



Deerfield Beach High School
IB THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE
Course Information & Syllabus



Instructor: Mr. W. Collazo

Academic Year: 2018-2019

Times & Location: Periods 1, 3 & 4 [Red Days] - Room 116

Office Hours (*By prearrangement only*):

Study Hall – Period 7; Planning – Periods 2 & 5; After School until 3:45 most days

Contact information:

- **Parents** may contact me during the above hours using the school's number, 754-322-0650; you may also contact me by e-mail at wcollazo@browardschools.com. Conferences may be scheduled upon request through the guidance department.
- **Students** may stop by my room after school or prearranged times during office hours; you may also contact me via e-mail at dbhsensei@gmail.com.
- **Course Website:** <http://dbhs-sensei.com> (All course info & assignments posted by week)

TEXTBOOK INFORMATION

The following textbooks will be used during the course of this semester:

Diploma Programme Theory of Knowledge Guide. Cardiff, UK: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2015.

Dombrowski, Eileen, et al. *Theory of Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

* Students will be provided online access to digital versions of the curriculum guide (website) and the primary text (PDF files by chapter).

** Please note also that a wealth of online and current print and audio/visual media and reading assignments from other courses will be utilized in addition to the primary texts cited above.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Central to the educational philosophy of the International Baccalaureate Program, the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course challenges students to reflect critically on diverse ways of knowing and areas of knowledge, and to consider the role which knowledge plays in a global society. The class encourages students to become aware of themselves as thinkers, to become aware of the complexity of knowledge, and to recognize the need to act responsibly in an increasingly interconnected world. TOK is designed to provide students with an opportunity for reflection. As such, the course is not designed to impart new information so much as it is intended to explore the origins and limitations of what the students have already learned in other courses. Students will carefully consider and investigate perspectives as they pertain to the I.B. curriculum's subject categories.

The aims of the TOK course are for students to:

- make connections between a critical approach to the construction of knowledge, the academic disciplines and the wider world
- develop an awareness of how individuals and communities construct knowledge and how this is critically examined
- develop an interest in the diversity and richness of cultural perspectives and an awareness of personal and ideological assumptions
- critically reflect on their own beliefs and assumptions, leading to more thoughtful, responsible and purposeful lives
- understand that knowledge brings responsibility which leads to commitment and action.

After successfully completing this course, the student should be able to:

- identify and analyse the various kinds of justifications used to support knowledge claims
- formulate, evaluate and attempt to answer knowledge questions
- examine how academic disciplines/areas of knowledge generate and shape knowledge
- understand the roles played by ways of knowing in the construction of shared and personal knowledge
- explore links between knowledge claims, knowledge questions, ways of knowing and areas of knowledge
- demonstrate an awareness and understanding of different perspectives and be able to relate these to one's own perspective
- explore real-life/contemporary issues from a TOK perspective.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

The following items are required for the course; students are expected to bring these items to class everyday:

1 bound composition book for journal writing, notes & reflections

1 three-ring binder (1/2-inch suggested) *or 1 folder* for keeping important handouts

1 flash drive OR online web storage account for saving documents

- Please note that from time to time the teacher may ask the students to bring other items to be used in class that are not listed above.

GRADING POLICY

- 1) **Grading Scale:** as passed by the Florida State Legislature and executed by School Board of Broward County policy.
- 2) **Grading System:** There are 2 categories of assessment in calculating your grade; these categories will be weighted as follows:
 1. **Reflections Journal – 50%** (completed as assigned; checked weekly)
 2. **Knowledge at Work – 25%** (completed as assigned)
 3. **Application Assessments – 25%** (completed as assigned)

ASSESSMENTS

The course assessments and value scores assigned to them are designed to represent the student's effort and achievement in two different areas:

- Abstract thinking - to explore and reflect on TOK concepts as introduced by the instructor and considered by the student in their own lives.
- Concrete application of ideas - to apply TOK concepts to real life situations, with the intent of explaining and arguing for and against different perspectives.

Students will be asked to participate fully in classroom discussions and assignments to demonstrate achievement in these two areas. Classroom activities will include, but are not limited to, large and small-group discussions, oral presentations, Socratic seminars, reading analyses, writing exercises, and current events discussions. These activities will be chronicled and assessed through the following categories of assignments:

- 1) **Reflections Journal (Formative):** Students are required to keep a journal of their personal and analytical reflections in a bound composition book throughout the course. They must enter entries into this journal as assigned in class. Individual responses and discussion notes in these entries must be included as instructed and the journal must be submitted on time to earn full credit. Entry topics will be determined by the instructor. Students are encouraged to use this journal as a tool for honest self-analysis, introspection, and careful deliberation on TOK ideas. The format of each entry is outlined in a separate handout to be provided. This journal will be collected weekly throughout the course, and as announced in class.
- 2) **Knowledge at Work (Formative):** Students will be asked to choose a topic of interest and complete a brief analysis of a “real life situation” (RLS) to explore how knowledge concepts may be utilized to understand, explain, and inquire about the world around them. This work will be similar to a current event exploration, but it will require a predefined format and approach to be outlined in a separate handout to be provided later. This analysis will be due as assigned throughout the year.
- 3) **Application Assessments (Summative):** Students will be asked to complete assessments that involve applying specific TOK concepts to analyze and construct arguments and to demonstrate their understanding of perspectives at work. These tasks will include, but are not limited to, term/vocabulary identification quizzes, addressing questions in oral or written form drawn from interpreting readings and texts, and most importantly, preparing for and completing practice assignments for IB required internal and external TOK assessments. Details for each assignment will be provided as a separate handout, since they vary depending on the unit. These application assignments will be due as assigned at the end of each unit.

IB Required Assessment Practice

- **Oral Presentations (Internal Assessment):** Students will develop TOK presentations as outlined in the I.B. published Theory of Knowledge Curriculum Guide. They will, as individuals, articulate a primary knowledge question that may be examined in an appropriate real-life situation of their choosing, with the approval of the instructor. In support of this exploration of perspectives, they will research and organize a series of arguments in support of a variety of perspectives in answering the knowledge question. The intent is to challenge students to use TOK critical skills to determine the validity of real-life arguments and debates. Detailed guidelines will be provided in a separate handout, and presentations will be assigned throughout the course to support unit material and content discussions. These assessments will NOT be used for their 12th grade assessment for the IB diploma; they are intended to enhance the course material while providing TOK skills practice.
- **Prescribed Title Essay (External Assessment):** Essays will be chosen from IB prescribed titles from previous exam sessions, as determined by the instructor. However, students will NOT be writing out the full essay as a class assignment; they may, however, be asked to use their outline to write the essay to be scored as a semester exam (see below). The focus in the 11th grade TOK class will be to give students the opportunity to consider carefully and outline extensively the kinds of essays they will address in their 12th grade assessment for the IB diploma. Detailed guidelines will be provided in a separate handout, and essay prompts will be assigned as the course schedule permits.

* **Midterm & Final examinations:** For both the midterm and final exams, students will complete a summative, multiple-choice and essay examination that assesses understanding of key concepts, perspectives and methodologies studied throughout the course. As this course is an I.B. course, NO exemptions will be awarded for the midterm, but qualifying students may choose to exempt the final examination. These grades will not be factored into the quarterly grade, only the semester grade as calculated by the district.

These procedures represent the culture of our classroom. As with any culture, there are certain values and practices that are considered acceptable and unacceptable. Below is a listing and explanation of those attitudes and practices that will ensure survival and success in our culture.

1) **Come to class on time and prepared.**

- Bring your journal and any other materials needed to class daily.
- Pay attention to the time between bells and be seated immediately at the beginning of class.

2) **Be mindful of the daily class routine.**

- When you enter the class and take your seat, take out your journal and begin work on the question for consideration. *Remember to put your name, the date, and an assignment title on any work that you do; failure to comply with standard procedures may result in a point deduction or punitive measures determined by the instructor.*
- Secure any belongings not needed for class in your bag.
- Raise your hand to ask for a restroom pass, preferably when we are transitioning to a new activity, not in the middle of discussion. Passes are NOT permitted 15 minutes after the start of the class or 15 minutes before the end of class. *Passes of any kind and signatures for permitted absences are provided only at the discretion of the instructor.*
- At the end of each class:
 - a) Return any books and borrowed materials to their proper locations.
 - b) Check and dispose of any trash that may be around your seat.
 - c) Be sure to take all of your belongings with you.

