September 2016

Dear Parent or Guardian:

My name is Mr. William Schaefer and I will be teaching your child IBDP 11 Theory of Knowledge (ToK) this year. I am honored to have the opportunity to help guide your child through this exciting and interesting course and through the rigor of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. ToK is designed to explore the various forms of knowledge that your child will be exposed to during their International Baccalaureate career. The two distinct features of ToK are the examination of knowledge in each discipline and the explanation of how we know what we know. In other words, “What do you know?” and “How do you justify that knowledge?” Students will explore the ways of knowing such as language and emotion as well as the areas of knowledge they are studying in the programme.

Please read through the specific guidelines below to help ensure the success of your child in this class.

**GRADING POLICY:**

*Students and parents are encouraged to check their grade weekly on-line or by consulting the teacher so that there are no surprises prior to the issuance of report cards.*

*Grades in ToK follow the PPS guidelines – 0-59% E; 60-69% D; 70–79% C; 80-89% B; 90-100% A.*

*Grading Breakdown:

- **Participation/Notebook (Formative Assessment): 20%**
  - **Chart Points:** Students will have the opportunity to earn four points each day for coming to class prepared and participating in class activities (this includes daily warm-ups and exit tickets, participation in whole and small group discussions, cooperative group work, and taking notes). Students will lose two points for the following reasons: failure to complete warm-up in a timely manner, no notebook or folder, no pencil and for disrupting class during the warm-up. Students lose all four points for unexcused absences and up to two points for not participating in class activities. All four points can be lost if a student doesn’t complete the warm-up and if the student does not participate in the class activities. **If a student has an excused absence, no chart points will be given until all of the work is made up.**

- **Classwork (Formative Assessment): 25%**
  - Students’ work in class will be graded. This includes responses to readings, work handed in related to group and individual activities.

- **Writing (Formative and Summative Assessments): 20%**
  - Essays and other writing assignments will be a regular activity in this class.

- **Culminating Unit Assessments/Quizzes & Tests (Summative Assessments): 25%**
  - End-of-unit culminating projects
  - Internal and External Assessments (Essays, Presentations)
  - Quizzes and tests

- **Homework: 10%**
  - Homework will consist mostly of readings to prepare for class discussions.
  - **The book we use is Nicolas Alchin’s theory of knowledge**
No opportunities exist for extra credit assignments.

IBDP Assessment Criteria:
External Assessment - ToK is a required course for Diploma Program candidates. In order to earn the diploma, you will need to write a 1200-1600 word essay on a Prescribed Title (given to us by the IBDP). As this is the first semester of a course you will continue two more semesters of next year, you will write a practice essay this year to prepare you for next year’s requirements.

Internal Assessment – Students must give a formal presentation which applies the ToK skills they learned in class to an analysis of a real-life situation and the problems of knowledge that arise. This year you will complete a presentation in groups of three. Next year, you will have the option of completing your presentation by yourself, in pairs or in a group of three.

Academic:
*ToK Binder: Students must have a ToK binder with them every day. This must be a ToK specific binder where students must include all notes and handouts. Failure to produce this binder on a daily basis with all necessary materials will result in a loss of two chart points each day. You are expected to keep this binder for the next two years as this is a three semester course. Please keep your notebook and folder inside of your TOK Binder.
*Warm-up: Students will be given a warm-up to do each day they enter class. The first thing a student should do upon entering my room is to get out their notebook and complete the warm-up.

Late Work Policy:
*I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE ESSAYS OR PRESENTATIONS (this applies to the final draft only).
*Other class work or homework will be marked 50% off if it is handed in late. I do not accept any work two weeks after its due date.

Behavioral Expectations:
*I expect all students to treat each other and their teacher with respect and dignity
*If a student exhibits any behavioral issues or doesn’t adhere to classroom and school rules I will conference with the student privately and make a phone call home.
*A student may be issued a written referral for the following reasons:
Cell phone usage, disrupting class, use of headphones, tardy to class, and use of profanity. This list is not inclusive of all behaviors, which may result in issuing a referral. Referrals are the final step for many of the infractions listed above.

As your child enters the 11th grade, it is important for them to develop the maturity necessary to communicate with their teachers to ensure their success. Students should make a concerted effort to consult with me during QRT to pursue any extra help they may need. Students AND parents are encouraged to send me an e-mail (the best way to contact me) at wschaefer1@pghboe.net with any questions or concerns. You can also call the school at (412) 529-2270.
Sincerely,

Mr. William Schaefer

Approved: ______________________, Director

Students and parents, please keep the first two pages of this letter for your records.

Please sign to indicate you have read the above letter.

Student signature_______________________________________Date_____________

Parent/guardian signature _____________________________________________Date __________

Parent/guardian e-mail_____________________________________________________

Student’s e-mail:___________________________________________________________

Phone number(s) {day} __________________________ {evening} ______________________

Comments: