Theory of Knowledge 2017-2018

Theory of Knowledge is at the center of everything you have done and will do in the IB program. The reason is that TOK is a course in which we will examine the very basis of human understanding. In that sense, this class can be quite challenging for teachers, students, and parents to understand. After all, we will be discussing questions that people have been struggling with for as long as people have been thinking, debating, and writing. That being said, TOK is an academic course, and the students are being evaluated. Ultimately, my goals as a TOK teacher are to help the students consider knowledge on a much deeper level than they have previously, to encourage them to see the inherent connections between all of the classes that they are studying, and to prepare them for the TOK essay and presentation that are the basis of their TOK grade for the IB.

The IB wants students to analyze knowledge claims and explore knowledge questions and to understand the differences between shared knowledge and personal knowledge.

For this purpose the crafters of the TOK program have designated eight ways of knowing:

**language, sense perception, emotion, reason, imagination, faith, intuition, and memory.** These ways of knowing have two roles in TOK. They underlie the methodology of the areas of knowledge and they provide the basis for personal knowledge.

The areas of knowledge have been classified by the crafters of the TOK program as: **mathematics, the natural sciences, the human sciences, the arts, history, ethics, religious knowledge systems, and indigenous knowledge systems.**

IB Assessments:

1. The students will receive a series of prescribed essay topics from the IB. They will have to write an essay on one of the topics that does not exceed 1,600 words. That essay will be mailed to the IB for scoring.
2. The students will perform a presentation either as individuals or in small groups (no more than 3 students per group) in which they explore a knowledge question in connection to a real life situation. Those presentations cannot exceed 10 minutes per student, so the maximum length is 30 minutes. I will guide the students in their preparation for the presentations and will assess the presentations using the official rubric provided by the IB.

**Grading for the SHS Course:**

My goal is to prepare the students for the assessments I just explained. In that spirit, the students will be doing a great deal of reading outside of class, writing in and out of class, and speaking in class. Major grades will include essays, presentations, and tests. Minor grades will include quizzes and participation grades. Major grades will count 60%, and minor grades will count 40%.

**Texts:**

We will use two books for the course: Man is the Measure by Reuben Abel and The Consolations of Philosophy by Alain de Botton. I will also include supplementary material as we progress through the course.

**Contact:**

We will meet twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays during 3rd block. For that reason, students will need to be able to reach me outside of class when they have questions. They can call me at 236-2428.

Parents,

Please sign the bottom of this syllabus to indicate that you have read it over with your senior and to show that you know that he or she knows how to reach me when he or she has questions. As always, I’m excited to work with your child again this year and hope for nothing but their continued success.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Theory of Knowledge—Year Two Pacing Guide**

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| **Week** | **Topic/Unit** |
| 1 | Course Introduction, Syllabus, Ways of Knowing Rehash |
| 2-3 | The Nature of Time  (Abel Chapter 12—Space, Time and Matter)  *Interstellar* |
| 4 | Metaphysics (Abel Chapter 1)—What in the World is There?  Knowledge (Abel Chapter 2)—The Basis of Knowledge |
| 5 | Truth (Abel Chapter 5)—When Do We Attain Certainty?  Memory vs. Reality  *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* |
| 6-7 | Areas of Knowledge—Social Sciences  (Abel Chapter 11—The Social Sciences)  (Abel Chapter 15—The Study of History: What is the Past?) |
| 8-9 | Areas of Knowledge—Mathematics and Human Sciences  (Abel Chapter 6)—Logic, Mathematics and Metaphysics  (Abel Chapter 9)—Science, Facts and Hypotheses |
| **Week** | **Topic/Unit** |
| 10 | IA Essay Introduction  Library Research/Topic Brainstorming |
| 11-12 | Areas of Knowledge—Language  (Abel Chapter 7)—Meaning and Naming: How Language Bites on to the World |
| 13 | IA Essay Peer Reviews & Edits  Specimen Paper Analysis  *Moonrise Kingdom* |
| 14-15 | Areas of Knowledge—Arts  (Abel Chapter 21)—Form in Art  (Abel Chapter 22)—Creativity |
| 16-18 | Areas of Knowledge—Ethics  (Abel Chapter 20)—Intention, Inaction and Free Will  (Abel Chapter 23)—Man is the Measure |
| **Week** | **Topic/Unit** |
| 19-23 | Research, Creation and Implementation of IA Presentations |
| 24-27 | IA Presentations Filming |