

**Newport-Mesa Unified School District
Office of Secondary Curriculum and Instruction
High School Course of Study**

Department	Non-departmental			Course Title	Theory of Knowledge			
Course Code			Grade Level(s)	11-12		Course Length	2 semesters	
Credits/Semester	5	Required for Graduation?		No	Elective Credit?		Yes	
Prerequisites	None							
Community College Articulation?				Name of College				
UC/CSU Articulation?		YES		Name of University		UC		
Meets UC/CSU “a-g” Requirement?		?		Meets NCAA Requirement?		?	Weighted Course Credit?	?

COURSE DESCRIPTION

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The Theory of Knowledge (ToK) course is designed to have students understand and own both the ways we acquire knowledge (language, logic, communication, and emotion) and the six major subdivisions of knowledge. The course will not be taught in a completely linear way, but will as much as possible show the connections and integration possible between the various disciplines. Teachers of the various disciplines will be involved in the ToK class by giving “guest lessons” and by incorporating ToK lessons into their own curriculum.

The core method of teaching will be to use the Socratic seminar, inquiry, debate and creative expression regularly in the classroom. While it is important that students acquire the core knowledge of the course, it is more important that they become critical thinkers, able to confidently communicate their ideas, listen carefully and with an open mind to the ideas of others, and develop through reflection and dialogue a sound grasp of the principles of moral reasoning.

Many of the activities and assignments of the course will have an international flavor so that students become comfortable with the attitude of “international-mindedness” which is integral to the IB program and an essential element in the development of true open-mindedness. Students will participate in discussions and activities designed to put them “in the shoes” of people from other cultures. The goal is to develop a deep appreciation for the points of view of people from other cultures while evaluating their practices with clear unbiased critical thinking.

The ultimate goal of the course is to produce open-minded, clear thinking, confident, creative students who will be better citizens of our country and of the world; students who are more willing and able to play a positive role in a global society.

THE COURSE will be offered over a two year span- juniors in the IB program will take the course in the second semester of their junior year, and complete the course in the first semester of their senior year. The course will be open to non-IB students if there are available seats.

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GOALS: (Expected performance outcomes for students)

- 1) The primary goal of this class is to enhance students' willingness and ability to do high level critical thinking. Students will engage in numerous Socratic seminars, debates, essays and other discussions in which they will be asked to express their ideas and support them with high quality thinking and supportive evidence.
- 2) Students will explore the processes by which we humans obtain knowledge (see course description) and develop a fuller understanding of how each (language, reason, emotion, and sensory perception) give us unique forms of knowledge. They will explore the major areas of knowledge and evaluate their contributions to human learning.
- 3) Students will explore the field of ethics both in general and in its specific application to various fields of knowledge. For example, they will examine and discuss the ethics of scientific experiments on animals. The goal of the course is to have students develop a strong and logical sense of ethics which they have developed through their own discovery.
- 4) Students will see the connection among the various fields of knowledge and study.

California Content Standards

This course is a required course for the International Baccalaureate, and meets all their requirements. While it includes elements of philosophy, it does not specifically address California Content Standards.

Evaluation

Students will take formative tests at the end of each section (see course outline) .

Students will write several essays on the subject matter studied.

Students will complete several projects (collages, skits, songs etc) which explore the thinking we are examining.

Students will participate in numerous Socratic seminars, debates, and discussions.

Students will make a formal oral presentation to the class at the end of the course.

Students will submit their EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT essay by April 1st of the second year of the course.

Performance Standards - Benchmark Assessments				
Far Below Basic = F	Below Basic = D	Basic = C	Proficient = B	Advanced Proficient = A