**IB Theory of Knowledge 2020-2021**

**Class Expectations: Ali Maners**

Welcome to Theory of Knowledge. Are you ready to explore ideas? In this class, your learning is what is important. Do whatever you can to ***gather and keep evidence of your learning everyday***… And remember, contrary to the photograph to the right with the class of enthusiastic learners, like you, your learning will be directed by you; ***there is no direct lead to a destination in this course***.

According to IB, “*the overall aim of TOK is to encourage students to formulate answers to the question “how do you know?” in a variety of contexts, and to see the value of that question. This allows students to develop an enduring fascination with the richness of knowledge. Specifically, the aims of the TOK course are for students to:*

1. *make connections between a critical approach to the construction of knowledge, the academic disciplines and the wider world*
2. *develop an awareness of how individuals and communities construct knowledge and how this is critically examined*
3. *develop an interest in the diversity and richness of cultural perspectives and an awareness of personal and ideological assumptions*
4. *critically reflect on their own beliefs and assumptions, leading to more thoughtful, responsible and purposeful lives*
5. *understand that knowledge brings responsibility which leads to commitment and action.*”

With that said, here are the ways you will be able to track your learning for our time together.

***Participation 25%***:

A large portion of your learning will depend on your ability to explore ideas verbally. You will be expected to be able to actively listen to other students' ideas and to respond to them in large and small group discussions. Silent brilliance and deep inner thoughts are not enough; you will need to speak and share your ideas to others in class. By questioning, respecting, and encouraging classmates, you will be able to gather and evaluate your ideas and the ideas of others. During discussions, you will be responsible to take notes on what is said in order to keep evidence that you are actively engaged and learning. ***Tardies and unexcused absences will affect participation and/or Course Work & Journals (see below) points***.

***Course Work (labeled as Daily Work in Student Access) 20%***:

The homework load for this class will average 20 minutes a night. I do not expect, however, that students will have homework every night. Most likely, students would have 40 minutes of homework two or three nights a week. When students are working on an essay or a large project, more time may be required. Come prepared and engage.

Additionally, reading assignments for this class are essential. TOK style critical reading notes will be assessed on a regular basis. There will be periodic quizzes to assess how well students have read; often, such tests will be taken *with notes*. The tests may be verbally taken – students may be asked what they have done to prepare for class. There will also be tests to assess how well students understand key issues or points that have been read, discussed, and analyzed; such tests may be *with or without notes*.

***IB Preparation/Essays/Writing 10%***:

Throughout the year there will be opportunities for students to write drafts of their ideas. Additionally, I anticipate possibly two versions of TOK essays will be completed; diploma candidates will submit their final essay to International Baccalaureate for internal assessment. The TOK essay will be during the first semester and will begin as soon as IB releases the May 2021 Prescribed Topics are released (usually October’ish). There will also be assessed written components to the TOK IA Presentation that will also go into this category.

***Journals & Projects (labeled as Portfolio in Student Access) 40%***:

Students will be asked to keep a journal in which they respond to teacher assigned prompts, document discussions, express their emerging ideas, record relevant ideas from readings, and take notes on in-class material. Journals should also be a repository for thinking and learning that happened outside of the class (possibly without even being assigned – Gasp!). All entries in the journal must be dated, labeled with a heading, and chronologically arranged. Organization counts. This journal may be submitted per entry or collected all at once at the end of an extended time period. However, students will always be given at least a day notice that it will be collected (usually more, but with remote learning we will need to be flexible).

Projects will be another way students can demonstrate their emerging understanding. Projects will often include a written component in addition to some other demonstration of ideas. Artwork, metaphors, political cartoons, and collages are just some of the possible ways that students can demonstrate their understanding. Interviews and other multiple-day assignments may be considered projects for grading purposes.

***Final Exams 5%***:

There will be final exams both Semesters. Finals will be comprehensive and will possibly include a multiple-choice and written portion.

Grades in this course will be on a straight letter system with the following percentages:

A: 100%-88%

B: 87.99%-76%

C: 75.99%-64%

D: 63.99%-52%

F: 51.99% & below

***Remote Learning:*** “Synchronous” and “Asynchronous” Instruction:

1. Synchronous: Everyday\* during scheduled class time (Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursday or Fridays) there will be live class sessions taking place on Zoom or Teams where students will learn as a whole class with teacher(s). Attendance will be taken. This time is invaluable to student learning and students are expected to attend. Example synchronous activities include discussions, lectures, writing instruction, etc.

Synchronous: existing or occurring at the same time.

2. Asynchronous: This time will occur during regular school hours, Wednesdays, and traditional homework time. Students will have a variety of independent (reading primarily, but also assignments) and group activities (recorded video chats, collaborative chat boards or assignments) during asynchronous time. These activities are just as crucial to student learning but are flexible and do not include live teacher attention.

Asynchronous: (of two or more objects or events) not existing or happening at the same time.

3. 1:1 Zoom Meetings:

***Canvas and Skyward Gradebooks:*** Likely, some or all graded activities will appear in both the Skyward and Canvas gradebooks. As a result, the grades may not be the same on both systems. The only accurate place to check your most up to date grade will be Skyward/Family Access, period. Legally Skyward is the only gradebook that matters. The Canvas gradebook exists as a place to gather individual teacher feedback on assignments and activities. Students may complete assessments and activities on Canvas, but it is not a holistic representation of the overall grade in the course.

***Sources***: Readings may include excerpts from texts like *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* and *Einstein’s Dreams*. There will also be selections from books that weigh much more than the above readings, texts like *The* *Critique of Pure Reason*, *The* *Republic*, *The* *Second Treatise on Civil Government*, *The* *Tao Te Ching*, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, and most likely some readings from an anthology like *Classical Philosophical Questions* or a philosophy text. Films and programs will likely include *The Matrix*, *Contact*, *Pi*, *Arrival, Three Identical Strangers, The Stanford Prison Experiment, The Good Place,* and, perhaps, *Minority Report* or *Blackhawk Down*. **Many of these movies are rated R.** Please inform me if you would prefer to do an alternate assignment instead of viewing a R rated film listed above within the first two weeks of the school year via e-mail, but if I do not hear from you in the first two weeks of school, I will mark that you agree to these rated films.

**To sign this form, please choose one of the following ways:**

1)  Print, sign, and scan

2)  If you do not have a printer - copy this in to a Word Document - type out your and your parent/guardian’s, name/signatures electronically

**Either way, upload this last page to the Canvas assignment by Friday, September 11th. No matter which option you choose, please know that you are signing to show your understanding and agreement of the course expectations in the syllabus. Any questions asked will be answered prior to signing.**

**I have seen the course expectations and required sources.**

X\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ X\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ TOK Period: .

PRINT Student Name Student Signature

I am aware that this course may make me think during my free time. I am aware that Mrs. Maners may giggle at me if I ask for an extension for a major due date less than a week before the due date; I am aware that I will most likely fail the semester if my Journals, IAs or Projects are late. I understand that this is a yearlong class and that transfers are not allowed at the Semester. I am aware that it is likely that I will need to contribute ideas to the class discussions in order to earn an “A” grade in the class and that absences are difficult to make up.

**I have seen the course expectations and required sources.**

X\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ X\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

PRINT Parent Name Parent Signature

I am willing to have conversations with my student on topics ranging from ethics, to truth, to parenting, to the scientific properties of water. I understand my student will possibly watch the films listed above and talk to me about them, ask me odd questions and may share my responses during class [if given permission]. I am willing to continue to put up with my student despite these issues.