

Department of Political Science
McGill University
Winter 2023

Political Science 626
Historical Analysis in Political Science

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Office Hours: Monday 2:30-3:30pm; Wednesday 1:00-2:00pm

Course Description:

The purpose of this graduate seminar is to examine how social scientists – primarily political scientists and sociologists – engage with historical research. The emphasis of this course is in deepening one’s understanding of the distinctive character of social science research that is rooted in history. The course will interweave two broad themes: (1) methodological and ontological issues in historical social science, including the nature and logic of historical explanations, the comparative-historical method, path dependence and critical junctures, and rational choice explanations; and (2) substantive macro theoretical questions that are central to the genre of historical social science, including modernization, revolutions, war and state formation, colonialism, democratization and party development, and historical analogies in foreign policy-making. In interweaving these two themes, we are interested in analyzing the relationship among methodology, ontology, and theory. We will examine both the logic of how historical arguments in social science are constructed, as well as the theoretical arguments themselves.

This course will be useful for graduate students interested in broad processes of macro political change, as well as in larger questions of social theory and how they interact with methodology and ontology. The readings in the course include many core texts in the field of comparative politics, and will therefore be helpful for PhD students preparing for the comparative politics comprehensive exam. Although this course is largely focused on works in political science and sociology, students from other disciplines who are also interested in historical social science, should benefit from this course. It should be noted that the course does not emphasize how to do historical research, but rather how to analyze historical social science.

Note: This is not a course on methodology per se, although it addresses comparative-historical methodology very directly in at least four weeks, and discussion of texts will often include methodological or ontological questions. Students taking this course to

fulfill the Advanced Methods Minor in political science must write a research paper that is focused directly on a question in comparative-historical methodology.

Course Requirements:

1. This is a reading-intensive seminar. Students are expected to come to class having done the readings beforehand. The readings per week are substantial, as befits a graduate seminar. Students should approach the readings with the following questions in mind: (a) what is the main argument? (b) what is the evidence for the argument? (c) how convincing is the argument?
2. Discussion is crucial to the success of the seminar. I expect *all students* to come to the seminar ready to discuss the works in depth. You will get the most out of this seminar by actively participating and interrogating the readings.
3. **Two** short, analytical papers of 4-5pp. in length.
 - The purpose of these analytical papers is to ensure that students actively engage the readings and seminar discussions. They should be avenues for students to test out their own ideas and to sharpen their analytical skills.
 - These papers should provide a critical analysis of the week's readings. When doing the readings for the week, you should think of contrasts and similarities between the readings, issues you find problematic, or questions you think can be deepened further. Your paper should then develop one main thesis based on your analysis of the readings. It should in effect be a response to an issue that you find interesting, provocative, or compelling. It is not necessary to analyze all the readings in the paper. What is more important is that you focus on one overarching central argument that builds on and critiques several readings. Remember: a strong paper advances *one* thesis statement in a systematic, logical, and analytical manner; a weak paper provides a list of scattered thoughts and lacks a central argument.
 - You are allowed to choose the week for which you will write your paper. However, the papers must be written within the timetable listed below. This is to ensure that you do not procrastinate and write your papers at the end of the course and also to ensure that you cover different parts of the course.
Paper 1: Week 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8
Paper 2: Week 9, 10, 11, 12, or 13
 - Papers must be emailed to me by Monday at 5pm, the day before the seminar. I will call on students to briefly discuss their papers in class.
4. **One** final paper of approximately 8,000 words (about 30 pages double-spaced, not including the bibliography).
 - The final paper is a research assignment. Students may write about any topic in the field of historical social science. This includes papers focused on ontological or methodological questions, or papers addressing substantive theoretical puzzles. Regardless of the actual topic, the paper must address a question that is rooted in the interaction between historical analysis and political science. This

paper is also an opportunity to sharpen one's writing for potential publication in an academic journal. It is best to meet with me early in the semester to discuss a specific topic for the paper. A two-paragraph abstract with a preliminary reference list should be handed in on Monday, March 13 by email. The final paper is due on Friday, April 28 by email.

