

# THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

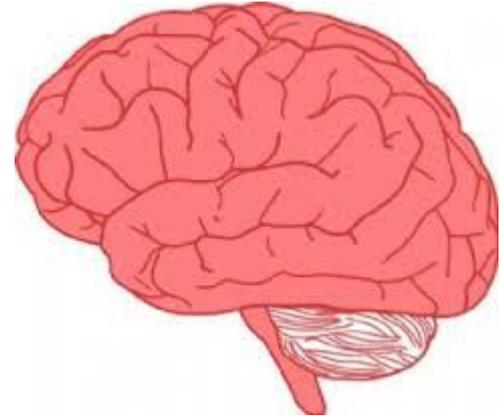
IT'S (ALMOST) ALL ABOUT... KNOWLEDGE



As you're waiting for us to start...ask yourself:

*What do I truly know and how do I know it? And, what exactly is knowledge?*

“Προμηθεια”...forethought. Some ancients used to believe this was a god; a very powerful one.



***“The unexamined life is not worth living.”***



**“Knowledge is power.”**



# TOK Over Two Years

Gr. 11 Semester One (now): Intro lectures

Gr. 11 Semester Two: Course work (HZT4U7) and IA Exhibition; OSSD mark determined from in class work and IA (Quad 4)

Gr.12 Semester One: Formal TOK essay (external assessment)

Gr.12 Semester Two: Final lectures, journals, field trip?

# SOME INITIAL PREMISES...

\*we are each “**knowers**” in the world.

\*there is a **reality**; there are **truths** in the world.

\*all knowledge, to some extent, is **shared**...a form of hearsay.

\*the **processes** through which we communicate and “share” knowledge are critical to our understanding of truths

# THEREFORE...

\*we must scrutinize and properly understand **how we learn** and subsequently **what we learn** to get closer to truths

\*we must be aware of **how we communicate** and **how we're perceived**

# IN THE GRAND SCHEME OF THINGS... WHY TOK?

TO BE HAPPY.

Gaining knowledge, wisdom and true understanding are virtues, which ultimately lead one to a happier life.

Socrates said, “There is only one Good, knowledge, and one evil, ignorance.”



What is the foundation of  
Theory of Knowledge?



# Knowledge Questions

- A knowledge question (KQ) enquires into what we know and how we know it. The course is structured on these questions that give us insight into the theories of knowledge.
- KQs are extracted from real life.

For example:

“What counts as good evidence for a claim?”, “Are some types of knowledge less open to interpretation than others?”, or “What constraints should there be on the pursuit of knowledge?”.

# REAL LIFE SITUATION

# → RELEVANT KNOWLEDGE QS

**Studying the views of two different historians in a DP history lesson**

A journal article detailing the outcomes of a medical trial of an experimental new drug

**Watching a video of a talk on compassion, happiness and inner peace by the Dalai Lama**

Should driverless cars be programmed to protect the passenger in the car or a pedestrian in the case of an accident?

**How can we decide between the judgments of experts if they disagree with each other?**

What ethical constraints should there be on the pursuit of knowledge?

**Does some knowledge belong only to particular communities of knowers?**

In what ways do ethical judgments differ from other kinds of judgments?

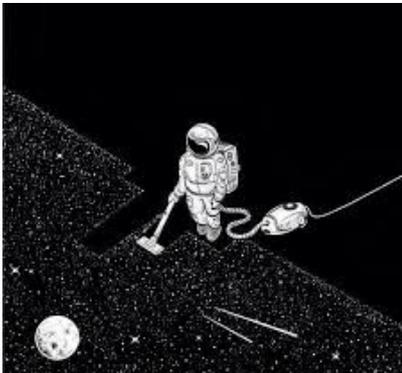
# THREE INTERCONNECTED PARTS OF THE COURSE

1. **Knowledge and the Knower:** students are encouraged to reflect on themselves as knowers and thinkers, and to consider the different communities of knowers to which we belong.
2. **Optional Themes:** knowledge and technology; knowledge and language; knowledge and politics; knowledge and religion; and knowledge and indigenous societies. (We will focus on 2-3 of these.)
3. **Areas of Knowledge:** we will explore these five--history; the human sciences; the natural sciences; mathematics; and the arts.

