The mission of Britannia Secondary Community School is to graduate responsible citizens with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to fulfill their potential for lifelong success.

Course: **Theory of Knowledge 12**  
Teacher: Ms. E. Brown  
Email: ebrown@vsb.bc.ca

**Course Synopsis**

“ONE WHO LEARNS WITHOUT THINKING IS LOST;  
ONE WHO THINKS WITHOUT LEARNING IS IN GREAT DANGER.”  
Confucius (551-479 BC)

TOK is a course about critical thinking and inquiring into the process of knowing, rather than about learning about a specific body of knowledge. It is a core element which all Diploma Program students undertake. The TOK course examines how we know what we claim to know. It does this by encouraging students to analyze knowledge claims and explore knowledge questions. The aims of the Theory of Knowledge course are:

- To step back from the details of the individual disciplines, whether mathematics, the natural or social sciences, languages, or the arts, and to see all fields of study.
- To deal, therefore, with the questions that underlie all fields of knowledge: How do we justify our knowledge claims? Why reasons might somebody give who disagrees with us?
- In so doing, to learn to question statements and assumptions, to reason more logically, and to express oneself more clearly in discussions, presentations, and written work.
- Ultimately to give an awareness of the uncertainties of knowledge, and therefore a greater humility in the holding of one’s own beliefs and a greater tolerance in regarding the beliefs of others.
Course Outline:

Students will be building on their understanding and appreciation of the ways of knowing that we use to justify our knowledge claims and applying them to the following knowledge systems:

- Mathematics
- Natural Sciences
- Human Sciences
- History
- Aesthetics
- Ethics

Learning Outcomes:

It is expected that students will:

- seek to find out how knowledge is constructed using various ways of knowing and by considering what constitutes knowledge in various areas of knowledge. It is a fundamental premise of TOK that personal knowledge should not result from simple acceptance of knowledge claims without sufficient inquiry and evidence.
- strive to be knowledgeable about the nature of knowledge. This means becoming knowledgeable about the methods of inquiry of a variety of subject areas, from a number of perspectives. Students are encouraged to explore the processes by which individuals arrive at their own knowledge and understanding of the world and the presuppositions that underpin this understanding.
- examine thinking in order to understand what constitutes good thinking and also to recognize potential flaws in thought processes. Students also think about what thinking is required in a variety of situations, as well as how thinking relates to emotional processing and intuition.
- TOK students are required by the TOK assessment tasks to communicate their understanding and perspective in both oral and written form. Students also study the language that is used to develop a body of knowledge, so they learn what gives language its power as well as what causes failures of communication.
- scrutinize knowledge in a critical manner, leading to what could be called principled knowledge. Students are required to examine the relationship between possessing knowledge and the moral obligations that this carries. Learning to see the world from a TOK perspective challenges students to think about acting in principled ways.
- learn to be open-minded about knowledge claims they encounter. They will learn not to simply accept claims at face value, but to consider the factual accuracy of any proposition and the potential emotional, social or cognitive bias of any person making a proposition. At the same time, they must learn to balance skepticism with belief, and recognize that in many situations there is a need to make decisions without possessing absolute certainty.
- care about how they use their knowledge. This necessarily means thinking about how knowledge can be used in sympathetic, empathetic and compassionate ways.
**Assessment:**

A variety of take home and in-class essays as well as shorter written arguments/reflections/commentaries are required throughout this two year course. Oral presentations will also be assigned throughout the course.

**Britannia Grades:**

65% of your Britannia grades will be determined by the quality of your written work and 35% will be determined by the quality of your oral work.

All assessment is based on the following criteria:

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Preparation, attendance, meeting assignment deadlines and thoughtful participation in class discussion are also factors that contribute towards the assignment of grades.

**IB Grades and Evaluation**

These will be determined by an essay (1200-1600 words in length) that will be externally assessed as well as an oral presentation that will be assessed by your teacher. Both of these assignments will be completed during the second year of Theory of Knowledge. IB will award a letter grade ranging from A to E and up to 3 additional Diploma points when combined on a matric with the extended essay. More details about this will be given in class.

You will be getting much more specific information about the criteria for assessment as needed in separate handouts.

**Provincial Evaluation:**

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<th>A</th>
<th>86% - 100%</th>
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<td>B</td>
<td>73% - 85%</td>
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<td>50% - 59%</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>67% - 72%</td>
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In order to receive credit for Theory of Knowledge 12, you must attain an average of at least 50%
Course Fee:
N/A

Class Expectations:
1. Students will act in a responsible manner.
2. Responsible people do not skip class.
3. Everyone is a learner and everyone is a teacher. In this classroom we respect each other and expect to learn from each other.
4. It is the responsibility of the student to learn what was covered in class if the student was away. In case of illness, field trips, work experience and appointments, are still expected to be completed.
5. The teacher is generally available for extra help before school and during the lunch hour. Students are encouraged to make an appointment.

Code of Conduct:

http://britannia.vsb.bc.ca/about_britannia/Britannia%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20and%20Ministry%20Requirements.pdf