

MCGILL UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
SOCI 555: Comparative-Historical Sociology
Winter 2018

Instructor: Dr. Efe Peker
Class time: Wednesdays, 9:35-11:25am
Class Location: LEA 819
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1. Course Overview:

Comparative-historical approaches and research methods have been deeply embedded in the sociological imagination since the foundation of the latter as a discipline. It was none other than Émile Durkheim who put forward that sociology and history are “not two separate disciplines, but two different points of view which mutually presuppose each other”. Eclipsed by the behavioural and functionalist schools in the mid-twentieth century, comparative-historical analysis made a comeback in the 1970s to establish itself as a respected branch of sociology, focusing on society-wide transformations happening over long periods. Comparative-historical sociology (CHS) is concerned with how and why various macro-social institutions and phenomena (such as states, markets, revolutions, welfare systems, collective violence, religion, nationalism) emerged and/or evolved in multifaceted ways in different parts of the globe. In showing us the winding and contentious trajectories of the past, it helps us make better sense of the world we live in today.

The purpose of this seminar is to familiarize the students with the core theories, methods, issues, and approaches employed in CHS. Organised in seminar form, the course is divided into two parts. Part A lays out the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of sociohistorical inquiry. After an introductory background on the intersecting paths of sociology and history, this part elaborates on the epistemological and ontological assumptions of CHS, various comparative research tools and agendas, data collection and interpretation techniques, as well as notions of temporality and causality in sociohistorical investigation. Part B, in turn, presents a selection of historical sociological works to exemplify the conceptual discussions in the first part. These include major studies on revolutions, social movements, the origins of capitalism and the modern state, and on sociopolitical secularization across various geographies. The seminar holds that comparative-historical approaches and methods enhance the resourcefulness of the sociological practice, as envisaged at the very outset of its journey.

2. Objectives/Learning Outcomes:

The seminar seeks to help students develop a comparative-historical sociological perspective as well as equip them with hands-on research methods and practices. After participating in this seminar, students should be able to, a) embed history in their sociological research (through concepts such as sequence, temporality, critical junctures, path dependencies, etc.); b) distinguish between various methods of sociohistorical comparison (large-N, small-N, process-oriented, etc.); c) adopt the practice of historical data collection and interpretation; and d) recognise and critically engage with the methods used in other historical sociological works.

3. Evaluation:

Attendance and Participation: 15%; Weekly Annotations: 10% (10x1%); Class Presentation: 10%; Research Outlines: 15% (3%+12%); Research Assignment: 40%; Research Presentation: 10%.

4. Requirements:

Attendance and Participation (15%)

As this course is organised as a seminar based on class discussions and presentations, attendance is mandatory. Debates and participation will be encouraged, and they will constitute an important part of your grade. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings.

Weekly Annotations (10x1%=10%)

You are expected to submit weekly annotations that summarise and discuss one or two points/concepts put forward by at least one of the authors assigned for that week. The annotations should not exceed 2 pages (Times New Roman 12, double-spaced). In total, 10 annotations (1% each, starting from Week 2) will be submitted. You do not need to provide an annotation on the week you do a class presentation. Please submit your annotation in hard copy in the beginning of class each week. Late and electronic submissions will not be accepted.

Class Presentation (10%)

Starting from Part B of the seminar (Week 7), each student will give a 15-minute in-class presentation on at least one of the readings assigned for that week. You are expected to carefully read, briefly summarise, and analyse the reading material with the use of examples. You should also prepare three discussion questions for the class and be ready to facilitate the rest of the conversation on the topic.

Research Outline 1 (3%; due Week 4, January 31) and 2 (12%; due Week 10, March 14)

To help you start thinking about and planning for your research assignment early on, two brief outlines are to be submitted on Weeks 4 and 10 (Times New Roman 12, double-spaced). In the preliminary outline, you are to submit a 1-page document declaring and justifying a choice of research topic. The second outline is a 7-page document elaborating on your research puzzle, existing literature, your research questions, and proposed methodology. Further guidelines and templates will be provided in class. Submissions will be in hard copy, in the beginning of class.

