Discussion: Nature of the self, knowledge, and reality

The task is the same for all 5 groups. Read the short texts assigned for this segment that deal with the self: Nairn on the contemporary Western idea of the self; *Upanishads* on the Hindu idea of the self; any of the Buddhist selections on the Buddhist idea of the self. Merton is optional but it briefly outlines the Christian idea of the self from a perspective that is friendly to both Buddhism and Hinduism. Plato’s text is on the nature of knowledge.

The task is to think about your own experience and understanding of the self in the U.S. society. In your presentation/discussion try to answer the following questions: what is your understanding of the self? what is it? what is it that your self wants? what is the point of life for your self? what is the ideal condition for your self? what is real for yourself? how much do you think your self knows about reality and itself?