

# Social Science

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Plan

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**Rationale:** The study of social world helps students to better understand the role of cooperation and conflict in and between societies and in social relationships. Understanding the forces that impel and interfere with social connections fosters appreciation for the complexities involved in social decision-making, encourages exploration of alternatives for addressing social barriers, confronts the ethical questions which stem from the choices involved in social engagement, and ultimately, aids in preparing students to be effective decision-makers in their own communities.

The social sciences requirement also exposes students to different kinds of approaches to theoretical, quantitative, and/or qualitative modes of inquiry, as they are applied to the study of social behavior, interaction, and institutions. Students will learn to critique the collection, reporting, and analysis of evidence on the social activities being explored, and examine their broader cultural and historical context. Ultimately, this requirement provides students with an opportunity to develop a set of critical thinking skills related to the social sciences that they will be able to use personally and professionally, to understand the social worlds that they inhabit.

Courses in Social Science have been formally defined by the Faculty as falling within the disciplines of Anthropology, Economics, Geography, Linguistics, Political Science, Psychology, or Sociology.

## **Student Learning Outcomes:**

### **A. Students will be able to explain social experiences and issues from a social science perspective.**

Suggested Assessment Method: The instructor chooses a topic or an issue relevant to their own course and discipline and asks students to write a two to three paragraph essay explaining either the cause, consequence, and/or significance of the topic/issue from the general perspective of the disciplines or a specific theoretical approach within the discipline. Alternatively, the outcome could be assessed by way of short answer and/or multiple choice questions.

#### Assessment Criteria:

1. Student performance demonstrates that they understand the social aspects of human behavior in relation to a given topic.  
Yes - Somewhat - No
2. Student performance demonstrates their ability to explain the topic/issue from a relevant disciplinary or theoretical perspective.  
Yes - Somewhat - No

**B. Students will be able to make evidence-based conclusions concerning social experiences and issues.**

Suggested Assessment Methods:

- 1) Have students write a one-page evidence-based evaluation of a statement (e.g. “opposites attract” or “Policy A is good for the economy”)
- 2) Have students read and write an evaluation of an idea presented in the popular press based on the legitimacy of sources and or conclusions made from the data presented.
- 3) Have student read and critique an article in the field of study.

Assessment Criteria:

1. Student can evaluate data which they are provided for credibility (e.g. bias, reliability, validity), probable truth, and/or relevance to a situation.  
Yes - Somewhat - No
2. Student can develop conclusions that reflect an informed, well-reasoned evaluation  
Yes - Somewhat - No

**C. Students will be able to apply critical knowledge and skills to understanding various aspects of personal and/or professional social life.**

Suggested Assessment Method: The instructor chooses a topic covered in the course and asks students to reflect on how they could use their understanding of the topic to address an ongoing real world social issue or problem. This could be done by identifying the problem and/or developing a resolution.

Assessment Criteria:

1. Student performance demonstrates an ability to make informed personal and professional choices using the interpretive tools of social thinking and research.  
Yes - Somewhat - No
2. Student performance indicates that they understand the value, usefulness, and contributions of social scientific knowledge to applications beyond the classroom.  
Yes - Somewhat - No

The instructor may choose to address these three learning outcomes through a variety methods. These could include an essay, a set of multiple-choice or short answer exam questions, or an in-class activity. They could be carried out through graded or ungraded assignments, and more than one outcome could be addressed through a single method, especially if the instructor is using essays as a tool.

## Social Science Rubric

<b>SLO</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Somewhat proficient</b>	<b>Not proficient</b>
<p><b>Students will be able to explain the cause, consequence, and/or significance of the topic/issue from the general perspective of the disciplines or a specific theoretical approach within the discipline.</b></p>	<p>Student understands the social aspects of human behavior in relation to a given topic. Student performance demonstrates an ability to explain the topic/issue from a relevant disciplinary or theoretical perspective.</p>	<p>Student somewhat understands the social aspects of human behavior in relation to a given topic. Student performance partially demonstrates an ability to explain the topic/issue from a relevant disciplinary or theoretical perspective.</p>	<p>Student does not appear to understand the social aspects of human behavior in relation to a given topic. Student performance does not demonstrate an ability to explain the topic/issue from a relevant disciplinary or theoretical perspective.</p>
<p><b>Students will be able to make evidence-based conclusions concerning social experiences and issues.</b></p>	<p>Student can accurately evaluate data which they are provided for credibility (e.g. bias, reliability, validity), probable truth, and/or relevance to a situation. Student can develop conclusions that reflect an informed, well-reasoned evaluation.</p>	<p>Student can partially evaluate data which they are provided for credibility (e.g. bias, reliability, validity), probable truth, and/or relevance to a situation. Student can develop conclusions, but they are not fully informed or well-reasoned.</p>	<p>Student cannot accurately evaluate data which they are provided for credibility. Student cannot develop conclusions.</p>
<p><b>Students will be able to apply critical knowledge and skills to understanding various aspects of social life beyond the classroom.</b></p>	<p>Student performance demonstrates a strong ability to make informed personal and/or professional choices using the interpretive tools of social thinking and research. Student performance indicates that they understand the value, usefulness, and contributions of social scientific knowledge to applications beyond the classroom.</p>	<p>Student performance demonstrates some ability to use the interpretive tools of social thinking and research to make choices. Student performance indicates that they somewhat understand the use of social scientific knowledge to applications beyond the classroom.</p>	<p>Student performance does not demonstrate an understanding of the interpretive tools of social thinking and research. Student cannot make scientific knowledge applications beyond the classroom.</p>