



SENIOR SEMINAR (HURST) COURSE INFORMATION August 2011

TEACHER/ CONTACT

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Senior Seminar is modeled on the International Baccalaureate Theory of Knowledge (ToK) Syllabus. Students will consider IB's question "What is knowledge?" and will develop the ability to reflect critically on how and what they have learned. The course will commence with a critical study of the knower, the four Ways of Knowing (sense perception, language, reason and emotion) followed by an analysis of one of the ToK six Areas of Knowledge— Ethics. Questions surrounding belief, certainty, culture, evidence, interpretation, intuition, justification and truth will be explored. In this particular Senior Seminar course, students will develop their English language proficiency through the exploration of ToK concepts. Class time will be devoted to reading and class discussions, bringing in students' own knowledge and experiences. Students will be required to synthesize their thoughts in speaking and writing. Later in the course, students apply their understandings by 1) presenting on a contemporary issue of their choice, and 2) writing an essay to a particular question. One half (0.5) elective credit will be awarded. Successful completion of Senior Seminar counts toward ISB's graduation requirement.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Students completing the Senior Seminar course will...

- develop an understanding of what knowledge claims are and why critically examining them is important;
- develop a critical capacity to evaluate belief and knowledge claims and identify their global implications;
- become aware of the interpretative nature of knowledge, i.e., context and personal and ideological biases;
- consider that knowledge may place responsibilities on the knower;
- demonstrate understanding of the **strengths and limitations** of individual and cultural perspectives as they relate to the various aspects of knowledge;
- identify the various aspects of knowledge, i.e., four Ways of Knowing and Ethics as an Area of Knowledge and make connections between and across these different aspects;
- make connections between personal experience, cultural perspectives, and the different Ways of Knowing and Ethics;
- demonstrate an understanding of knowledge at work in the world;
- make interdisciplinary connections;
- demonstrate a capacity to reason critically;

- demonstrate an understanding that personal views, judgments and beliefs may influence their own knowledge claims and those of others;
- use oral and written language to formulate and communicate ideas clearly;
- demonstrate tolerance of others' values and ways of thinking.

SENIOR SEMINAR UNITS

1. Knower
2. Way of Knowing: Sense Perception
3. Way of Knowing: Language
4. Ways of Knowing: Reason & Emotion and Area of Knowledge: Ethics

TEXTS/ MATERIALS

- *Theory of Knowledge for the IB Diploma*, by Richard van de Lagemaat
- ToK Syllabus as needed
- Various supplemental readings provided as handouts

ASSESSMENTS & GRADING

- **Overall Grade:** Students are expected to complete all formative assignments and assessments according to the **Broad Learning Categories (BLCs)** for Social Studies described below. A **formative assessment** or assessment 'for' learning gives information during student learning about progress and about how to improve. They include in-class assignments, blog posts, discussions and periodic checks for learning. **Summative assessment** or assessment 'of' learning shows how much learning actually took place. These assessments will occur throughout the course and are the basic assessments that determine the final grade. They include presentations, quizzes and essays. Both formative and summative assessment results are posted on PowerSchool.
 - 15% Formative Assessments
 - 75% Summative Assessments
 - 10% Final Assessments, to include a final oral presentation and essay
- **HAL Grade:**

The following habits and attitudes to learning (HAL) will be periodically reported on PowerSchool using a 1- 7 scale (1 = very poor; 7 = excellent), but counts 0% toward the overall grade. Refer to the HAL rubric for details.

 - Attendance & punctuality
 - Preparation pertaining to materials, assignments and homework, and use of Panthernet or other resources as assigned
 - Work Habits: engaged learner; listening to instructions/ feedback; careful work, attention to detail and thoughtful revision; seeking clarification
 - Behavior/ Initiative: reflective of own learning; participation/ inquiry and desire to share learning; initiating discussions, questioning & leading; taking intellectual risks & asserting & supporting opinions; listening respectfully

BROAD LEARNING CATEGORIES

To pass *Senior Seminar*, students must demonstrate at least 60% of knowledge and understanding of the following Broad Learning Categories (BLCs) for Social Studies:

1. **Content Knowledge**, i.e., subject specific content acquired in each unit (knowledge) and the comprehension of its meaning and significance (understanding)
 - Knowledge of content: facts, terms, definitions
 - Understanding of content: theories, concepts, ideas, methodologies, procedures, processes, technologies
 - Recall, recite, list, memorize, describe, explain, paraphrase
2. **Analytical Thinking**, i.e., the use of critical and creative thinking skills and/or processes
 - Use of planning skills: focused research, gathering information, organizing an inquiry, organizing content knowledge/ examples
 - Use of processing skills: selecting, analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, detecting, point of view and bias, forming conclusions
 - Use of critical/creative thinking processes: inquiry, problem-solving and research processes to include establishing criteria, generating solutions and reaching consensus
 - Analyze, compare, contrast, hypothesize, infer, categorize, deduce
3. **Application**, i.e., the use of knowledge and skills to make connections within and between various contexts
 - Application of knowledge and skills in familiar contexts
 - Transfer of knowledge and skills to new contexts
 - Making connections within and between various contexts (past, present and future, environmental, personal, social, religious, cultural, socio-economic)
 - Generalize, predict, transfer, evaluate, apply to new situations
4. **Communication**, i.e., the conveying of meaning through various forms
 - Expression and organization of ideas and information (clarity of expression, logical organization) in oral, visual and written forms
 - Communication for different audiences (peers, adults, communities) and purposes (to inform, persuade, debate) in oral, visual and written forms
 - Use of conventions (language, symbols, media usage), vocabulary, and terminology of the discipline in oral, visual and written forms