). Use the questions below as a way to get you thinking. Consider how the metaphysics you settle on for this paper affect the epistemology that flows from it?

The metaphysics of the self: What are you? Are you purely material or purely spiritual, or a mixture of both? Are you a spiritual soul inhabiting a body? Are you simply a physical body which possess a "bundle of perceptions"? Are you nothing more than your experience? Are you a process, like a stream of consciousness? Or are you simply a role in society? Give your reasons and refer to your own experiences.

The epistemology of the self: Can you know what you are? What is it to know what you are? Is it to explain your self? Is knowing what you are being able to point at yourself? Is knowing what you are simply listening to how others describe you? Or can you know yourself only through intuition, in a flash of experience that is untranslatable.