

Social Sciences Assessment Report AY2021-22

Courses:

Sections of SOCI 111, SOCI 112, POLS 213, POLS 215, POLS 312, and ANTH 312.

Summary

In 2015, the Social Sciences faculty of the HHSS Department created a new “Mission Statement and Learning Objectives” document¹ and this was used as the basis for the assessment of Social Science Learning Outcomes in the 2021-22 Academic Year.

In the Fall 2021, a rubric based on the Learning Outcomes was drafted and this rubric was piloted in sections of Social Science courses during the Fall 2021 semester. During this pilot, three faculty members identified student artifacts that best represented achievement of the range of SS Outcomes and used the draft rubric² to assess student achievement via these assignments. During this pilot, faculty also chose their own scales to apply, so it was not possible to aggregate the scores across sections. At a subsequent meeting of FT SS faculty, there was a consensus that this process would be valuable to implement during the Spring 2022 semester. The notion was to implement in Spring 2022 with FT faculty, and then invite part-time faculty to participate more fully in an upcoming semester.

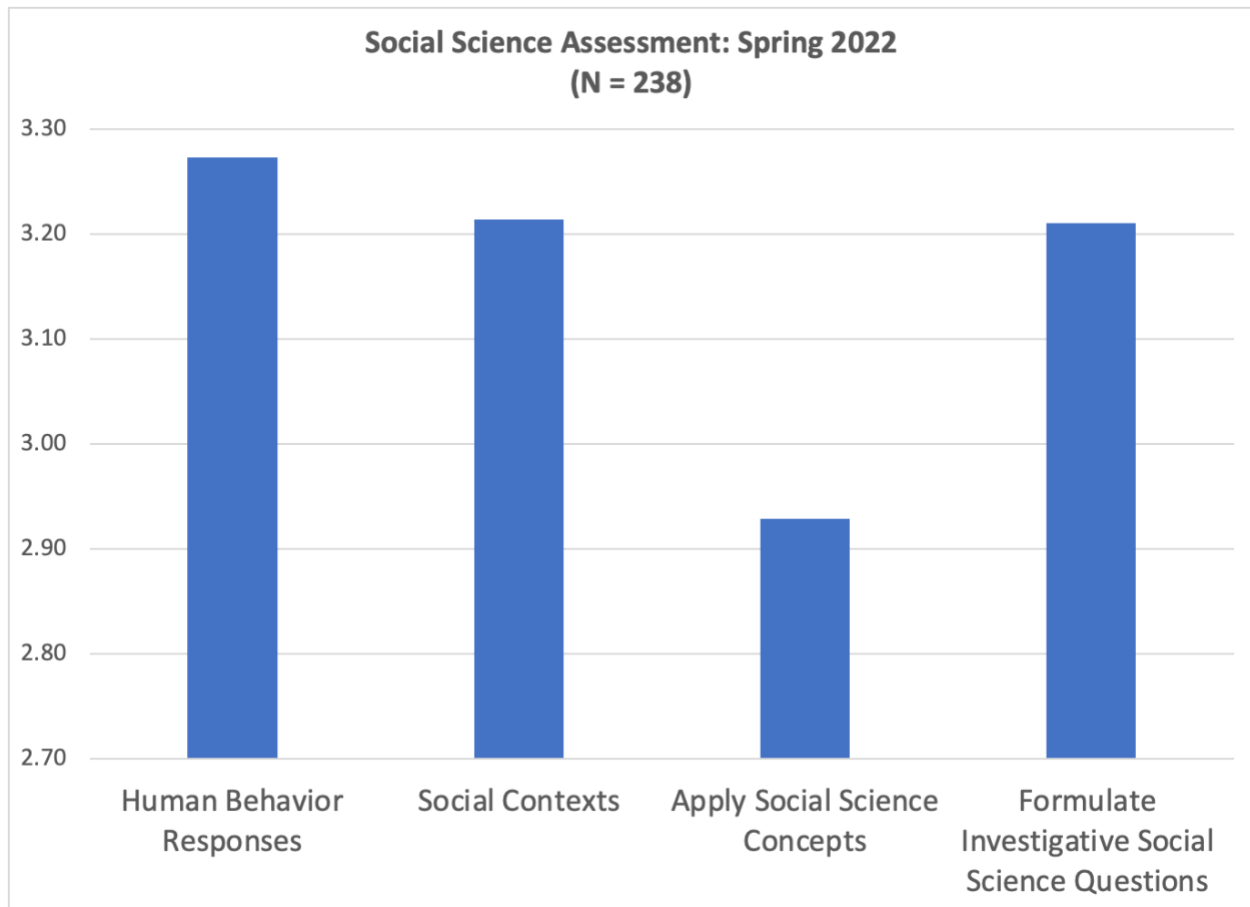
Four full-time faculty submitted their assessment of student work on selected assignments during the Spring 2022 semester.

Spring 2022 Semester Results

¹ This appears as Appendix A.

