Friedrich-Ebert-Gymnasium, Bonn

Gymnasium der Stadt Bonn mit internationalem Profil

Bilingual deutsch-französischer Bildungsgang und bilingual deutsch-englische Bildungswege

School code: 000973

Diploma Programme course outline — Theory of Knowledge

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School name	Friedrich-Ebert-Gymnasium Bonn, Germany		School code	000973
Time distribution	Starting date of TOK course in year 1 of the Diploma Programme	July/August	Ending date of TOK course in year 2 of the Diploma Programme	term 3 ends in January (IB) term 4 ends in June/July (part of the German Abitur)
Name of the teacher who completed this outline	Martin Löcke Sebastian Uffmann		Date of IB training	16th – 18th February 2018, Coventry, UK 12th August – 9th September 2020 (Online)
Date when outline was completed	30th June 2024		Name of workshop	Theory of Knowledge Category 1

1. Course outline

- One lesson is 45 minutes. There are two lessons per week.
- The textbook used as a resource is the 2010 Edition of *Theory of Knowledge for the IB Diploma* (Cambridge).
- Further resources: Teacher support material from MyIB and TOK workshops (sample exhibitions/essays), online articles / videos (TED Talks etc.)
- Assessment components will be introduced during IBDP orientation sessions. The timeline, requirements and assessment criteria will be explored at the beginning of the TOK course (August) and again before the students begin to work on their exhibition (April) and essay (September). Throughout the course practice tasks are implemented on a regular basis to ensure the students' familiarity with the assessment components and sample exhibitions as well as essays are analysed in preparation for the assessment.
- term 3 ends in January (IB), as part of the German Abitur, term 4 will additionally be completed (ending in June/July)

2. Collaboration with Diploma Programme teachers

- Using the knowledge framework throughout the course, the students are encouraged to explore the links between TOK questions and subject courses.
- As the course outline shows connections to all subjects are made through case studies from various disciplines.

- As a teacher of English and History, Philosophy and Science of Education, we feel strongly connected within the subject departments and work with colleagues from languages, natural and human sciences making sure to highlight TOK links whenever possible. This cooperative and collaborative atmosphere enables us to get regular input and ideas for my TOK class.

3. Approaches to learning

Due to the nature of TOK, the development of thinking skills is a key feature of this course. Through the exploration of different topics and perspectives, the students will experience a route through different areas of knowledge and their respective elements in focus (scope, perspective, methods and tools and ethics). On a regular basis they will be provided with opportunities to reflect on the themes in class and relate them to their real-world experience (for example reflective essays, case studies, presentations, and discussions). Throughout the course students will be constantly encouraged and supported to improve their metacognition and critical thinking skills.

Cooperative learning arrangements, presentations, role play and creative approaches will add to the development of their communicative and social skills. Different cultural perspectives allow them to be sensitive towards their own role in a global context. Constructive feedback and discussion etiquette (by peers and teacher) will be at the heart of the course.

The students develop their self-management skills when preparing for the TOK exhibition and the TOK essay. Both tasks are accompanied by the teacher – in meetings and feedback on their first draft. The teacher is always open to approach difficulties with self-management and set meetings to support the planning and schedule of a task. This is especially important since pressure and struggle in self-management may result in academic misconduct.

Their research skills are at play when finding out more about the background of certain examples or development of paradigms, those research skills are closely connected to the different areas of knowledge and the corresponding subject. At the same time using specific examples in their essay needs thorough research.

4. Development of the IB learner profile

Beside becoming balanced risk-takers and principled inquirers with a caring character, who strive to explore knowledge across a range of disciplines, students are encouraged to use their critical thinking skills as a key attribute of this TOK course.

As always, upcoming TOK concepts are highlighted when working collaboratively on these topics and students are supported to communicate their findings confidently and creatively using a variety of methods. Classroom arrangements, activities and resources are chosen to help students to develop an openminded attitude that helps them to reflect on their own personal and cultural biases and to explore a range of perspectives.

[cf. Diploma Programme Theory of knowledge guide (Oxford 2020)]

Time frame		Units/Topics	Contents
Term 1	August - September	**Introduction:** **core theme: Knowledge and the Knower**	**"The map is not the territory"- First contact with TOK** Getting to know each other, rules, self-assessment, IB assessment instruments **"How do we know?"** Scope: What is knowledge? What does it mean to know / to be a knower / to be ignorant? What are the limits of knowledge? What is a knowledge question? - Perspectives: Knowledge communities, expert knowledge, intellectual humility, conspiracy theories and scientific denialism - Methods & Tools: Thinking patterns and habits (metacognition skills)

			- Ethics: Epistemic diversity and (in)justice (credibility, validity, justification and evidence)
	October - November	**Areas of Knowledge: the Natural Sciences**	**Science – Progression and paradigm shift** Scope: What is science, and what is not? Science vs. Pseudoscience - Perspectives: Historical perspectives on science (change and growth in science, scientific consensus, disagreement and denialism communication and dissemination of scientific knowledge Methods & Tools: How does science work? The scientific method, verification vs. falsification (Popper), experimentation & observation, objectivity, Hypothesis Debate - Ethics in scientific methodology and the application of scientific knowledge (ethical safeguards and breaches, utilitarianism)
	December - January	**Areas of Knowledge: Mathematics**	**What certainties are there in mathematics. Formulas as language?** Scope: The nature and limits of mathematics, math as a method and/or body of knowledge - Perspectives: Was mathematics discovered or invented? (realist and anti-realist perspectives), is mathematics universal or culture-bound? (diversity in mathematics) - Methods & Tools: Truth, proof and evidence in mathematics (axioms and theorems), math education - Ethics: Is (pure) mathematics ethically neutral? (The myth of impartiality)
Term 2	February – March	**Areas of Knowledge: the Human Sciences**	**The problem of discovering laws and theories about the human nature** Scope: What are differences/similarities between natural sciences and human sciences? Perspectives: Strength and weaknesses of human science Methods & Tools: Issues of neutrality and objectivity in ethnographic methods, measurement and knowledge, experimentation, replicability and reproducibility, carrying out a human science research project - Ethics: Human beings as subjects of study, unethical experiments in human sciences (e.g. Milgram), predictive knowledge and responsibility (e.g. climate justice)
	April	**Assessment 1: TOK exhibition**	**Introduction of prompts, assessment criteria and formal requirements (commentary)** - Discussion of ideas and individual feedback sessions - Planning the actual exhibition / display - Final document and display at the end of Year 1 (June).
	May	**Areas of Knowledge: the Arts**	**The difference between good and bad art: criteria of art** Scope: What is art? Who gets to decide? What is truth and knowledge in the context of art? - Perspectives: The role of the audience/critic/artist in the arts (expertise and aesthetic judgment), the relationship between art and culture (patrimony, repatriation and redistribution of art, appropriation) - Methods & Tools: Art education and production, instruments in art - Ethics: Questions of value and moral responsibility in art, the intention and impact of art, censorship

	June- July	**Areas of knowledge: History**	**Theories of history – Can we learn from history?** Scope: The past vs. history, - Perspectives: ethnic/cultural diversity in historiography, thresholds of significance - Methods & Tools: The role of the historian, history and truth (overcoming hindsight bias), Historical Simulation: ICC on Colonial Crimes - Ethics: Neutrality vs. restitutive history, history as activism, judging the past
Term 3	August	**Optional theme 1: Knowledge and Language**	The meaning of words. The relationship between meaning and sense. Language in different AoK. Scope: The nature of language and meaning - Perspectives: language and translation, language and thought (e.g. Sapir-Whorf hypothesis) - Methods & Tools: Testing the hypothesis (e.g. the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis) - Ethics: How can we know if language is intended to deceive or manipulate us? Do professional interpreters and translators have any special ethical obligations?
	September	**Assessment 2: TOK essay**	**Introduction to Essay Writing:** o Discussion of last year's essay titles and analysis of sample essays o Assessment criteria and formal requirements - Introduction of prescribed titles published in September - Unpacking key terms / concepts (group session) - Planning stage and first draft feedback (individual sessions) - Final document February
	October-November	**Optional theme 2: Knowledge and Politics**	**Is everything political?** Scope of politics: Is everything political? Concepts of truth, neutrality, and objectivity (false balance), How is political reality created (UN)? - Perspectives: Facts vs. fake news and misinformation (post-truth society, critical thinking skills), debating and making international laws - Method & Tools: Echo chambers, filter bubbles and digital subcultures (reflection on social media use), Model United Nation (simulation) > links to optional theme 1 (Knowledge and Technology) - Ethics: Concepts of power, pluralism, tolerance (e.g. campus politics: no-platforming / cancel-culture)
	December-February	***Further* optional theme: Knowledge and Technology**	**What is technology? The significance of technology then, now and in the future.** Scope of technology: Which human acts may be incomputable? What is the connection between technology and science? - Perspectives: Technology and Society (the role of culture, gender) - Methods & Tools: Impacts of technology and technological risks - Ethics: Artificial intelligence and ethical concerns (power, responsibility, and machine bias)

Term 4	March - April	***Further* Area of Knowledge: Knowledge and indigenous societies**	Scope: Does our culture determine what we know? How have government education policies and systems compromised the transmission of indigenous knowledge? Perspectives: How might differences in their worldviews create challenges for collaboration between environmental scientists and holders of traditional environmental knowledge? - Methods & Tools: What is the role of folklore, rituals and songs in acquiring and sharing knowledge? · What methods have indigenous peoples developed to support the recording, preservation and protection of their traditional knowledge? - Ethics: Is cultural appropriation an example of a violation of collective intellectual property rights?
	May – June/July	**Me and the Areas of Knowledge**	**"Future workshop":** Analysis: individual and shared knowledge in our time Developing of new ideas; solutions of social problems. experience of creative decision making
		Final reflections return to core theme: knowledge and the knower	**Looking back, taking it all in** - Scope: What are my personal gains of the TOK course? -Perspectives: What shapes my perspective as a knower? Ethics: Are there responsibilities that necessarily come with knowing something or knowing how to do something? Under what circumstances, if any, do we have a moral duty to share what we know?