

IB Theory of Knowledge (yr 1)

Mr. Lozano RM. 725 (All Credit to Mr. Connors)

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Conference period: 4 (I have a 0-6 day ending at 2:30pm)

Google classroom code: Period 0: 42id2ou6

Course Introduction and Purpose:

Welcome to Theory of Knowledge! The TOK course plays a special role in the Diploma Program by providing an opportunity for students to reflect on the nature, scope, methods and limitations of knowledge and the process of knowing. In this way, the main focus of TOK is not on traditional academic content 'per se', but on helping you reflect on, and put into perspective, what you already know. In TOK, you will reflect on the knowledge, beliefs, and opinions that you have built up from your years of academic studies and lives outside the classroom, as well as many potentially new avenues of exploration. The course is intended to be challenging and thought-provoking—as well as empowering—for students.

IB Learner Profile traits are also evident within TOK: Students will be asked to *Inquire* about how knowledge is constructed, becoming *Knowledgeable* about knowledge itself. Students must *Communicate* about *Thinking* and the process of thought. Students must maintain an *Open mind* about claims they will encounter, learning not to accept claims at face value but considering how to be a *Risk-taker* in questioning what they already hold to be true. Students must *Care* about how they use their knowledge, making sure that they apply *Balance* and *Reflection*. Overall, TOK should encourage students to develop a more *Principled* basis from which to act and engage in the world.

Method: The course centers on the exploration of knowledge questions. These are contestable questions about knowledge itself, such as: “What counts as good evidence for a claim?”, “How can we decide between the judgment of experts when they disagree with one another?”, and “What ethical constraints should there be on the pursuit of knowledge?”. Knowledge Questions are questions about how knowledge is produced, acquired, shared, and used.

This course, more so than most - will rely on **YOUR** participation. I am not the ‘content’ expert. I will be there to facilitate discussion, provide materials and interesting resources, and to stimulate and moderate debate and reflection. However, it is **ESSENTIAL** that in this course you become somewhat comfortable speaking out, sharing ideas, and engaging with your peers. Remember, the *whole point* of this course is that **there is not a ‘single’ answer to these questions**. There will still be projects, writing, and multiple other forms of work and assessment; but overall, this needs to be a participation driven, group-minded, and collaborative class.

**** Course Structure and Themes:** The TOK curriculum is based on three interconnected parts, These are:

#1 Core Theme- Knowledge and the Knower: This Theme will not only be the basis of a unit of our course, but it will be interwoven throughout the other themes as well. This Theme will focus on how our perspectives are shaped, both individually and in communities of knowers. It will offer you opportunities to reflect on how our knowledge is constructed, evaluated, and renewed, and overall how we navigate the world.

#2 Optional Themes: The TOK guide offers five optional themes - and of these, **Two** must be studied in detail. For our course - Our two Main optional themes will be ‘**Knowledge and Language**’ and ‘**Knowledge and technology**’. We will also briefly look at the other five themes - though we will not spend as much time on them. These Themes are: ‘Knowledge and Religion’, ‘Knowledge and Politics’, ‘Knowledge and Indigenous Societies’, ‘Knowledge and Technology’ and ‘Knowledge and Language’.

#3 Areas of Knowledge: The IB Guide Defines **5 ‘Areas of knowledge’** (AOKs) and *Each* must be studied in detail. They are: *History, The Arts, Mathematics, Human Sciences* (such as Psychology, Anthropology, Economics etc...) and *Natural Sciences* (Biology, Geology, Physics etc...)

In each of these Themes and AOKs, we will make use of a framework that includes the four elements of: *Scope, Perspectives, Methods and Tools, and Ethics*.

Remember - The focus of this course is NOT to become an expert in any of these content areas, but to examine the role of knowledge in each. You will not need to become an expert in physics to discuss how knowledge is constructed and used in the natural sciences, and you will not need to be an expert in any individual religion to discuss the role of faith.

Review of TOK components: TOK, along with the EE and CAS, are core components of the Diploma Program.

Failure in any single one of these will mean failing the diploma itself. While there are no Theory of Knowledge ‘exams’ at the end of the two year program, there are two major pieces of coursework that will be used to determine the students’ performance in TOK, which, alongside the EE, will determine the number of points a student can earn towards their diploma in addition to points from other subject courses.

More detailed rubrics and instructions will be provided in class when they become more directly relevant.

****Internal assessment**

Theory of knowledge exhibition (10 marks)

For this component, students are required to create an exhibition that explores how TOK manifests in the world around us. This component is internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course. This item will be weighted at 1/3 (33%) of the overall student score.

****External assessment**

TOK essay on a prescribed title (10 marks)

For this component, students are required to write an essay in response to one of the six prescribed titles that are issued by the IB for each examination session. As an external assessment component, it is marked by IB examiners. It will be weighted 2/3 (67%).