² The rubric appears as Appendix B.

| Instructor | Class | N | Human Behavior Responses Social Contexts | | Apply Social Science Concepts Formulate Investigative Social Science Questions | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|------------|---|-------------|---|-------------|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | |
| Causey | SOCI 312-01 | 20 | 3.45 | 3.45 | 2.45 | N/A | | |
| Causey | SOCI 312-02 | 18 | 3.22 | 3.28 | 2.28 | N/A | | |
| Causey | SOCI 312-03 | 18 | 3.56 | 3.56 | 2.56 | N/A | | |
| Watkins | POLS 213-01 | 24 | 3.29 | 3.21 | 3.00 | N/A | | |
| Watkins | POLS 213-02 | 21 | 3.14 | 3.10 | 2.90 | N/A | | |
| Watkins | POLS 215-01 | 23 | 3.26 | 3.26 | 2.91 | N/A | | |
| Cruz | SOCI 111-01 | 25 | 3.32 | 3.16 | 3.24 | 3.40 | | |
| Cruz | SOCI 111-02 | 26 | 3.08 | 2.96 | 3.04 | 3.27 | | |
| Cruz | POLS 312-01 | 17 | 2.88 | 2.88 | 2.76 | 2.65 | | |
| Diaz de Sabates | SOCI 112-01 | 25 | 3.08 | 2.92 | 3.00 | 2.96 | | |
| Diaz de Sabates | SOCI 112-02 | 21 | 3.76 | 3.71 | 3.76 | 3.67 | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | Mean | 238 | 3.27 | 3.21 | 2.93 | 3.21 | | |



Faculty Comments

As part of the assessment process, participating faculty were asked to respond to three questions. Two faculty responded.

1. What surprised you about the results?

Faculty #1:

I am a little surprised at the lower score for "Applying Social Science Concepts." My classes are focused on political theory and the concepts, especially in POLS 213, are sometimes difficult for students to apply well. It seems to me that they understand them, but applying them is more of a challenge.

Faculty #2:

My two assessed sections were taught the same day, had the same syllabus, and did the same activities. The assessment results in all areas were lower in the first section (12:30-3:20PM) than in the second one (3:30-6:20 PM). You would think that as an instructor I had more energy during the first almost 3 hours of instruction than during the second one, but results obtained refuted that inference. To me, the class members and intra-group dynamics account for the variation in results. Certainly, the uniqueness of dynamics within social groups truly impacts the way in which they experience and process knowledge.

2. What did not surprise you about the results?

Faculty #1:

I am not surprised with the relatively good results for "Human Behavior Responses" and "Social Contexts." These are the building blocks of social science generally and political science specifically, and so it is gratifying but not surprising to see these scores as high as they are.

Faculty #2:

In both my classes students were taught to understand social human behavior situations by considering them within historical and social contexts, and I provided students with the necessary tools to do so. It is no surprise that the highest ratings for both sections corresponded to students successfully learning how to apply social science concepts and understand and contextualize human behavior responses. I am truly proud of that!

3. What implications does this assessment activity have for curriculum and pedagogy in Social Science classes?

Faculty #1:

Personally, the implications of this assessment for my courses pertain to the application of social science concepts. I will think some more in coming days and weeks about way to improve my pedagogy in this regard, perhaps with the introduction of some new in-class exercises to apply the concepts.

Faculty #2:

a. Positive pedagogy not only should have into account the individual student but also the class as a dynamic group, devoting time to learn how such intra-group dynamics influence each student's behavior and ability to process course information.

b. Time and effort need to be devoted when working with groups to develop and utilize pedagogical tools to maximize learning. Maximizing learning results includes working in healthy and positive environments. It is essential to take students' mental health into consideration, providing ample space during class to address any individual and group issues.

Appendix A

2015 Social Sciences Mission Statement

The social sciences teach students about the mental and emotional, social-cultural, and political-economic human condition. As a division of the department of Humanities, History, and Social Sciences, we are composed of different disciplines (anthropology, economics, political science, psychology, sociology) but share an interest in researching and understanding how humans perceive and interact with self, other, and our natural surroundings. Curricular offerings in the social sciences directly reflect the College's mission, to "provide a comprehensive educational opportunity in the arts, communications, and public information within the context of enlightened liberal education" by addressing human rights, access, representation, equity and participation in social changes as well as issues related to race and class, and religion, which are central to achieving the College's goal of "help[ing] students find out who they are and to discover their own voices [and] respect their own individuality."

2015 Social Sciences Learning Objectives

1. Students will recognize that all human behaviors are responses to varying personal, social, and material stimuli, and that those diverse behaviors are worthy of consideration and study.
2. Students will understand how individuals fit in social contexts (cultural, political, economic, institutional) and how both social context and personal factors condition their behaviors.
3. Students will be able to apply social science concepts to the analysis of varied cultural texts as well as the behavior of individuals and social contexts.
4. Students will be able to formulate investigative social science questions and apply their gained knowledge to compose thoughtful responses to whatever state of the world faces them.

Appendix B: Social Sciences Program Outcomes Rubric

| How well does the student work...? | None | A Little | Some | Fully | N/A |
|---|---------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | None | Poor | Good/Well | Excellent | |
| Does the student...? | Missing | A Little | Somewhat | Well | Excellent |
| Point Values | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Recognize that all human behaviors are responses to varying personal, social, and material stimuli, and that those diverse behaviors are worthy of consideration and study. | | | | | |
| Demonstrate an understanding of how individuals fit in social contexts (cultural, political, economic, institutional) and how both social context and personal factors condition their behaviors. | | | | | |
| Apply social science concepts to the analysis of varied cultural texts as well as the behavior of individuals and social contexts. | | | | | |
| Formulate investigative social science questions and apply their gained knowledge to compose thoughtful responses to whatever state of the world faces them. | | | | | |