In efforts to continue assessing Harold Washington College’s General Education Goals, the HWC Assessment Committee created this assessment tool to measure specific student learning outcomes for the Social Sciences. The assessment contains three parts.

Part I includes matching social science disciplines to related terms and concepts as presented in hypothetical conversations. Part II includes demographic questions to determine whether the sample of students who take this assessment are a representative sample of the student body at large in order to check the reliability of the data obtained. Secondly, Part II asks you to comment on your interests, values, and opinions related to the social sciences. There are no right or wrong answers for this section, only your opinions, so please be honest. Part III asks you to examine how two different social scientists might differ in their approach to studying a specific social phenomena.

Please take your time to complete this assessment; there is no time limit. You will not be graded on this assessment, but your responses will be collected and analyzed in aggregate form and the statistical findings will be made available to the HWC community. Therefore, applying your honesty and a serious attitude toward completing this assessment is appreciated.

PART I. Differentiating Between the Social Sciences

Below you will find nine fabricated casual conversations between two social scientists (SS). The social scientists in each conversation work within the same social science discipline. Your task is to identify the key terms and concepts addressed in each conversation and select the social science discipline that is most closely represented. Only ONE discipline should be chosen for EACH conversation.

Question 1

SS1: I saw Obama on television last night, and he appeared quite composed considering the stressful situation he’s facing.

SS2: What do you think is responsible for his high level of self-composure? Do you think he learned it through his strong family upbringing or at law school?

SS1: Obviously, he has a high degree of emotional intelligence, which I think is an innate personality trait.

SS2: I wonder how much of his cool can be attributed to his enculturation in Indonesia and Hawaii.

SS1: It would be good if it would rub off on the rest of Washington DC. It seems like a lot of politicians could use help dealing with stress!

**Completely fill in one choice only:**

O Anthropology     O Economics      O Geography      O History

O Political Science O Psychology     O Sociology
Question 2

SS1: President Obama is such a fine example of a humanitarian. I was amazed at the amount of support he committed to Haiti after the earthquake. But I’m concerned that resources spent there are resources that could be better used in America.

SS2: I think your concern is legitimate. We are currently in the worst recession since the Great Depression, so our physical capital is not expanding. Even if it is a moral imperative, shouldn’t our government base its decisions on the discretionary budget?

SS1: I agree. I think the President should concentrate on domestic issues, such as unemployment, especially in areas where people have suffered the greatest hardship.

**Completely fill in one choice only:**

- Anthropology
- Economics
- Geography
- History
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Sociology

Question 3

SS1 The hardest aspect of being the President must be dealing with so many conflicting state issues.

SS2 I know! How can one devise a national environmental policy that considers the needs and issues of all 50 states? Just take the different political attitudes that California and Alaska have on alternative energy.

SS1 It’s true. California is densely populated and characterized by major conurbations. Its citizens have been trying to proactively address their pollution problem through progressive alternative energy policies with the goal to reduce greenhouse gases in their atmosphere. At the same time, Alaska is largely rural with a tundra climate and has major oil reserves which they are willing to extract to improve their trade surplus. Last summer, my team was in Alaska field sketching drillable oil fields, recording geologic information relative to natural resource supply, and developing virtual maps of industrial development.

**Completely fill in one choice only:**

- Anthropology
- Economics
- Geography
- History
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Sociology
Question 4

SS1 Many people who voted for Barack Obama expected him to initiate much more liberal policies that he actually has. He has retained several Bush-era appointees, and he has continued many Bush-era policies related to the War on Terror relatively unchanged.

SS2 That is true. He has not been nearly as liberal as many people expected. It would be fascinating to see how Americans in 2110 would view his record as compared to George W. Bush. They would read about how similar both presidents were in some ways, but future generations would also see great differences between them. Obama put moderates on the Supreme Court, and he initiated health care reform. Bush did neither of those things.

SS3 Perhaps people will find him closer to JFK. I think there are a number of parallels to consider, such as their comparable oratory styles.

Completely fill in one choice only:

  O Anthropology  O Economics  O Geography  O History
  O Political Science  O Psychology  O Sociology

Question 5

SS1 It's hard to tell whether Obama will be a strong president. He's certainly not a diehard Democrat given his willingness to compromise so much to bring Republicans to the table.

SS2 I am not sure if that should be considered a weakness. As the head of the executive branch, he has to find a way to balance the legislature while moving his ideas forward.

SS1 I have not seen the polls yet, but I think all these compromises will be seen as weakness and lack of conviction.

SS2 We'll have to agree to disagree. I think Obama's strength will be to work around party lines, especially given how far the country has shifted to the right in the last 40 years.

Completely fill in one choice only:

  O Anthropology  O Economics  O Geography  O History
  O Political Science  O Psychology  O Sociology
Question 6

SS1 I am hoping to see Obama’s experience as a community organizer inform his presidential decisions. He should understand better than most how groups of people with something in common can be organized to affect change in public policy.

SS2 I agree. It is important to be able to understand how the different groups have different needs regarding policy, and Obama can hopefully use this understanding to work for policies that appropriately balance the needs of different groups.

