



2018-2019 Innovative Course Application

Application request

- Approval of a new innovative course Renewal of a previously approved innovative course

Title of innovative course(s): IB Theory of Knowledge

Applicant Information

Name of applying school district, charter school, or organization: Texas IB Schools

Complete mailing address: 1901 Stevenson Lane, Flower Mound, TX 75028

Contact person: Karen Phillips

Contact person's title: Executive Director, Texas IB Schools

Contact person's email address: karen@texasibschools.org

Contact person's phone number, area code first: 972 834 8934

County District Number (if applicant is a Texas public school): NA

Superintendent (if applicant is a Texas public school): NA

Date of local board of trustees' approval of this innovative course application (if applicant is a Texas public school): *Click here to enter text.*

Course Information

Subject area (choose only one): Other Electives

Career cluster (CTE only): *Choose an item.*

Number of credits per course that may be earned: 1.0

Grade level(s) to be served (high school only): 9-12



Brief description of the course (150 words or less):

Theory of knowledge (TOK) is a course about critical thinking and inquiring into the process of knowing, rather than about learning a specific body of knowledge. TOK plays a special role in the IB Diploma Programme (DP) by providing an opportunity for students to reflect on the nature of knowledge, to make connections between areas of knowledge, and to become aware of their own perspectives and those of the various groups whose knowledge they share. The overall objective 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.

Theory of Knowledge course guide, 2013.

Brief justification of how/why the course qualifies as “innovative” (e.g., the knowledge and skills are not covered in any other state-approved course, the course is a part of a unique program, etc.) (150 words or less):

TOK explores methods of inquiry to establish techniques that makes them effective as knowledge tools. In this sense, TOK is concerned with knowing about knowing. This course is most closely related to philosophy courses, specifically epistemology, which are not addressed in the essential knowledge and skills of any existing TEKS-based course.

The raw material of TOK is knowledge itself. Students think about how knowledge is determined in the various disciplines, what the disciplines have in common, and the differences between the disciplines. The fundamental question of TOK is “how do we know that?” The answer might depend on the discipline and the purpose to which the knowledge is put. This is interdisciplinary and may touch upon many content-areas within the instructional scope of the course.

Description of the specific student need(s) this course is designed to meet (150 words or less):

TOK is a course in critical thinking but it is one that is specifically geared to an approach to knowledge that is mindful of the interconnectedness of the modern world. “Critical” in this context implies an analytical approach prepared to test the support for knowledge claims, aware of its own weaknesses, conscious of its perspectives and open to alternative ways of answering knowledge questions. It is a demanding course but one that is an essential component not only of the DP but of lifelong learning. Studying TOK allows the opportunity for students to engage with exciting, stimulating and personally relevant topics and issues.

It is a required course for all DP students at IB designated schools.

Essential Knowledge and Skills of the course:

Please see the instructions for more information on formatting essential knowledge and skills. Please use the list format provided.

- (a) Introduction. The objectives of the theory of knowledge (TOK) course are for students to make connections between a critical approach to the construction of knowledge, the academic disciplines, and the wider world; develop an awareness of how individuals and communities construct knowledge and how this is critically examined; develop an interest in the diversity and richness of cultural perspectives and an awareness of personal and ideological assumptions; reflect critically on their own beliefs and assumptions, leading to more thoughtful, responsible and purposeful lives; and understand that knowledge brings responsibility which leads to commitment and action.
- (b) Knowledge and Skills
- (1) The student explains various ways of knowing, including language, sense perception, emotion, reason, imagination, faith, intuition, and memory. The student is expected to:
- (A) define and discuss knowledge as a product of the human experience;
 - (B) discuss how language is a way of knowing, including language acquisition and transmission;
 - (C) discuss how sense perception is a way of knowing, including to what extent humans can trust their senses;
 - (D) discuss how emotion is a way of knowing, including what constitutes an emotion and how emotions assist and limit the search for knowledge;
 - (E) discuss how reason is a way of knowing; including logic, argument, fallacies and the relationship between reason and emotion;
 - (F) discuss how imagination is a way of knowing, including creativity and resourcefulness;
 - (G) discuss how faith is a way of knowing, including religious doctrine and spiritual conviction;
 - (H) discuss how intuition is a way of knowing, including its relationship to emotion;
 - (I) discuss how memory is a way of knowing, the brain's capacity to store and recall knowledge; and
 - (J) assess the advantages and limitations of each way of knowing in acquiring and shaping knowledge.
- (2) The student understands the construction of personal and shared knowledge. The student is expected to:
- (A) explain how personal knowledge is created such as through direct instruction, personal experience, or the development of individual skills or talents;

