



What is Theory of Knowledge?

One of three central experiences in the International Baccalaureate program is Theory of Knowledge. CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) and the Extended Essay are rather self-explanatory. Theory of Knowledge is a bit different. This course takes place over your two years in the Diploma program.

The course takes place during your seminar time and while you are technically in a class-it is more of an experience than a traditional classroom. In this course you will be asked to consider **why do you know what you do and how do you know it?** What is the connection between the **knowledge and the knower?** It is not a philosophy class, per se, though it can certainly seem that way from time to time! Rather it is a course that is designed to get you thinking about the knowledge that you have gained over your 16 years both in school and outside of it and how you use that knowledge. The course will challenge your thinking and ask you to consider how your community and culture has impacted your perspectives on the world around you. It is a course that demands mutual respect as you listen to your classmates and explore their own knowledge in tandem with your own.

One central concept is a **knowledge question**. There are first order knowledge questions which are questions about the world around us and can be answered or researched. Second order knowledge questions go deeper and ask about knowledge itself, for example **to what extent do we rely on authority figures in order to accept something as true?** Or **how do our emotions influence our response to a work of art?** These knowledge questions drive the two assessments of an exhibition (junior year) and a response to an essay prompt from IB (senior year).

The **core theme of the class is knowledge and the knower**, but there are optional themes:

1. Knowledge and politics
2. Knowledge and technology
3. Knowledge and language
4. Knowledge and the Indigenous societies
5. Knowledge and religion

There are **five areas of knowledge** that are brought into discussion:

1. Natural Sciences
2. Human Sciences
3. History
4. The Arts
5. Mathematics

IB believes strongly in this curriculum and views it as integral part of everyone's educational experience to ask how and why!