Completely fill in one choice only:

- Anthropology
- Economics
- Geography
- History
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Sociology

Question 7

SS1 When do you anticipate the Obama administration taking on the challenge of immigration reform? It’s about time that our archaic immigration laws conform to a modern idea of cultural relativism. They desperately need to be aligned with the level of globalization we are experiencing.

SS2 I agree. If more funding were provided to expand our efforts in ethnographic research, then the US would be better prepared to implement evidence-based policies, even in the area of linguistics. This is especially important now because of our fast changing culture and demographics. After all, just look at our current President!

SS1 I can’t believe it took so long to have a president of African-American descent.

Completely fill in one choice only:

- Anthropology
- Economics
- Geography
- History
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Sociology
Question 8

SS1 I think it’s terrific that President Obama has his extended family living in the White House. I imagine his mother-in-law provides great support to the First Lady as well as to the Obama children. It would be nice to think that the President's commitment to family values might inspire all Americans to place greater emphasis on their own parenting and family dynamics.

SS2 Sure, but how do you think his policies will reflect his family values?

SS1 Well, with the creation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, he’s placed a greater focus on the living standards of middle-class working families across America.

SS2 I suppose you are correct. If the bill expands educational opportunities and provides more affordable health care, it can only be a boon to families everywhere.

Completely fill in one choice only:

- O Anthropology
- O Economics
- O Geography
- O History
- O Political Science
- O Psychology
- O Sociology

Question 9

SS1 Last year, people were saying that Barack Obama’s election was going to bring real change to the country, but his goals have been met with bitter resistance. How do you think future generations will view this administration’s effectiveness?

SS2 I don’t have a crystal ball, but many presidents who confronted great difficulties have been viewed more favorably in later years. For example, Abraham Lincoln faced a huge amount of political opposition even from members of his own cabinet. Many people doubted whether he would be elected to a second term in 1864. The popular perception of him now, however, is that he was one of America’s most important presidents.

Completely fill in one choice only:

- O Anthropology
- O Economics
- O Geography
- O History
- O Political Science
- O Psychology
- O Sociology
Part II: Demographic and Affective Responses

Please fill in marks like this: ● not like this: ○ ○

Question 10
Please indicate the total number of college level credit hours earned at Harold Washington College with a grade of C or better.

○ 0 ○ 1-15 ○ 16-30 ○ 31+

Question 11
Please indicate the total number of college level credit hours earned at OTHER colleges with a grade of C or better.

○ 0 ○ 1-15 ○ 16-30 ○ 31+

Question 12
Not including this semester, how many social science courses have you successfully completed at Harold Washington College?

○ 0 ○ 1-2 ○ 3+

Question 13
Not including this semester, how many social science courses have you successfully completed at OTHER colleges?

○ 0 ○ 1-2 ○ 3+

Question 14
In which of the social sciences have you taken a college class (at HWC or elsewhere). Select all that apply

○ Anthropology ○ Economics ○ Geography ○ History

○ Political Science ○ Psychology ○ Sociology

○ Social Science 101 or 102 (or an equivalent course taken elsewhere)

Question 15
Please indicate your gender:

○ Female ○ Male
**Question 16**
Please indicate your race and/or ethnicity:

- O Black/African American
- O Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- O White
- O Asian
- O American Indian/Alaska Native
- O Hispanic/Latino
- O Multi-Racial/Multi-Ethnic

**Question 17**
Please indicate your age:

- O 20 or under
- O 21-25
- O 26-40
- O 41-60
- O 61 or over

**Question 18**
Please indicate your current academic status:

- O Full time
- O Part time
The following questions ask you about your interests, values, and opinions related to Social Science. Please mark ONE answer for each question by filling the bubble completely.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please indicate your comfort level with:</th>
<th>Highly Comfortable</th>
<th>Comfortable</th>
<th>Uncomfortable</th>
<th>Highly Uncomfortable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. The Natural Sciences.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Math.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Writing.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Reading.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Arts and Humanities.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Economics.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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<td>26. Geography.</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. History.</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. Political science.</td>
<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td>29. Psychology.</td>
<td>O</td>
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<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td>30. Sociology.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question 31</td>
<td>Social Science helps me understand the world around me.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 32</td>
<td>There are often many ways to look at a social phenomenon.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 33</td>
<td>For me, social science involves exploration, investigation, or experimentation.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 34</td>
<td>I need a good understanding of the Social Sciences to achieve my career goals.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 35</td>
<td>Social Science has been an important tool to help me learn other subjects.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 36</td>
<td>The social sciences allow me to be creative and discover things for myself.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 37</td>
<td>Thinking like a social scientist helps me make intelligent decisions about my life.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 38</td>
<td>Social Science is useful not only to people who do specialized work but also to everyday life.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 39</td>
<td>There may be more than one correct interpretation of a real life phenomenon.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 40</td>
<td>Learning the social sciences involves more than simply memorizing (e.g. dates, facts, theories, formulas, etc.).</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 41</td>
<td>Social Science raises interesting new questions</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part III – Looking through the Lens of a Social Scientist

Social Scientists play a critical investigative role in understanding the relationship between social phenomena (e.g. current events) and society’s quality of life. A key research task of the social scientist is to ask critical questions that will more clearly define, describe and explain the phenomena. Their questioning initiates scientific research that results in theories and practices that ultimately contribute toward social control and stability.

