**Lecture Four: Social and Human Sciences VS. Natural Sciences**

**Objectives:** Students are expected to:

* Differentiate between natural sciences and social/human sciences

Science, which is the knowledge obtained from the continuing process of studying and explaining the world, is divided into two broad categories: ***natural sciences and social/human sciences***. Natural sciences are about observing natural phenomena, symptoms and events i.e., they deal with the physical world. Social/human sciences, however, study human behavior. Science with all its categories aims at making theories that serve to ensure the well-being of humans. Ingthorsson (2013) discusses the utility of both categories:

Natural science, it is said, has given us cures for all kinds of diseases, TV’s, computers, and has brought us (some of us anyway) to the Moon and back again. What have the human sciences ever done for us? Well, in so far as there has been a progress in the structure and content of the law, in educational systems, social structures, organisation of businesses and world market, not to speak about literature and arts, this has been in accordance to developments in the human sciences. (p.6)

***Nature***

***Human behavior/Society***

***VS.***

Though these categories of science may have some common features, there are many differences between them, and the following table summarizes the major ones:

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | ***Natural Sciences*** | ***Social/Human Sciences*** |
| ***Study*** | Natural events and phenomena | Human behavior and society |
| ***Disciplines*** | biology, mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, and medical science. | Psychology, sociology, economics, political science, philosophy, literature, etc. |
| ***Research Method*** | Scientific Methods | Social sciences: Scientific method Human sciences: Analytical approach |
| ***Categories*** | -Biological sciences: the study of living organisms.-Physical sciences: the study of inanimate (non-living) objects. | -Social sciences-Human sciences |
| ***Careers*** | Biologists, physicians, engineers, doctors, etc. | Sociologists, psychologists, historians, linguists, teachers, etc. |

**References**

Ingthorsson, R. D. (2013). The natural vs. the human sciences: myth, methodology and ontology. [Discusiones Filosóficas](https://www.researchgate.net/journal/Discusiones-Filosoficas-2462-9596?_tp=eyJjb250ZXh0Ijp7ImZpcnN0UGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIiwicGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIn19), 14(22), 25-41. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262458712>

McAllister, J. W. (2002). Historical and structural approaches in the natural and human sciences. In P., Tindemans, A., Verrijn-Stuart, and R., Visser (Eds.). *The Future of the sciences and humanities: Four analytical essays and a critical debate on the future of scholastic endeavour (pp. 19-54)*. Amsterdam: AmsterdamUniversity Press