Diploma Points Matrix: The performance of a student in both Diploma Program requirements, theory of knowledge and the extended essay, is determined according to the quality of the work, based on IB assessment criteria. It is described by one of the band descriptors A–E. Using the two performance levels and the diploma points matrix, a maximum of three diploma points can be awarded for a student’s combined performance.

The band descriptors are:

1. (A) Work of an excellent standard (9-10)
2. (B) Work of a very good standard (7-8)
3. (C) Work of a satisfactory standard (5-6)
4. (D) Work of a basic standard (3-4)
5. (E-Failing condition) Work of an elementary standard (1-2)
6. (N-Failing condition) Irrelevant (0)

A student who, for example, writes a *satisfactory (C)* Extended Essay and whose performance in theory of knowledge is judged to be *very good (B)* will be awarded 2 points, while a student whose performance in both areas is judged *Basic (D)* will not earn any additional points, but will not receive an automatic failing condition.

ToK/EE	A	B	C	D	E
A	3	3	2	2	Failing condition
B	3	2	2	1	
C	2	2	1	0	
D	2	1	0	0	
E	Failing condition				

A student who fails to submit a TOK essay, or who fails to create an exhibition, will be awarded N for TOK, will score no points, and will not be awarded a diploma. Performance in either theory of knowledge or the extended essay of an elementary standard is a failing condition for the award of the diploma. (Its **NOT** hard to do better than an E if you take ANY time at all)

Classwork, CAS, and EE: We are fortunate this year to have more hours than the IB guide requires for this part of the course. Because of this, in years past, it has usually been the case that 0 period TOK also becomes a time for you to work on the requirements of the other IB elements - CAS hours and the Extended Essay. Within a few weeks, as these elements are introduced to you, we will likely have regular times (Most likely Wednesdays at minimum) where we will put a *pause* on our TOK content, and you will work on your proposals, data entries, and reflections for your other elements. These days are NOT ‘Free days’. Nor are they days where you can show up late and slack off. Your participation for these elements CAN and WILL be used as a part of your TOK course grade.
-Mrs. LaBare is the CAS coordinator and also has more expertise with the EE. She will likely be introducing the particulars of these elements when she returns.

Thou Shalt NOTs: Non-productive/ non-academic device use, talking or texting during lecture or when another peer is speaking, leaving before I have dismissed you, and rude language addressed to peers are unacceptable and will be treated severely. In this class especially- we need to learn how to discuss things that are controversial in a civil and reasonable way.

Attendance: This class is early - I get it - but you NEED to get in the habit of showing up on time. Even though this class is not as reliant on specific content - the Foundation of this class is our corporate ability to discuss ideas and thinking with each other. Routinely missing out on class discussion means your perspective and contributions are missing from the group which makes everyone's discussion poorer. BE here!

Homework: - There WILL be some homework in this class- largely in the form of reading an article or watching a video and taking notes to be prepared to discuss in class. Because this class is so participation heavy, you may be asked to post these notes on Google Classroom for credit if you are unable to participate in live discussion.

- It is your responsibility to get yourself caught up on any concepts that are discussed or introduced in class when you are absent - find a buddy or two for this purpose and copy the notes of their discussion.
- Homework should be completed on time, I will do my best to make all necessary materials available online when possible. Missing assignments may be turned in within one week of the original due date for a maximum of 3/5

Class Grading/ Weighting: This class will rely less on summative assessment than your other content classes. We will work on a rough and *Final* draft of the TOK Exhibition (subject to timing) - as well as a practice TOK essay (we cannot work on the actual TOK essay until the prompts are released for you next year.) Your class grade will especially depend on class participation and the consistency and depth of thinking in your contributions.

Like your other classes - your work will be assessed on a 5 point scale with a possible 6 or 7 being attained for especially good and fruitful work. Meaning, on individual assignments - it is possible to get as high as 7/5

Summative Assessment will comprise **25%** of the final score - largely the Exhibition, and draft Essay

Formative Assessment will comprise **20%** of the final score - draft work and various CAS and EE progress

Guided Practice will comprise **40%** of your final score - weekly participation in discussion and classwork

Independent Practice will comprise the remaining **15%** - this is outside reading, article work etc...

Course Materials:

- Many course materials will be digital - and it will be **essential** to every student to bring their *chromebook and charger* each day as well as a few basics like *pencils and black pens*.
- Each Student will also keep a running composition book with a table of contents - it is possible that these will be kept in class.

Please note that this syllabus is a starting point and can be customized according to the specific needs and preferences of the class. I encourage open communication to ensure that this course is both engaging and beneficial for all students involved.

Your signature here indicates that you have read this syllabus and understand its contents. You are aware that if this syllabus requires changes you will be notified. Your signature here indicates your agreement to abide by the above expectations for personal and academic conduct; or as a parent or guardian, to hold your student responsible.

Student Signature:_____.

Student print:_____ **Date:** _____

Parent or Guardian Signature._____.

Teacher Signature:_____ . Once all signatures are obtained within the first week, a photocopy will be made and returned to student.