

Diploma Programme course outline - Theory of Knowledge -

School name	Goetheschule Essen		School code	003511
Time distribution	Starting date of TOK course in year 1 of the Diploma Programme	August (2021)	Ending date of TOK course in year 2 of the Diploma Programme	February (2023)
Name of the teacher who completed this outline	Maria Spree		Date of IB training	September 15 th -18 th 2022
Date when outline was completed	February 2023		Name of workshop	Theory of Knowledge Category 2

1. Course outline

- One class is 45 minutes. There are two classes per week.
- The textbook used as a **resource** throughout the 2021-2023 course was the 2020 Edition of the Theory of Knowledge Course Companion (Oxford).
- 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 (May) and essay (December). 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.

Time frame	Topic / Unit	Contents	
Year 1	Aug-Sept	Core theme: Knowledge and the knower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction: TOK course outline / contents and assessment - TOK terminology and concepts - Knowledge framework and questions - Scope: What is knowledge? What does it mean to know / to be a knower / to be ignorant? What are the limits of knowledge? - 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)
	Oct-Nov	Optional theme 1: Knowledge and Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope of politics: Is everything political? Concepts of truth, neutrality, and objectivity (false balance) - Perspectives: Facts vs. fake news and misinformation (post-truth society, critical thinking skills) - Method & Tools: Echo chambers, filter bubbles and digital subcultures (reflection on social media use) > <i>links to optional theme 2 (Knowledge and Technology)</i> - Ethics: Concepts of power, pluralism, tolerance (e.g. campus politics: no-platforming / cancel-culture)
	Dec-Jan	Optional theme 2: Knowledge and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technopolitics: The use of microtargeting (cf. Cambridge Analytica) > <i>transition from / links to optional theme 1 (Knowledge and Politics)</i> - 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)
	Feb-Mar	AOK 1: Natural Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope: What is science, and what is not? Science vs. Pseudoscience - Perspectives: Historical perspectives on science (change and growth in science – Kuhn cycle) scientific consensus, disagreement and denialism communication and dissemination of scientific knowledge, power and exclusion in science (feminist/post-colonial critiques) > <i>links to optional theme 1 (Knowledge and Politics)</i> - Methods & Tools: How does science work? The scientific method, verification vs. falsification (Popper), experimentation & observation, objectivity - Ethics in scientific methodology and the application of scientific knowledge (ethical safeguards and breaches, utilitarianism)

	Mar-Apr	AOK 2: Human Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope: What are differences/similarities between natural sciences and human sciences? - Perspectives: The role of gender and culture in human sciences (question of representation) - Methods & Tools: Issues of neutrality and objectivity in ethnographic methods, measurement and knowledge, experimentation, replicability and reproducibility - Ethics: Human beings as subjects of study, unethical experiments in human sciences (e.g. Milgram), predictive knowledge and responsibility (e.g. climate justice)
	May-Jun	Assessment 1: TOK Exhibition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the prompts, assessment criteria and formal requirements - Discussion of ideas and individual feedback sessions - Planning the actual exhibition / display - Final document and display at the end of Year 1 (June).
Year 2	Aug-Sep	AOK 3: History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope: The past vs. history, issues with distinction between historical and “prehistorical” knowledge - Perspectives: Gender and ethnic/cultural diversity in historiography, thresholds of significance - Methods & Tools: The role of the historian, history and truth (overcoming hindsight bias) - Ethics: Neutrality vs. restitutive history, history as activism, judging the past
	Oct-Nov	AOK 4: Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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
	Nov-Dec	AOK 5: Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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)

	Dec-Feb	Assessment 2: TOK Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to Essay Writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 at the end of Year 2 (February).
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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.
- Team sessions for subject teachers addressing the contents and outline of the TOK course are offered on a regular basis.
- As a teacher of biology, English and philosophy myself, I am 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 me 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. One of the topics that puts the focus on using and improving these skills is connected to the optional theme Knowledge and Politics. In the context of discussing the existence of a post-truth society students are researching and analysing (national and global) examples of (political) fake news and misinformation. Following from that they will **reflect** on their own cognitive biases and explore the issue of echo chambers and filter bubbles analysing their own use of (social) media.

Another topic that lends itself to fostering these attributes is brought up in connection with the Core theme and/or the AOK Natural Sciences. Students will be asked to research and explore the issue of science denialism and analyse examples logical fallacies made by proponents of common conspiracy theories.

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 **open-minded** 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)]