# THE KNOWLEDGE FRAMEWORK (KF)

All knowledge (in themes and subjects) is organized into a framework of four elements: **scope, perspectives, methods and tools, and ethics.**

This KF encourages a deeper analysis into the subject matter and encourages making comparisons and connections between the various themes and subjects.



*“Nothing happens in a vacuum.”*



# KF - SCOPE

1. **“Scope”**: explores how each theme/area of knowledge fits within the totality of human knowledge, and also considers the nature of the problems that each theme/area of knowledge faces and tries to address.

Ex. What exactly is part of math? What does it do?

Investigating and understanding human behaviour. (Hum. Sci.)

The arts shape belief and have a social function. (arts)

# KF - PERSPECTIVES

**2. “Perspectives”:** reflection on the students’ own perspectives and what informs them, as well as how different people or groups view or approach knowledge in the different themes/areas of knowledge. It also includes reflection on historical perspectives and how knowledge changes over time.

Ex. Do different cultures understand mathematical concepts differently? (math)

What role does the historian play in history? (history)

# KF - METHODS AND TOOLS

**3. “Methods and Tools”**:...of how we build knowledge; includes the building of conceptual frameworks, the establishing of traditions and practices, as well as the methodologies employed by formal disciplines.

Ex. Math uses pure reason to come up with theories. A mathematical statement is only true if proven. (math)

Art often requires an emotional interaction with audience. Imagination and creativity are made visual (art)

# KF - ETHICS

**4. “Ethics”:** ethical considerations that have an impact on inquiry in the different themes and areas of knowledge. This includes aspects such as the relationship between facts and values, and how ethical and epistemic values are built into the quest for knowledge. It also includes questions relating to knowledge and inequality and injustice.

Ex. What kind of power can certain mathematical/scientific discoveries have? Who is responsible for regulating them?  
(math and natural sciences)

Ex. How do one’s values affect their interpretation of history?  
(history)

SOME MORE DETAILED CONCEPTS WE'LL BE EXPLORING

**evidence, certainty, TRUTH,  
interpretation, power,  
justification, explanation,  
objectivity, perspective, culture,  
values and responsibility.**

# IB ASSESSMENT PART ONE

Two IB assessment tasks:

1. **IA Exhibition** assesses the ability of the student to show how TOK manifests in the world around us. The exhibition is an internal assessment component; it is marked by the teacher and is externally moderated by the IB. (Spring 2021)
2. **The TOK essay** engages students in a more formal and sustained piece of writing in response to a title focused on the areas of knowledge. The essay is an external assessment component; it is marked by IB examiners. (Fall 2021)

# IB ASSESSMENT PART TWO

You will also receive an OSSD mark for the work done within the course this Spring. This work will prepare you for the exhibition and essay.

This will include 70% for class assignments, presentations, etc.

Your IA exhibition will be the 30% summative of this mark.

# LET'S BEGIN OUR TOK DISCUSSIONS...

...with what I (and many others) believe to be a horrifying concept...



OXFORD DICTIONARY'S NEW WORD OF THE YEAR 2016...

**"Post-truth"**

- a philosophical and political concept for "the disappearance of shared objective standards for truth" and the "circuitous slippage between facts or alt-facts, knowledge, opinion, belief, and truth".

**\*think about this: is this a problem? An epidemic?**



Some common sense

Reactions to this moment

# IS THERE A REALITY? A TRUTH?

The Truth is Out There...



