

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Department of Humanities.

Level: 1st year, Group 04.

Module of English language.

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Course N°01: What is Human Science?

Introduction

Human science (or human sciences in the plural), also known as humanistic social science and moral science (or moral sciences), studies the philosophical, biological, social, and cultural aspects of human life. Human science is the study and interpretation of the experiences, activities, constructs, and artifacts associated with human beings. The study of the human experience is historical and current in nature. It requires the evaluation and interpretation of the historic human experience and the analysis of current human activity to gain an understanding of human phenomena and to project the outlines of human evolution. Human science is the objective, informed critique of human existence and how it relates to reality. The ultimate question of science is "What is reality?" The ultimate question in the study of human beings "What is the reality of being human?" To study appropriate human phenomena it is necessary to use multiple systems of inquiry. Empirical, psychological/philosophical, and spiritual methods of inquiry are the research methodologies associated with the human sciences. All in all, it is the study of human phenomena.

Definitions of Human Sciences

"A branch of study which deals with people or their actions, including the social sciences and the humanities, as contrasted with the natural sciences or physical sciences" (Oxford).

The study of the reality of being human--the social, cultural, biological and behavioral aspects of human existence. (Adapted from the 2015 ToK Guide, Page 37).

History of Human Sciences

The phrase 'human science' in English was used during the 17th-century scientific revolution, for example by Theophilus Gale to draw a distinction between supernatural knowledge (divine science) and study by humans (human science). John Locke also uses 'human science' to mean knowledge produced by people, but without the distinction. By the

20th century, this latter meaning was used at the same time as 'sciences that make human beings the topic of research'.

Insights from Human Sciences

Human sciences teaches us about people. For example, it gives us insights into how people react to things, which is often not what might be expected. One example is the bystander effect. Researchers have shown that individuals are less likely to offer help to a victim when other people are around. The more people who witness someone needing help, the less likely people are to help.

It helps us understand how humans are manipulated, what types of weaknesses we have a species. These include logical fallacies. Understanding these better can help us make better decisions.

Human Science also helps us improve society, through improved public policy. A great example of this is the UK's "Nudge Unit." In this government department, the insights of economists, such as Chicago's Richard Thaler, are being used to make changes to how the government works. These changes are intended to "nudge" citizens toward choosing actions which are best for themselves and society (Guardian). The techniques are fascinating. For example, simply informing late-taxpayers that that most of their neighbors pay their taxes on time, improves the likelihood that they will pay theirs (Sunstein).

The study of the human sciences attempts to expand and enlighten the human being's knowledge of his or her existence, its interrelationship with other species and systems, and the development of artifacts to perpetuate the human expression and thought.

Fields of Human Sciences

Human science aims to expand our understanding of the human world through a broad interdisciplinary approach. It encompasses a wide range of fields including history, philosophy, sociology, psychology, justice studies, evolutionary biology, biochemistry, neurosciences, folkloristics, anthropology(social and cultural), economics, global politics, and geography.