- (B) explain shared knowledge as a product of both individuals and groups working together in the present and by cultures and civilizations over the course of time;
 - (C) describe how collectively employing the ways of knowing generates both personal and shared knowledge;
 - (D) differentiate between personal knowledge and shared knowledge;
 - (E) identify overlaps in personal knowledge and shared knowledge and describe ways in which one influences the other;
 - (F) describe the potential difficulties in communicating personal or procedural knowledge; and
 - (G) explain how personal knowledge leads to advances in shared knowledge.
- (3) The student examines areas of knowledge. The student is expected to:
- (A) describe areas of knowledge as a network of shared knowledge;
 - (B) describe an area of knowledge as a system of relationships between its key concepts and vocabulary; and
 - (C) analyze the areas of knowledge relevant to this course, including mathematics, natural sciences, human sciences, history, the arts, ethics, religious knowledge systems, and indigenous knowledge systems.
- (4) The student relates personal and shared knowledge to the global community. The student is expected to:
- (A) discuss areas of knowledge that are based in a group such as particular culture or religious tradition;
 - (B) explain that different cultural traditions have contributed to current constructions of shared knowledge and academic disciplines;
 - (C) explain the significance of historical context on the development of areas of knowledge;
 - (D) examine personal viewpoints through discussion with others from varying backgrounds;
 - (E) analyze how conflict between individuals and groups has effected shared knowledge over time; and
 - (F) discuss individual qualities that lead to effective membership in local and global communities.
- (5) The student explains and assess knowledge claims and knowledge questions. The student is expected to:
- (A) define first-order and second-order knowledge claims;
 - (B) compare and contrast first-order claims and second-order claims;

- (C) differentiate between knowledge claims about the world and knowledge claims about knowledge;
 - (D) define knowledge questions in terms of first-order and second-order knowledge claims;
 - (E) explain why knowledge questions may have more than one plausible answer;
 - (F) describe how personal perspective affects the analysis of and response to knowledge questions;
 - (G) assess the role and validity of a neutral position when discussing knowledge questions; and
 - (H) assess formal argument prompted by knowledge questions.
- (6) The student analyses the various justifications used to support knowledge claims. The student is expected to:
- (A) explain that reliability of knowledge depends upon the methods used to produce it;
 - (B) identify the methods or procedures used to generate knowledge in a particular academic area such as testing hypotheses through experiment in the natural sciences; and
 - (C) discuss limitations and constraints for generating knowledge such as ethical considerations, bias, or consistent laboratory conditions.
- (7) The student formulates, evaluates, and attempts to answer knowledge questions. The student is expected to:
- (A) determine key concepts involved in given knowledge questions;
 - (B) identify the varying and specific quantities of knowledge necessary to answer a question;
 - (C) analyze existing knowledge questions and describe how possible answers to these questions lead to existing or new knowledge; and
 - (D) construct new knowledge questions and describe how possible answers to these questions lead to new knowledge.

Recommended resources, technology, and instructional materials to be used in the course:
Please provide full citations in APA format.

International Baccalaureate Organization. (2013). *Theory of knowledge guide*. Chippenham, Wiltshire, UK.

www.theoryofknowledge.net



Recommended course activities:

Discussion forms the backbone of the TOK course. Students are invited to consider knowledge questions against the backdrop of their experiences of knowledge in their other Diploma Programme subjects but also in relation to the practical experiences offered by CAS and the formal research that takes place for the extended essay. The experiences of the student outside school also have a role to play in these discussions, although TOK seeks to strike a balance between the shared and personal aspects of knowledge. Recognizing the discursive aspect of the course, the TOK presentation assesses the ability of the student to apply TOK thinking to a real-life situation. The TOK essay gives the opportunity to assess more formal argumentation prompted by questions of a more general nature.

Methods for evaluating student outcomes:

- Discussion
- Extended essay
- Individual or group presentation

Texas educator certification requirements and recommended qualifications of teachers:

At least one valid Texas educator certification related to the subject area indicated on page 1 must be listed. Please consult [high school teacher assignment rules](#) for guidance.

An assignment for an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate Course is allowed with a valid certificate that matches the subject and grade level of the assignment unless otherwise specified in this chapter.

- Teachers should be certified to teach 8-12 English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, or fine arts.
- In addition to the appropriate Texas certification, teachers of this course must complete the relevant training from IB.

Additional information (optional):