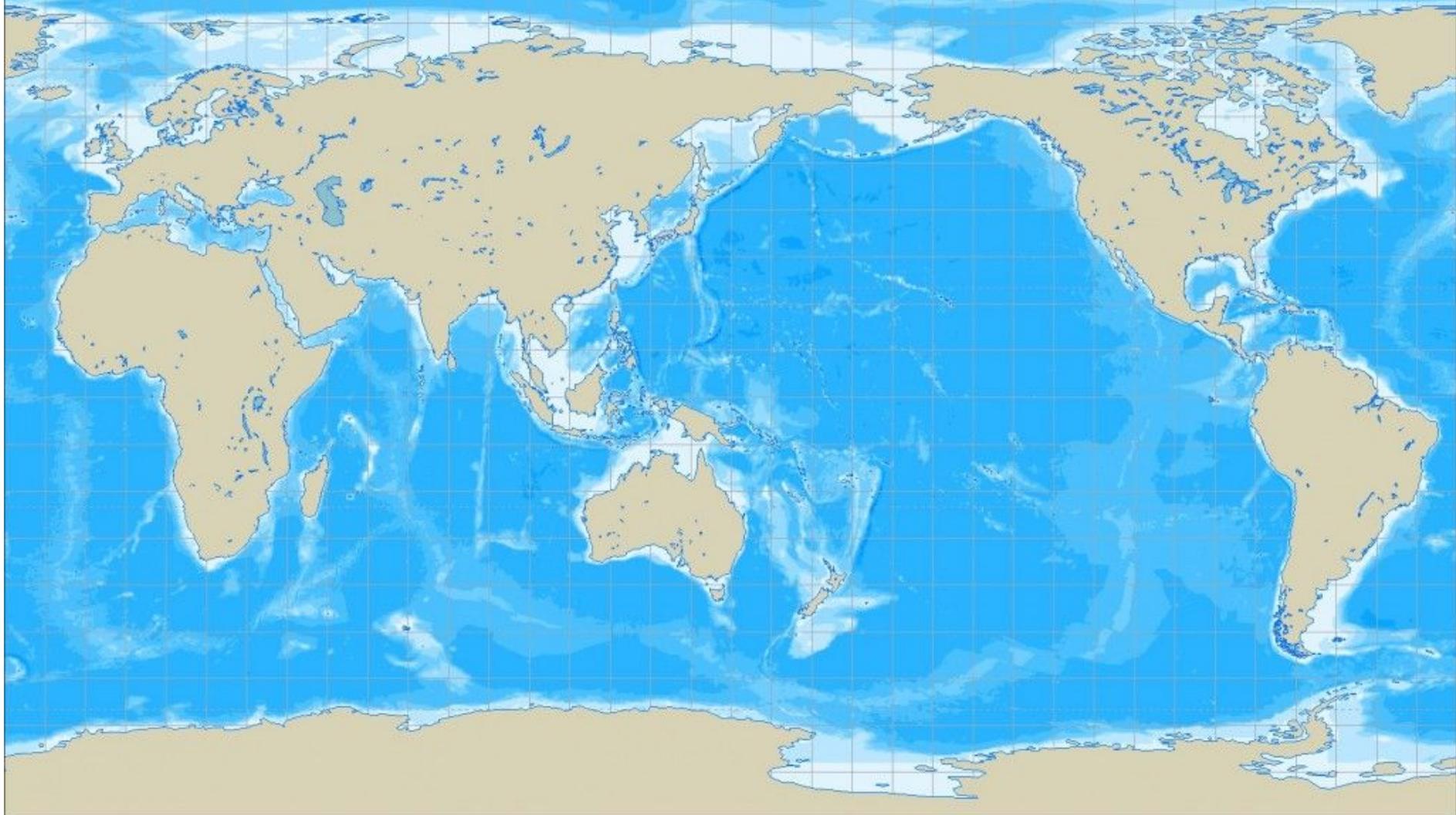
# QUIZ

How good are you at recognizing countries on a map?