Research Assignment (40%; due April 16, 12pm)

Based on a comparative-historical approach, your assignment can be structured in one of the three ways: 1) a research paper involving at least one case study, 2) a theoretical/methodological research paper on CHS, 3) a research proposal working towards your graduate-level dissertation. The assignment should demonstrate comprehension and utilisation of theories, methodologies, and approaches developed in comparative-historical sociology. It should be between 20-25 pages, (Times New Roman 12, double-spaced, excluding bibliography). Further guidelines will be specified in class. Online submission. Papers that are submitted late will have their grade reduced by 5% per day.

Research Presentation (10%; on Week 14, April 11)

During the final class, five days before the final submission of your research assignment, you will have 10 minutes each to present a summary of your work (including research questions, the available literature, methodologies, and findings) and receive feedback from the instructor and fellow students. Presentations will use PowerPoint (template will be offered) and are aimed at helping students prepare for academic conferences.

5. Schedule of Topics and Readings (all available on *MyCourses*)

PART A: IMAGINING SOCIOLOGY HISTORICALLY

Week 1 (Jan 10) Introduction

Week 2 (Jan 17) When Sociology Meets History (≈89 pages)

Lachmann, Richard (2013) “The Sense of a Beginning”, in *What is Historical Sociology?*, pp. 1-15.

Skocpol, Theda (1984) “Sociology’s Historical Imagination,” in *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology*, pp. 1-21.

Lange, Matthew (2013) “An Intellectual History and Overview of Comparative-Historical Analysis”, in *Comparative-Historical Methods*, pp. 22-39.

Mahoney, James and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (2003) “Comparative Historical Analysis: Achievements and Agendas”, in *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, pp. 3-38.

Further Reading (optional)

Adams, Julia et al (2005) “Introduction: Social Theory, Modernity, and the Three Waves of Historical Sociology”, in *Remaking Modernity: Politics, History, and Sociology*, pp. 1-72.

Week 3 (Jan 24) Foundations: Critical Realism and Historical Sociology (≈63 pages)

Porpora, Douglas V. (2015) *Reconstructing Sociology: The Critical Realist Approach*, pp. 1-30.

Archer, Margaret et al (2016) “What is Critical Realism?”, *Perspectives* 38(2): pp. 4-9

Gorski, Philip (2013) “What is Critical Realism? And Why Should You Care?”, *Contemporary Sociology* 42(5): pp. 658-670.

Steinmetz, George (1998) “Critical Realism and Historical Sociology: A Review Article”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40(1): pp. 170-186.

Further Reading (optional)

Sayer, Andrew (2000) “Introducing Critical Realism”, in *Realism and Social Science*, pp. 1-29.

Week 4 (Jan 31) Comparative-Historical Methods (≈102 pages)

Lange, Matthew (2013) “Comparative-Historical Methods: An Introduction”, “The Within-Case Methods of Comparative-Historical Analysis”, “The Comparative Methods of Comparative-Historical Analysis”, “Combining Comparative and Within-Case Methods for Comparative-Historical Analysis” in *Comparative-Historical Methods*, pp. 1-21, 40-69, 86-116, 117-140.

Further Reading (optional)

Tilly, Charles (1984) “Comparing”, in *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, pp. 60-96.

Week 5 (Feb 7) Case Selection and Data Collection (≈114 pages)

Lange, Matthew (2013) “Data, Case Selection, and Theory in Comparative-Historical

Analysis”, in *Comparative-Historical Methods*, pp. 141-174.

Presnell, Jenny L. (2007) “Historians and the Research Process”, “Evaluating Your Sources”, “The Thrill of Discovery: Primary Sources”, “History and the Internet”, in *The Information-Literate Historian: A Guide to Research for History Students*, pp. 3-18, 86-91, 92-135.

Howell, Martha C. and Walter Prevenier (2001) “Historical Interpretation: The Traditional Basics”, in *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods*, pp. 69-87.

Further Reading (optional)

Milligan, John D. (1979) “The Treatment of an Historical Source”, *History and Theory* 18(2): pp. 177-196.

