

# 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/or 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/or 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

<b>Supporting Skills</b>	<b>Exemplary 4</b>	<b>Accomplished 3</b>	<b>Developing 2</b>	<b>Beginning 1</b>
<b>Describe major approaches, theories, methods, and /or substantive findings from a particular Social and Behavioral Sciences domain.</b>	Provides a comprehensive and accurate description of theories, methods, and /or substantive findings in a particular Social and Behavioral Sciences domain; description is supported with relevant examples and offers a high level of depth and detail, exploring and elaborating on major approaches, theories, methods, and/or substantive findings in the chosen domain.	Provides a clear, generally accurate description of theories, methods, and /or substantive findings in a particular Social and Behavioral Sciences domain; description is generally supported with examples and offers some level of depth, generally exploring major approaches, theories, methods, and/or findings in the chosen domain, although not always fully.	Provides a partial and/or partially accurate description of theories, methods, and/or substantive findings in a particular Social and Behavioral Sciences domain; description is only partially supported with examples and has some gaps and inaccuracies, offering a minimal exploration of approaches, theories, methods, and/or findings in the chosen domain.	Provides an inadequate and/or highly inaccurate description of theories, methods, and /or substantive findings in a particular Social and Behavioral Sciences domain; description is not supported with examples and has extensive gaps and inaccuracies, offering no clear exploration of approaches, theories, methods and/or findings in the chosen domain.
<b>Apply concepts and theories from a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain to real life contexts.</b>	Clearly and thoroughly applies highly relevant concepts and theories from a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain to real life contexts, with accuracy and nuance; application demonstrates clear understanding of both context and concepts; application foregrounds clear connections between the theoretical framework and the real-life context(s).	Clearly applies appropriate relevant concepts and theories from a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain to real life contexts, with very few inaccuracies; application demonstrates a good general understanding of both context and concepts; application reveals some connections between the theoretical framework and the real-life context(s).	Applies some concepts and theories from a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain to real life contexts, with inaccuracies; application demonstrates a limited understanding of both context(s) and concepts; application suggests some connections between the theoretical framework and real-life contexts, but the connections between the two are unclear or not fully explored or exploited.	Struggles to apply concepts and theories from a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain to real life contexts; application is flawed and/or inadequate and demonstrates little to no understanding of context(s) and/or concepts; application lacks structure and coherence and it is, therefore, difficult to discern any relevant connection between the theoretical framework and real-life contexts.
<b>Evaluate significant theories, methods, and /or evidence within a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain.</b>	Is clearly able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of significant theories, methods, and /or evidence within a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain; evaluation is highly insightful, comprehensive, and demonstrates a deep understanding of theories, methods, and/or evidence.	Is able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of significant theories, methods, and /or evidence within a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain; evaluation is relevant and demonstrates a solid understanding of theories, methods, and evidence.	Is generally able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of significant theories, methods, and / or evidence within a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain; evaluation is incomplete and/or partially inaccurate and demonstrates a limited understanding of theories, methods, and/or evidence.	Demonstrates a limited ability to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of significant theories, methods, and /or evidence within a Social and Behavioral Sciences domain; evaluation is incomplete and inaccurate and demonstrates a very limited or incorrect understanding of theories, methods, and/or evidence.