3) **Actively listen and be respectful of others.**

- During large or small group discussions, as well as Socratic Seminars, participate fully by listening carefully to what your classmates are saying and remain considerate of their opinions.
- Each day, try to practice listening with these ideas in mind:
 - ✓ I listen because I want to know the truth about the world and people outside of myself.
 - ✓ My listening is guided by the principle of “charitable interpretation” — I don’t worry about the minor details in someone’s expression of an idea; instead, I look for the insight behind their words.
 - ✓ I listen graciously, without drawing attention to myself. (I get out of the way)
 - ✓ I encourage others, if necessary, with my body language and words. I never distract them.
 - ✓ I share the discussion space. If needed, I invite others in who haven’t had equal time to share their views.

4) **Maintain a positive attitude and be ready to take risks.**

- A positive attitude is one of the most powerful secrets of success in life. In any endeavor, attitude is the foundational element, before skills, to achieve success. Negativity is contagious and does not support progress. Sincerely try to do your best and your skills can be trained over time for achievement. With attitude in mind, please make a conscious effort to do the following:
 - ✓ Count your blessings – Be thankful everyday.
 - ✓ Believe in yourself – Take control of your mind.
 - ✓ Do unto others as you would have them do unto you (Practice the “The Golden Rule”).
 - ✓ Be consciously positive – Dilute negative thoughts.
 - ✓ Be kind to someone for no reason everyday.
- During large or small group discussions and Socratic Seminars, take risks by expressing opinions that may not be popular or even by making one more contribution than the day or week before. By maintaining a positive attitude, taking risks becomes a little easier with time.

5) **Avoid bringing food, candy, drinks to class.**

- No unauthorized eating or drinking in this classroom.
- Please throw out your gum as you enter the classroom.
- If I authorize eating or drinking in a special case, please be sure to clean your desk and dispose of any trash that may be around your seat afterward.

Beyond the procedures mentioned above, **please note two big DO NOTs:**

- 1) **Do not cheat.** Cheating ranges from copying another students' homework to turning in an assignment copied from an internet source or turning in work with quotes but no source citations. Cheating also includes helping others to do work that is supposed to be an individual effort and working on homework for another class during TOK. *Worst of all, the trust broken with me is often irreparable.*
- 2) **Do not use your phones or electronic devices during class time** (unless specifically authorized to do so). They are not to be turned on during class unless cleared by me for an academic or emergency purpose. They should never be a distraction for your own or others' learning. *Please consider carefully my classroom culture statement (under separate handout), as this may be viewed as disrespectful.*

ATTENDANCE POLICY

All policies regarding attendance and tardiness fall under those outlined in the Code of Student Conduct & Discipline Handbook distributed to each student. Please refer to this handbook for details about the student's responsibilities and the consequences for violating these policies. All students will be assigned a "TOK study buddy" to contact in the event of absence. Students must also check the course website for the daily journal topic and updates on homework assignments.

MAKE-UP WORK

All policies regarding make-up work fall under those outlined in the Code of Student Conduct & Discipline Handbook distributed to each student. Please refer to this handbook for details about the student's responsibilities and the consequences for violating these policies. Here are my general expectations:

- Submit previously assigned work or take a previously scheduled quiz/test on the day you return.
- Contact your "TOK study buddy" and check the course website and your email for updates on what was covered and what might be due the day you return (especially for multi-day absences).
- Make-up assignments will be submitted at the beginning of the next class (2 days later) in most cases, unless otherwise directed.

LATE WORK POLICY

Students are expected to submit their work on or before the date due. ***If work is submitted late, it must be complete to be accepted.*** 20% will be deducted from the maximum number of points earned on the assignment. For journal submissions, deductions will be applied to EACH entry being graded for that particular check.

Students are required to be proficient or have a working knowledge in the use of word processing and automated researching skills (internet, databases, etc.). Since there is a course website, there will be times that they will be asked to search this website for updated information and assignments.

Students are strongly encouraged to have an e-mail address and regular internet access. If a student does not have e-mail or internet access at home, the media center has computers for your use; during the weekends, you can use your local library's computers. This is a valuable resource for keeping up-to-date with work, research, and announcements.

ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITY

Students are expected to abide by ethical standards in preparing and presenting material, which demonstrates their level of knowledge and which is used to determine grades. Such standards are founded on the basic concepts of honesty and integrity. IB students are bound to act in accordance with BOTH the Student Code of Conduct and the IB Honor Code. The teacher reserves the right to award NO points for an assignment where evidence shows the student submitted work that is not his/her own original work **and/or used sources that have not been acknowledged by the student in the final product**. Progressive disciplinary action will then be followed in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and the IB Honor Code.