Week 6 (Feb 14) Temporality and Causality in Historical Sociology (≈74 pages)

Griffin, Larry J. (1995) “How Is Sociology Informed by History?”, *Social Forces* 73(4): pp. 1245-1254.

Mahoney, James (2000) “Path Dependence in Historical Sociology”, *Theory and Society* 29(4): pp. 507-548.

Aminzade (1992) “Historical Sociology and Time”, *Sociological Methods and Research* 20(4): pp. 456-480.

Further Reading (optional)

Griffin, Larry J. (1992) “Temporality, Events and Explanation in Historical Sociology”, *Sociological Methods and Research* 20(4): pp. 403-427.

PART B: COMPARATIVE-HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGISTS AT WORK

Week 7 (Feb 21) Comparing Revolutions: Why and How They Occur (≈154 pages)

Skocpol, Theda (1979) *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*, pp. 3-157.

Further Reading (optional)

Sewell, William H., Jr. (1985) “Ideologies and Social Revolutions: Reflections on the French Case”, *Journal of Modern History* 57(1): pp. 57-85.

Week 8 (Feb 28) Birth and Development of Social Movements (≈122 pages)

Tilly, Charles (2004) *Social Movements, 1768-2004*, pp. 1-122.

Further Reading (optional)

Ritter, Daniel P. (2014) “Comparative Historical Analysis”, in *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*, pp. 97-116.

***** Week 9 (March 7) STUDY BREAK – NO CLASS**

Week 10 (March 14) Lineages of Secularism and Nationalism in Québec (≈98 pages)

Zubrzycki, Geneviève (2016) “From French Canada to Québec: An Introduction”, “Iconographic Remaking and the Politics of Identity”, “Nationalism, Secularism, and Cultural Heritage”, in

Beheading the Saint: Nationalism, Religion, and Secularism in Québec, pp. 1-35, 115-144, 145-180.

Further Reading (optional)

Zubrzycki, Geneviève (2012) “Negotiating Pluralism in Québec: Identity, Religion, and Secularism in the Debate over ‘Reasonable Accommodation’”, in *Religion on the Edge*, pp. 215-237.

Week 11 (March 21) The Longue Durée of Capitalism (≈98 pages)

Arrighi, Giovanni (1994) “The Three Hegemonies of Historical Capitalism”, in *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times*, pp. 28-75.

Polanyi, Karl (1944) *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of our Times*, pp. 59-70, 71-80, 136-140, 141-157, 257-268.

Further Reading (optional)

Wallerstein, Immanuel (1974) “The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 16(4): 387-415.

Week 12 (March 28) Historical Patterns of Secularization (≈90 pages)

Kuru, Ahmet T. (2009) “Analyzing Secularism: History, Ideology, and Policy”, in *Secularism and State Policies toward Religion the United States, France, and Turkey*, pp. 6-37.

Martin, David (1979) “Notes Towards a General Theory of Secularization”, “A Theory of Secularization: Basic Patterns”, in *A General Theory of Secularization*, pp. 1-27.

Peker, Efe (2018) “Secularization and Sovereign State Building: Making of *Laïcité* in the French Third Republic (1875-1905)”, *Working Paper*, pp. 1-32.

Further Reading (optional)

Madeley, John (2003) “A Framework for the Comparative Analysis of Church-State Relations in Europe”, *West European Politics* 26(1): pp. 23-50

Week 13 (April 4) Origins of the Nation-State: Coercion, Capital, or Religion? (≈94 pages)

Tilly, Charles (1990) “Cities and States in World History”, in *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1990*, pp. 1-37.

Flint, Colin and Peter Taylor (2011) “A World-Systems Approach to Political Geography”, in *Political Geography: World-Economy, Nation-State and Locality*, pp. 12-27.

Gorski, Philip (1993) “The Protestant Ethic Revisited: Disciplinary Revolution and State Formation in Holland and Prussia”, *American Journal of Sociology* 99(2): pp. 265-307.

Further Reading (optional)

Hall, John A. (1985) “The Rise of Christian Europe”, in *Powers and Liberties: The Causes and Consequences of the Rise of the West*, pp. 111-144.

Week 14 (April 11) Research Presentations

6. 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 www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ 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/students/srr/honest/).

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 noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).