Reflection Prompts for Week 10 & 11

Week 10
Monday’s Reading

In Bk VII, 514a-518d, Plato presents his allegory of the cave that illustrates the process of education that finally allows certain souls to understand the Form of the Good, which is the source of Knowledge, Truth, and Beauty. For your reflection:

• Briefly describe the allegory
• What are the prisoners actually seeing?
• What do they falsely believe that they are seeing?
• According to Plato, the majority of us are like the prisoners in the cave. Do you agree?

For Friday’s film showing

Write up a one page reflection on questions #2 and #4 on the film handout. To receive full credit, make sure and cite both Plato’s *Republic* and the film

For Friday’s reading

Read pp. 114-121 in your course pack. This includes the editor’s introduction to epistemology and an excerpt from Rene Descartes *Meditations*. The Descartes’ excerpt is entitled ‘Cartesian Doubt and the Search for Foundational Knowledge.’ For a reflection, you may answer any or all of the questions for further reflection on p. 121. Make sure to try and restate Descartes’ argument(s) before critiquing them.

Week 11

For Monday’s film showing and reading

Reread Descartes’ ‘Cartesian Doubt and the Search for Foundational Knowledge.’ In your reading, you will see Descartes imagining all sorts of things in order to see if he can doubt his beliefs. His goal is to find the one belief or truth cannot be doubted. Reflect on the following:

1. In Meditation Two, what is the statement that Descartes finally realizes must be true even if there is an evil omnipotent genius that is trying to deceive him?

2. How does Descartes' strategy for arriving at rationally justified true beliefs compare or contrast with the process whereby Truman finally discovers which of his beliefs are true and/or rationally justified? For example, Descartes begins his method by withdrawing "in solitude" (p. 116). Do you think that Truman could have and should have relied on others to help him form his beliefs about reality? Why or why not?