

Social and Behavioral Sciences

Student Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate an understanding of theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of human behavior, culture, and/or institutions.

The Value of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Almost every challenge humankind has ever faced, or will ever face, depends on the actions of people. Whether studying why people built pyramids across the ancient world, how people decide to spend their money, why people vote for one candidate over another, why people cheat on tests, or how groups and organizations alter individual trajectories, we must understand people's behavior to answer these questions. Exploring how and why people and

societies think and behave is fundamental to understanding our past, present, and future. The social and behavioral sciences provide students with the knowledge, methods, and tools to better understand individuals and societies, by advancing generalizable theories about human behavior based on empirical evidence.

Supporting Skills

1. Students will describe major approaches, theories, methods, and substantive findings from a particular Social and Behavioral Sciences domain.
2. Students will apply concepts and theories from a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain to real life contexts.
3. Students will evaluate significant theories, methods, and evidence within a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain.

Course Content Criteria

1. Courses in this category explain major approaches, theories, methods, and substantive findings in the Social and Behavioral Sciences.
2. Courses in this category demonstrate or explain how knowledge is created in the Social and Behavioral Sciences.
3. Courses in this category evaluate concepts, theories, methods, and evidence from the Social and Behavioral Sciences and apply them to real life contexts.
4. Courses in this category have the domains of Anthropology, Economics, Political Science, Psychology, or Sociology as a primary focus.
5. Courses in this category include an assessment assignment that requires students to demonstrate each of the skills in the Social and Behavioral Sciences Assessment Rubric (below). This assessment assignment should be one of the following: an objective exam, an essay question on an exam, an essay, or a research paper.

Glossary

1. **Anthropology:** The study of human beings and their ancestors through time and space and in relation to their physical character, environmental and social relations, behaviors and adaptations, communications, and culture.
2. **Culture:** The way of life (i.e., behaviors, beliefs, values, symbols, etc.) learned within and shared by a particular group of people at a particular time.
3. **Economics:** The study of the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. It focuses on the behavior and interactions of economic agents such as households, firms, buyers, and sellers, as well as how economies work and are shaped by such issues as unemployment, inflation, economic growth, and public policy.
4. **Empirical evidence:** Information received by means of the senses, particularly by observation and documentation of patterns and behavior through investigation.
5. **Generalizable theory:** A set of suppositions or ideas that, through extension of research findings and conclusions from a study conducted on a sample to the population at large, retain utility for the larger group.
6. **Human behavior:** The potential and expressed capacity for physical, mental, and social activity during the phases of human life.
7. **Institutions:** Established laws, practices, norms, rules, ideas, structures, or organizations that define, govern, and constrain action.
8. **Political Science:** The study of the exercise of power, viewed in domestic, international, or comparative perspective. It explores political ideas, institutions, identities, and interests in order to explain phenomena related to such issues as governance, law, elections, revolution, war, diplomacy, cooperation, and social change.
9. **Psychology:** The study of the mind, how it works, and how it affects behavior in humans and other animals. It encompasses a broad range of research and application, including abnormal, biological, clinical/counseling, cognitive, comparative, developmental, forensic, industrial-organizational, personality, and social psychology.
10. **Sociology:** The study of the social lives of people, groups, and societies. It includes the study of human behavior as social beings, and the scientific study of social aggregations, the entities through which humans move throughout their lives.

Social and Behavioral Sciences Assessment Rubric

Supporting Skills	Exemplary 5	Accomplished 4	Developing 3	Beginning 2	Absent 1
Describe major approaches, theories, methods, and substantive findings from a particular Social and Behavioral Sciences domain.	Demonstrates substantial familiarity with theories, methods, and substantive findings in a particular Social and Behavioral Sciences domain, with very few inaccuracies.	Demonstrates considerable familiarity with theories, methods, and substantive findings in a particular Social and Behavioral Sciences domain, with few inaccuracies.	Demonstrates basic familiarity with theories, methods, and substantive findings in a particular Social and Behavioral Sciences domain, with some inaccuracies.	Demonstrates limited familiarity with theories, methods, and substantive findings in a particular Social and Behavioral Sciences domain, with significant inaccuracies.	Is unable to demonstrate familiarity with theories, methods, and substantive findings in a particular Social and Behavioral Sciences domain.
Apply concepts and theories from a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain to real life contexts.	Applies concepts and theories from a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain to real life contexts, with accuracy and nuance.	Applies concepts and theories from a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain to real life contexts, with few inaccuracies.	Applies concepts and theories from a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain to real life contexts, with some inaccuracies.	Applies concepts and theories from a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain to real life contexts, with significant inaccuracies.	Is unable to apply concepts and theories from a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain to real life contexts.
Evaluate significant theories, methods, and evidence within a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain.	Is able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of significant theories, methods, and evidence within a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain, with significant detail and nuance and in a very convincing or well-developed manner.	Is able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of significant theories, methods, and evidence within a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain, with significant detail and in a generally convincing or well-developed manner.	Is able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of significant theories, methods, and evidence within a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain, but not in an entirely convincing or well-developed manner.	Is able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of significant theories, methods, and evidence within a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain, but in an unconvincing or poorly developed manner.	Is unable to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of significant theories, methods, and evidence within a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain.