

Theory of Knowledge Course Syllabus / Resource List / 2010 - 11 Prescribed topics

Semester I, 2010

Ms J. Stewart

(with thanks to TOK teachers in the Edmonton area and around the globe.)

Course Description

Theory of Knowledge is a key element in encouraging students to appreciate cultural perspectives. It is an interdisciplinary IB full diploma requirement intended to stimulate critical reflection of and about knowledge and experience gained inside and outside the classroom. The course challenges students to reflect critically on the diverse ways of knowledge, to be aware of subjective and ideological biases, to develop the ability to analyze evidence that is expressed in rational argument, and to consider the role knowledge plays in a global society.

IB Motto

The IBO aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

Aims

The aims of the Theory of Knowledge program are to engage students in reflection on, and in the questioning of, the bases of knowledge, so that they

- * develop an understanding of why critically examining knowledge claims is important;
- * develop a critical capacity to evaluate beliefs and knowledge claims;
- * make interdisciplinary connections (eg. science has a major role in the discussion of ethics);
- * become aware of the interpretative nature of knowledge including personal and ideological biases;
- * consider that knowledge may place responsibilities on the knower;
- * understand the strengths and limitations of individual and cultural perspectives; and
- * develop a concern for rigor in formulating knowledge claims, and intellectual honesty.

Objectives

Through taking the Theory of Knowledge course over two years, candidates should extend their skills and abilities in the following areas:

- * understanding of the strengths and limitations of the various Ways of Knowing and of the methods used in the different Areas of Knowledge;
- * a capacity to reason critically;
- * make connections between and across Ways of Knowing and Areas of Knowledge;
- * make connections between personal experience and different Ways of Knowing and Areas of Knowledge;
- * demonstrate an understanding of knowledge at work in the world;
- * identify values underlying judgments and knowledge claims pertinent to local and global issues;
- * demonstrate an understanding that personal views, judgments and beliefs may influence their own knowledge claims and those of others; and
- * use oral and written language to formulate and communicate ideas clearly and effectively.

Assessment Outline

During the course, students

1. complete work on their prescribed essay of 1200 to 1600 words assessed externally by the IBO. (The 2010-2011 list of topics is on p. 5 of this booklet.)
2. make one or more individual and/or small group oral presentations to the class, and submit a self-evaluation report. Students may make presentations as a member of a group, although points will be attributed on an individual basis. Length: **10 minutes not including class discussion**. All students are expected to make a contribution and to participate equally. Details follow. on p. 3.
3. complete required **planning** document and **self evaluation** report of the oral presentation. (For grade 12 students, a formal presentations will constitute the internal assessment for the course, and the score is reported to IBO.)
4. read, discuss, and write about novels, readings, other texts (including film) of TOK relevance and interest and complete practice essays on TOK and other relevant topics
5. work on extended essays for completion early into Semester II

Resources

- numerous print and audio visual resources including excerpts from lecture series, selected readings, a course text and novel study.

A list of selected readings may include sections from the following resources.

Abel, R., Man is the Measure

Alchin, N., Theory of Knowledge

Berger, J., Ways of Seeing

Bronowski, J., The Ascent of Man and The Lives of a Cell

Gaarder J, Sophie's World

Hayakawa, S.I., Language in Thought and Action

Nagel, T. Ways of Knowing

Postman, N., Amusing ourselves to Death, Technopoly, others

Stuart, Tony Regarding the World: A Primer for TOK

Thomas, L., Late Night Thoughtst on Listening to Mahler's Ninth Symphony

Tomkinson, J., The Enterprise of Knowledge

Woolman, M., Ways of Knowing, An Introduction to Theory of Knowledge

Evaluation

35% classroom assignments, readings, journals, homework, participation

65% presentations and essays

Due Dates for IB Assessment

We may renegotiate these targets if it becomes necessary.

IB Oral Presentations

- gr. 11 students: to be completed in the final two weeks before the Christmas break
- gr.12 students: tentatively early November?
- gr. 12 students: tentatively 4 - 5 class periods will be allocated for research/preparation time

Essay on a Prescribed Title (1200 - 1600 words)

gr. 11 students: we will work through this assessment together

gr. 12 students:

- **thesis statement/outline:** third week of November (or before)
- Draft #1 - first week of December
- Final Draft - second week in January.

Some class time (approx. 6 classes) will be provided for research/ conferencing/ writing.

REMINDER: Grade 12 students: Please bring THREE copies OF YOUR FINAL IB essay ON ITS DUE DATE. (One for IB coordinator, one for myself, one for external assessment.)

GR. 12 IBO ASSESSMENT DETAILS

IB ASSESSMENT 1: ORAL PRESENTATION

Students must make one or more individual and/or small group oral presentations to the class during the course, and complete a self-evaluation. Topics for oral presentations may be chosen by the student(s) with the teacher's approval. The TOK presentation requires students to identify and explore the knowledge issues raised by a substantive real-life situation that is of interest to them. Students may select the situation they will tackle from a more limited domain of personal, school, or community relevance, or from a wider one of national, international, or global scope. *Prescribed Titles, however, should never be used as presentation topics.* Presentations may take many forms, such as lectures, skits, games, dramatized readings, interviews or debates. The students may use

supporting material such as videos, overhead projections, power points presentations, posters, questionnaires, cassettes of songs or interviews, costumes, or props. **Under no circumstances, however, should the presentation be simply an essay read aloud to the class.** Although a student may have made the presentation as a member of a group, the teacher must attribute points on an individual basis.

READ CAREFULLY:

Each presentation will have two stages:

- a. an introduction, briefly describing the real life situation and linking it to one or more relevant knowledge issue
- b. a treatment of the knowledge issue(s) that explores their nature and responses to them, and shows how these relate to the chosen situation.

A good presentation will demonstrate the presenter's personal involvement in the topic and show both why the topic is important and how it relates to other areas.

Approximately 10 minutes per presenter should be allowed, up to a maximum in most cases of 30 minutes per group. Presentations should be scheduled to allow time for class discussion afterwards.

Interaction and audience participation are allowed during the presentation, not just in follow-up discussion, but there must be an identifiable substantial input from the presenter(s) that is assessable.

Before the presentation, the individual or group must give the teacher a copy of the presentation planning document. The document is not to be handed out to the audience.

Students must prepare a written self-evaluation report using the marking criteria as a focus for evaluating the presentation.

Assessment Criteria for TOK Oral Presentation 2010-- Details to follow.

- A: Identification of knowledge issue (5)
- B: Treatment of Knowledge Issue (5)
- C: Knower's Perspective (5)
- D: Connections (5)

ASSESSMENT 2: TOK PRESCRIBED TOPICS -- START THINKING.....

SOME ADVICE: Remember to center your essay on problems of knowledge and, where appropriate, refer to other parts of your IBO programme and to your experiences as a knower. Always justify

your statements and provide relevant examples to illustrate your arguments. Pay attention to the implications of your arguments, and remember to consider what can be said against them. If you use external sources, cite them according to a recognized convention.

NOTE: Examiners mark essays against the title as set. Respond to the title exactly as given; do not alter it in any way. Your essay must be between 1200 and 1600 words in length.

See next page for list of topics 2010 - 2011