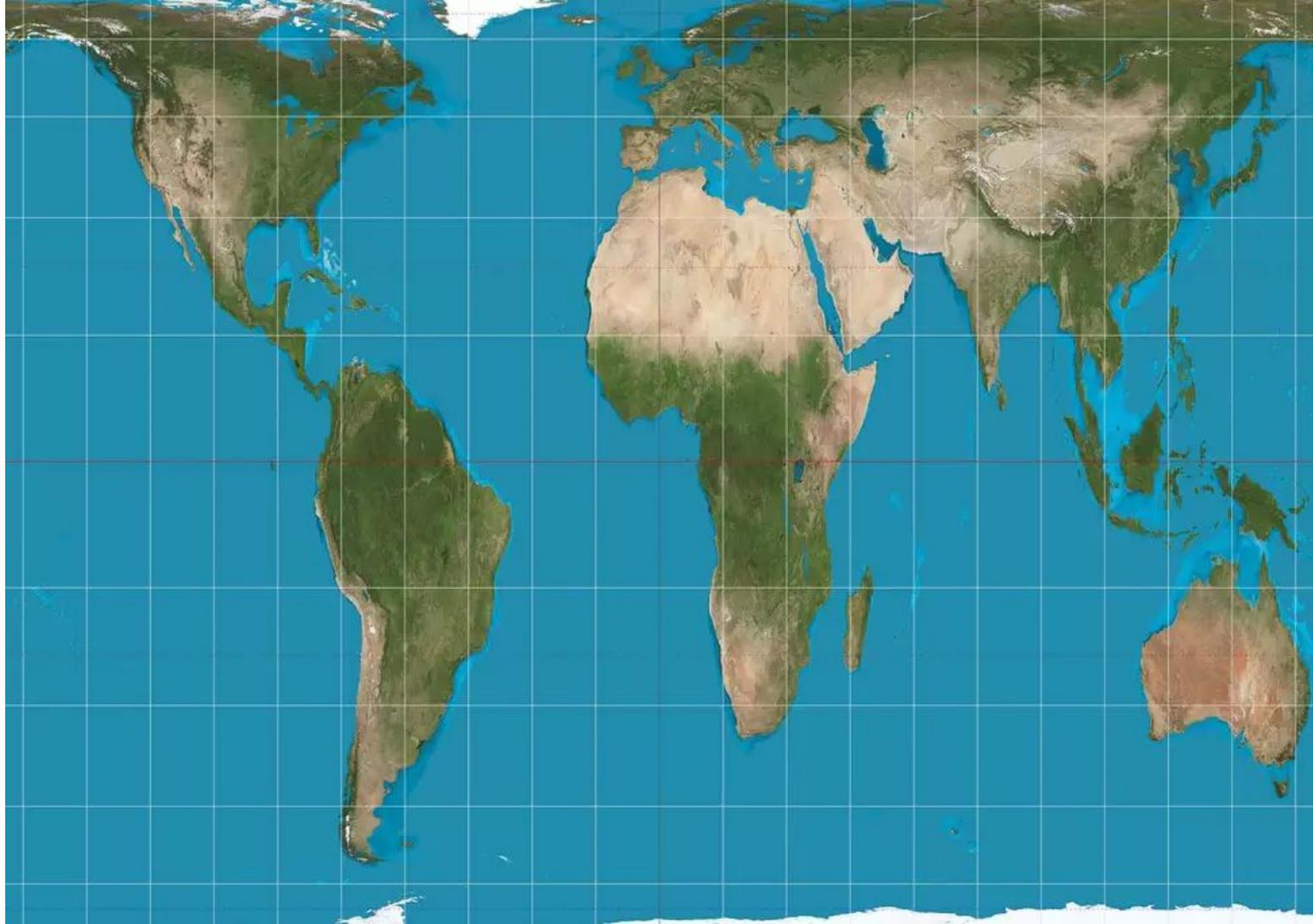












# HOW RELIABLE ARE OUR MEMORIES?

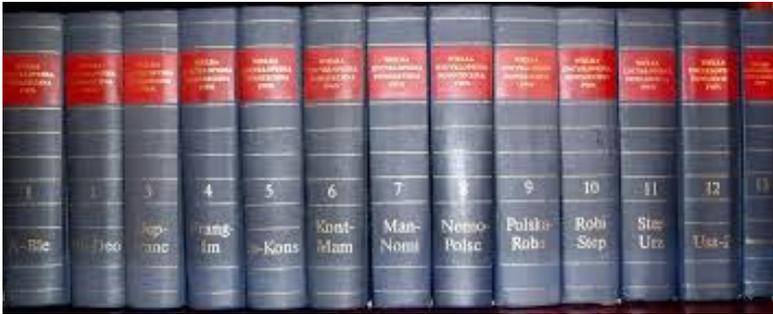
What role does perspective play in retelling a story? What role does the audience play? What role does the “knower” play?



# LET'S THINK ABOUT IT...

(THIS CONCEPT COULD BE A 'GAME-CHANGER' IN YOUR LIFE)

What is one of your biggest memories?



Vs.



# WHAT INFLUENCES OUR PERSPECTIVES?

- Age
- Gender
- Cultural background(s)
- Education
- Finances
- Location