IB THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE (TOK)

2023-2024 COURSE SYLLABUS

HIGH POINT CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL



**Teacher:** Mr. Bean

**Room:** 203

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**Tutoring:** Tuesday & Thursday: 8 – 8:45; By Appointment

**WELCOME!**

Welcome to Mr. Bean’s TOK class! I am excited to teach each and every one of you. It is my personal goal that all students leave the class with a new outlook on life, a new understanding of complex ideas, and of course an excellent grade that represents all of your hard work! Be sure to keep this syllabus in your binder and refer to it often when you have questions about the class.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course is designed to help students develop a coherent approach to learning that transcends and unifies the academic areas and encourage appreciation of other cultural perspectives. TOK encourages critical thinking about knowledge itself and tries to help young people make sense of what they encounter.

**CLASSROOM RULES AND GUIDELINES**

Simply put, this is a class that encourages participation and the ability to listen to myself and others. Therefore the following rules are critical to your success and growth:

1. Be respectful to all – I encourage all students to stop talking and listen while others are speaking, you may learn just as much from your classmates as you will from me.
2. Put down the cell phones – Cell phones can provide all the knowledge in the world, but so can a classroom. Use the cell phones outside of class. Theory of Knowledge should be a place to escape from the crazy world around us. Cell phones may be confiscated if this becomes an issue
3. Practice tolerance/acceptance – TOK should allow everyone to express their own view points. Making fun of or putting down others will not be tolerated.

**STUDENT EVALUATION**

Student Assessments will include the following:

* Presentations 25%
* Essays/Projects 25%
* Journal 25%
* Homework/Classwork 25%

**GRADE MAKE-UP POLICY**

If a student is absent from school, work may that was due may be turned in the following class period. If you know you will be absent ahead of time, please see me so I can provide your make-up work. Grade penalties will be enforced for any work that is turned in late.

**REQUIRED SUPPLIES**

Each student should come to class with the following supplies:

1. Writing utensils
2. Three ring binder divided into sections
3. Journal

**TOLERANCE**

It is expected in class that there will be points of view that are mutually exclusive and contradictory. It is your responsibility to accept the principle of validity of other points of view. In this sense there is no “right answer” in this class. You must accept that different points of view exist in the world. There is a difference in refuting ideas and claims based on logic and simply dismissing the views based on arbitrary reasoning. Please be respectful at all times. Condescending tones in responses can cause shut downs and a lack of differing opinions, which as a result, hinder the class and everyone’s ability to fully understand arguments.

**Changing Positions**

Changing positions is quite alright in this class. Stubbornness and a commitment to our past “knowledge” is often the biggest obstruction of learning truth. In fact, if you finish the year without having changed your view or perspective on something, you probably haven’t experienced the class to its fullest power. Is anyone willing to stand up right now and say they know “everything”? Let’s all make a commitment to growing our “knowledge”.

“The whole problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are always so certain of themselves, and wiser people so full of doubts.” - Bertrand Russell

**IB ASSESSMENT FOR TOK**

There are two components of the IB Assessment for TOK; an Internal and External Assessment. During your junior year, we will focus on the exhibition.

The Internal Assessment is a presentation that is graded by the TOK teacher. Students will be designing an exhibition connected to course content. The IA will be done during the exam period for this class and be presented at the IB fair; therefore it will also count as the final exam grade for TOK.

The External Assessment is a paper in which the student selects from a predetermined list of ten topics or issues. The essay is between 1200-1600 words in length, must center on knowledge issues, and is sent to IBO for grading.

Students will receive more detailed information in class.

**Aims of Canvas/Dashboard**

Canvas will be our virtual classroom that will allow for self-reflection throughout the course.

**Encourage students to connect with what’s going on in the world** Asking your students to write about ‘significant’ events means that they will follow the news, and keep their eyes open for interesting and important stories. They can then bring this into the classroom, and discuss it with their peers.  
   
**Help them to identify and explore knowledge questions associated with real life situations** If you ask them to identify and attempt to discuss the ‘knowledge questions’ behind the events, they’ll be well set up for when it comes to writing their essay and presentation.  
   
**Improve the way in which they structure their ideas and opinions** Writing down their ideas and opinions in an informal way will allow them to play with those ideas, and figure out the most effective way in which to express them. Encouraging them to read them out in class could then lead onto discussion and debate, which will help them to hone their skills in self-expression.  
   
**Demonstrate the importance of using evidence to support their arguments** Connected to above, they’ll soon learn that an opinion is nothing without evidence – and the best form of evidence is real life examples. You can use this to drill home the importance of using evidence based on actual fact, rather than of a hypothetical or anecdotal nature.  
   
**Get them into the practice of reflecting on knowledge (and learn to enjoy it)** Not only can personal experiences be developed and better understood by writing them down, it can be immensely therapeutic to write down your feelings. Your students may well find that they continue their TOK journal long after they finish the course, and carry with it wherever in the world they end up.

*http://www.theoryofknowledge.net/about/teaching-theory-of-knowledge/tok-journal/*

**PARTICIPATION AND PLAGIARISM**

First and foremost, your participation is required in this class. Many of our assignments and tasks will be discussion based and your input is extremely valuable.

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. You will be required to do higher level work inside and outside of the class. The use of another person’s work and claiming it as your own is a serious offense. If you are unaware or unsure of how to properly site work used, please do not hesitate to ask me for help. Just be honest with me and yourself and you should find success.

**SIGNATURES**

I UNDERSTAND THE REQUIREMENTS EXPECTED OF ME FOR MR. BEAN’S IB THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE CLASS AND WILL STRIVE TO MEET THESE EXPECTATIONS ON A DAILY BASIS.

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