Sociology 555 (Winter 2017)—Comparative Historical Sociology

Instructor: Professor Matthew Lange
Class Time: Tuesdays, 9:35-11:25
Class Location: Leacock 819
Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30-2:00
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Course Overview
Comparative historical sociology is an enormously rich research tradition and includes the works of such renowned sociologists as Theda Skocpol, Max Weber, and Charles Tilly, to name just a few. Scholars following this research tradition generally ask big questions and analyze large structures and long processes. What caused the emergence of effective states in Western Europe? Why did the West industrialize before other regions of the world? What causes social revolutions? In this course, we focus on the methods behind comparative historical analysis, trying to understand the bases on which comparative historical scholars make their claims. In so doing, the course provides students with the tools and understandings to use comparative historical methods for their own research.

The core of the seminar is reading and class discussions. Some of the readings are challenging, and an important part of the discussion will involve clarification. Course grades have three components. First, participation is worth 40 percent of the final grade. The grade for this component is based on attendance, participation in class discussions, and knowledge of the reading materials, all three of which are weighted equally. Second, students will write a 5-8 page paper reviewing the methods of Eidlin's *Labor and the Class Idea in the United States and Canada*. The paper is due at the beginning of class on March 7th and is worth 20 percent of the course grade. The final graded component of the class is a final project, which can be either a research proposal based on comparative historical methods or a research paper using comparative historical methods. The final project is worth 40 percent of the final grade and is due on April 20th. In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

For both written assignments, students must submit physical copies of the papers *unless given special permission by the professor to submit an electronic copy*. Papers that are submitted late will have their grade reduced by 5% per day.

Academic Integrity and Rights
McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/integrity).

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être note.

Readings
All readings are available in electronic format on the course's MyCourse page.

Course Calendar

January 10: COURSE INTRODUCTION

January 17: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY: Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, "Comparative Historical Analysis," 3-25; Adams, Clemens, and Orloff, *Remaking Modernity*, 1-69; Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods*, Chapters 1 and 2

January 24: EXAMPLE: Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, 3-157.

January 31: COMPARATIVE METHODS: Skocpol and Sommers "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry"; Ragin, "Constituting Populations"; Lieberson, "Small N's and Big Conclusions"; Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods*, Chapter 5

February 7: WITHIN-CASE METHODS: Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods*, Chapter 3; Roberts, *The Logic of Historical Explanation*, 16-88, 105-133

February 14: HISTORY AND TEMPORAL PROCESSES: James Mahoney, "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology"; Slater and Simmons, "Informative Regress"; Paul Pierson, "Big, Slow-Moving, and . . . Invisible"; Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods*, Chapter 4

February 21: STATISTICS AND MIXED-METHODS DESIGNS: Lieberman, "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research"; Mahoney and Goertz, "A Tale of Two Cultures"; Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods*, Chapter 6

February 28: No class

March 7: METHODOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT: Eidlin, *Labor and the Class Idea in the United States and Canada*.
		Methodological assessment paper due in class

March 14: CASE SELECTION: King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* 3-7, 115-149; Collier, Mahoney, and Seawright, "Claiming Too Much: Warnings about Selection Bias"; Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods*, second section of Chapter 7

March 21: HISTORICAL DATA AND INTERPRETATION: Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods*, first section of Chapter 7; Milligan, "The Treatments of an Historical Source"; Howell and Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources*, 1-3, 17-20, 69-87; Goldthorpe, "The Uses of History in Sociology: Reflections on Some Recent Tendencies"

March 28: FUZZY-SET METHODS: Ragin, *Fuzzy-Set Social Science*, 120-145, 149-180, 203-260

April 4: NETWORK ANALYSIS AND NATURAL EXPERIMENTS: Gould, "Uses of Network Tools in Comparative Historical Research"; Erikson and Bearman, "Malfeasance and the Foundations for Global Trade"; Gerring and McDermott, "Internal Validity: An Experimental Template"; Darden, "Lessons from a Natural Experiment"

April 11: Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods*, Chapter 8

RESEARCH PROPOSALS DUE ON APRIL 20th BY 3PM