

Theory of Knowledge 2
Course Syllabus 2009-2010

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Essential Questions

Community: *Are there certain obligations for humanity to treat members of a community and the natural environment in a certain way? Are there constraints? If so, are the obligations and constraints based only on a concern for the indirect effects on humanity?*

Justice: *What are the justifications for, and implications of, claiming that there are universal standards for morality? When moral codes of individuals conflict, can criteria be developed for an international morality that transcends them?*

Forgiveness: *To what extent does the state of a person's knowledge play in deciding whether an act is right or wrong? Under what conditions would it be legitimate for a person to plead ignorance?*

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of Theory of Knowledge is to present content and questions that ask students to reflect on their own knowledge claims. In essence, it asks participants to examine the fundamental question: "How Do We Know What We Know?" The central purpose of ToK is to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the justifications used to support our knowledge claims.
2. **Beliefs:** In order to appreciate the purpose of ToK, one must be willing to use listening skills and critical reflection to understand the justifications used by the members of the class. One does not have to agree with the other students or the teacher, but in order to engage in purposeful dialogue, a tone of respect must permeate the classroom. I believe, that through fruitful discuss and self examination, students will better understand the complexity of knowledge associated with Ways of Knowing and Areas of Knowledge and will recognize that the world is interconnected.

Course Objectives

- Content studied will include knowledge issues in:

I. Monsters

II. History

- III. the Social Sciences
- IV. the Natural Sciences
- V. Mathematics
- VI. the Arts

VII. Ethics

- Skills incorporated throughout the course are
 1. developing a critical capacity to evaluate beliefs and knowledge claims
 2. making interdisciplinary connections
 3. understanding the strengths and limitations of individual and cultural perspective
 4. developing a concern for rigor in formulating knowledge claims and intellectual honesty
 5. using oral and written language to formulate and communicate ideas clearly

(Adapted from I.B.O TOK Guide, 2001 and D. Oberg, 2005)

- Expectations of attitudes are that all students show eagerness to participate in class discussions in a mature manner, courteous behavior when listening to others and respectful awareness that the interpretative nature of knowledge includes personal and ideological biases.

Extra-help is available before or after school and during lunch by prior arrangement.

3. **Teaching Strategies & Resources**

- Learning will involve varied approaches including teacher- and student-led directed discussions and activities, student presentations, assigned outside and classroom readings, videos and possibly guest speakers.
- Resources will include readings from a variety of sources, including student contributions, news articles, I.B.O TOK subject guide (2001, 2006), *Theory of Knowledge* by Nicholas Alchin (John Murray), *Ways of Knowing* (2000) by Michael Woolman, *Grendel* by John Gardner, *The Republic of Plato*: edited by Alan Bloom, *A Brave New World (1932)* by Aldous Huxley and *Theory of Knowledge for the IB Diploma (2005)* by Richard van de Lagemaat.

4. **Assessment**

- Assessment will include

1. Keeping a personal journal via the Blog. Journal entries should reflect on TOK topics and articles studied in the course.
2. An essay of 1200-1600 words for submission to the I.B.O. A minimum score of 31 out of 40 marks is required to earn an A-.
3. Two oral presentations, 10-12 minutes per individual presenter. Students may work individually or with a partner or perhaps as a team of three (with teacher approval). A minimum score of 18 out of 20 marks is required to earn an A-.
4. Attendance and adherence to deadlines are important to successful progress in the course. Regular absences and late or missed assignments without excuse will have a detrimental impact on the grade earned in the course.

- Sturgis Grades will be based on personal journal/blog and mini essays (25%), class participation (25%) the successful completion of the ToK essay (25%), and oral presentations (25%).

- Missing Work:

Work not handed in on time will not be allowed to receive full credit. An incomplete will be given until the work is made up. Students who have missing work will be given the opportunity to attend MULT until the work is completed.

Skills to be Addressed

1. Plan & Substantiate Open Response Questions.
2. Access & Discriminate Information from Range of Technologies.
3. Master the citing of Sources Using Several Accepted Standards (MLA, APA).
4. Implement Long Term Management Strategies, Multi-Tasking Techniques & Organizational Skills.
5. Inform Others, Including Presentation Skills, Using a Variety of Media.
6. Practice Self-Advocacy.

Required daily materials:

- A spiral notebook or laptop computer - students are expected to **take notes every day!**
- Blue or black pen

Schedule

Mini Presentations on Grendel and mini essays associated with the final ToK Essay will be given throughout the semester

Wk. 1 September 2-4: Introduction to TOK 2 & Monsters

Wk. 2 September 07-11: Monsters: Karadic & The Elephant Man

Wk. 3 September 14-18: Plato's Republic

Wk. 4 September 21-25: Hinduism & Buddhism

Wk. 5-6 Sept. 28-Oct.9: A Brave New World

Extended Essay Draft due September 30

Wk. 7 October 12-16: History: Cheques Lab & Judaism

Progress Reports: Oct. 16

Wk. 8-9 October 19-30: The Social Sciences: Milgram's Experiment

Extended Essay Final Draft due October 30

Wk. 10 November 2-6: The Natural Sciences: Darwin on Trial & Christianity

End of Quarter I: Nov. 6

Wk. 11 November 9-13: The Natural Sciences: Darwin on Trial & Christianity

Report Cards Nov. 13

Wk. 12 November 16-23: Mathematics: The Soccer Ball

Wk. 13 November 30-Dec.4: Mathematics & Islam

ToK Essay Due December 4

Wk. 14 December 7-11: Art: Whitney vs. Hendrix

Wk. 15 December 14-18: Art: The end of Grendel

Progress Reports December 18

Wk. 16 December 21-24: Ethics & Justice: ICTY

Wk. 17 January 4-8: Ethics & Forgiveness: TRC

Wk. 18 January 11-15: *Work on Final ToK Presentations*

Wk. 19 January 19-22 **Mid-Year Exam Week:** *Final Presentations Due*

Final Grades due Jan. 29

End of Quarter II and End of ToK