Instructions:

Your task in Part III is to examine through the lens of the Social Scientist the social phenomena of the discovery of a cure for cancer. Before reading the fictional scenario below, review in your mind, the focus and emphasis of each of the 7 social science disciplines. As you read the scenario, consider the discovery’s social implications and determine how social scientists might differently research the situation based on their specific discipline. Note: you may find it helpful to underline phrases or make notes as you read through the scenario.

After reading the scenario you are asked to:

(A.) Choose a specific type of social scientist to reference,

(B.) List the concepts or characteristics revealed in the scenario that would be of most interest to the social scientist you've chosen,

(C.) Explain how an investigation of those concepts/characteristics might contribute to establishing social ability and control, and

(D.) Explain how an investigation of those concepts/characteristics might affect your personal quality of life.

Note: Your explanation in parts C and D should consist of 4-6 sentences each. Be specific and thorough in order to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the discipline.

Evaluation: The following rubric will be used to evaluate the accuracy and strength of your response in parts B, C and D. The ratings are as follows:

- **Strong** (lists *MULTIPLE* use of accurate and detailed concepts or characteristics of the discipline with *excellent clarity*; and accounts with *100% accuracy* their relevancy toward maintaining social control/stability AND a quality of life)
- **Fair/Moderate** (lists *MULTIPLE* use of accurate and detailed concepts or characteristics of the discipline with *moderate clarity*; and accounts with *limited accuracy* their relevancy toward maintaining social control/stability AND a quality of life)
- **Weak** (Identifies *ONLY ONE* accurate concept or characteristic of the discipline; and accounts with *questionable clarity* its relevancy toward maintaining social control/stability AND a quality of life)
- **Incorrect application** (application of concepts and/or characteristics is inaccurate)
- **Unclear response** – cannot be determined
- **Unanswered** – no response
**SCENARIO:**

In the Amazon River Basin, a tribe known as the Unagawa lived in complete isolation from the modern world for over a century. Missionary groups, concerned with the preservation of indigenous societies, eventually became successful in making routine visits to the tribal community in efforts to study their culture to ensure the safety and security of the Unagawa society. Groups of medical personnel and social scientists studied such things as the Unagawa communication and language patterns, their social institutions, diet and nutrition.

During one particular expedition, a team of missionaries stumbled upon a group of rare trees growing amongst the Unagawa’s sacred burial ground. The trees produced an unusual sap. After having the sap collected and analyzed, a team of North American scientists eventually speculated that the chemical makeup of the sap appears to hold a cure for certain kinds of cancer.

Naturally, the news of this discovery spread globally. It created a commodity that every member of the medical and political community wanted control over. For the Unagawa people, however, the discovery brought much unwelcomed attention. Their special sap-filled trees were an integral part of the Unagawa culture, and therefore, regardless of the value of the trees to others, they were disinclined to exploit them as a resource.

Across the globe, politicians made speeches either calling for respect for the indigenous peoples of the world or demanding that they be removed from their land so that the world may benefit from the trees. The sensational rhetoric made the situation very volatile. Mercenaries, aware of the trees’ potential value, staged raids on the land, leading to extensive bloodshed. The Unagawa people have resisted discussion because the raids have created a climate of distrust.

Due to the considerable international tension, the United Nations has established a team of social scientists to make recommendations as to how the situation should be handled. In doing so, the social scientists must ask critical questions that will elicit clear and accurate data.
The Behavioral Social Sciences

Look through the lens of an anthropologist, psychologist OR sociologist.

42. Choose only one discipline from these behavioral sciences:
   Completely fill in one choice only:

   ○ Anthropologist          ○ Psychologist          ○ Sociologist

43. Looking through the lens of the social scientist you chose above, what concepts or characteristics of the Unagawa scenario would he or she most likely investigate?

44. Explain how the results of that investigation might contribute to social stability and control. NOTE: Your explanation should consist of 4-6 sentences. Include key terms and concepts that are frequently associated with the discipline.
45. Explain how the concepts/characteristics might affect your personal quality of life. NOTE: Your explanation should consist of 4-6 sentences. Include key terms and concepts that are frequently associated with the discipline.
The Non-Behavioral Social Sciences

Look through the lens of an economist, geographer, historian OR political scientist.

46. Choose only one discipline from these non-behavioral sciences:
Completely fill in one choice only:

○ Economist  ○ Geographer  ○ Historian  ○ Political Scientist

47. What characteristics or aspects of the Unagawa scenario described above might he or she most likely investigate? (list them here)

48. Explain how the results of that investigation might contribute to social stability and control. NOTE: Your explanation should consist of 4-6 sentences. Include key terms and concepts that are frequently associated with the discipline.
49. Explain how the concepts/characteristics might affect your personal quality of life. 
NOTE: Your explanation should consist of 4-6 sentences. Include key terms and concepts that are frequently associated with the discipline.

This concludes the Social Science Assessment. Thank you from the Harold Washington College Assessment Committee.