

Theory of Knowledge
Instructor: Mamdouh Elsayed

Course Description:

The Theory of Knowledge (TOK) program at AYA is of particular importance, since it will encourage our Muslim American students to see themselves as global citizens by means of critical thinking and thoughtful reflection on what they know, how they know it, and how to use this knowing responsibly. By studying global issues which have relevance to society on a smaller or larger scale, they will be encouraged to play their part in the wider community through gaining ownership of their knowledge by understanding the precise nature of it. By applying a deeper understanding of inter-related concepts to an increasingly inter-connected world, we aim to encourage them to become responsible, thoughtful, sensitive and confident participants in the world.

The following main topics are covered:

1. Introduction to the concept of knowledge
 - What is the nature of knowledge?
 - What is the purpose of knowledge?
2. Aspects of knowledge, beliefs, and truths
 - Who are the knowers?
 - What are the responsibilities which being a knower brings?
3. The role of truth and group presentations exhibiting the nature of knowledge and the issues arising from world affairs
4. Cultural differences
 - Other forms of communication
 - Metaphor versus reality
 - Sense perception
 - How can we trust our senses?
 - How can we trust the perceptions of others?
5. Reason, rationality and logic
 - How does reason reinforce our knowledge?
 - What are the strengths and limitations of logic?
6. Emotion: the conflict of reason and emotion
 - Should emotion play a role in our decision making?