Theory of Knowledge – Course Description and Outline

“ONE WHO LEARNS WITHOUT THINKING IS LOST; ONE WHO THINKS WITHOUT LEARNING IS IN GREAT DANGER.”

Confucius (551-479 BC)

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.

The order of ideas in the Theory of Knowledge course:

- What is knowledge?
- What is the relationship between language and thought?
- What knowledge do we gain through reason and logic?
- What knowledge do we gain through sensory perception?
- What roles do memory, intuition, imagination and faith play in what we claim to know?

We will then explore the following knowledge systems:

- Mathematics
- Natural Sciences
- Human Sciences
- History
- Aesthetics
- Ethics
Theory of Knowledge 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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<th>CLARITY</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>CRITICAL THOUGHT</th>
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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:**

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.

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