Grade Distribution:

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|------------------------|-----|
| 1. Class participation | 20% |
| 2. Two short papers | 40% |
| 3. Final paper | 40% |

Statement on Academic Integrity:

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/integrity for more information).

Resources:

The following journals are especially relevant for research in historical social science: *World Politics, Comparative Politics, Politics and Society, Comparative Studies in Society and History, Theory and Society, Historical Sociology, Social Science History, Political Power and Social Theory, American Journal of Sociology, and Studies in American Political Development.*

Contact during the Semester:

Feel free to email me for any minor or logistical questions. But if you need a lengthier discussion, I prefer that you talk to me in person during office hours rather than through email.

Books to Purchase:

The following 10 books have been ordered at Paragraphe Bookstore on 2220 McGill College Avenue. All journal articles and book chapters that are not in the assigned 10 books will be available through MyCourses.

E.H. Carr, *What Is History?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

Diana S. Kim, *Empires of Vice: The Rise of Opium Prohibition across Southeast Asia* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2020).

Atul Kohli, *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen, eds., *Advances in Comparative-Historical Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968).

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Routledge, 2001).

Daniel Ziblatt, *Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 (1/10): What is the relationship between history and political science?

[Read before first day of class]

Kathleen Thelen and James Mahoney, "Comparative-Historical Analysis in Contemporary Political Science," in Mahoney and Thelen, eds., *Advances in Comparative-Historical Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 3-36.

Charles Tilly and Robert Goodin, "It Depends," in Robert E. Goodin and Charles Tilly, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 3-32.

Alasdair MacIntyre, "Is a Science of Comparative Politics Possible?" In Peter Laslett, W.C. Runciman, and Quentin Skinner, eds., *Philosophy, Politics and Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1972), 8-26.

Recommended:

James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, "Comparative Historical Analysis: Achievements and Agendas," in Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative-Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3-38. [compare this introduction with that of Thelen and Mahoney 2015]

David Collier, "Comparative-Historical Analysis: Where Do We Stand?" *Newsletter of the American Political Science Association Organized Section in Comparative Politics* 9, 2 (1998).

Kathleen Thelen, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999): 369-404.

Sven Steinmo, "Historical Institutionalism," in Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating, eds. *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 118-138.

Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22, 2 (1980): 174-197.

Charles Tilly, "Why and How History Matters," in Goodin and Tilly, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 417-437.

Orestes Fioretos, Tullia G. Falletti, and Adam Sheingate, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Historical Institutionalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

WEEK 2 (1/17): Modernization, Revolution, and Political Change: Classics in Comparative-Historical Research

Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in*

the Making of the Modern World (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968). Preface, Chapters 1, 7, 8, 9, Epilogue, and at least one other case chapter of your choice.
Theda Skocpol, "State and Revolution: Old Regimes and Revolutionary Crises in France, Russia, and China," *Theory and Society* 7, 1-2 (1979): 7-95.

WEEK 3 (1/24): Weber, Religion, and Modernity

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Routledge, 2001). Read all.

WEEK 4 (1/31): The Comparative-Historical Method

Stanley Lieberson, "Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases," *Social Forces* 70, 2 (1991): 307-320.

Ian S. Lustick, "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias," *American Political Science Review* 90, 3 (1996): 605-618.

Dietrich Rueschemeyer, "Can One or a Few Cases Yield Theoretical Gains?" in Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 305-336.

James Mahoney, "Strategies of Causal Assessment in Comparative Historical Analysis," in Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 337-372.

Tulia G. Falletti and James Mahoney, "The Comparative Sequential Method," in Mahoney and Thelen, eds., *Advances in Comparative-Historical Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 211-239.

Evan S. Lieberman, "Nested Analysis: Toward the Integration of Comparative-Historical Analysis with Other Social Science Methods," in Mahoney and Thelen, eds., *Advances in Comparative-Historical Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 240-263.

Recommended:

Matthew Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods* (London: Sage, 2013).

Charles Tilly, "Means and Ends of Comparison in Macrosociology," *Comparative Social Research* 16 (1997): 43-53.

John H. Goldthorpe, "The Uses of History in Sociology: Reflections on Some Recent Tendencies," *British Journal of Sociology* 42, 2 (1991): 211-230.

WEEK 5 (2/7): Path Dependence, Critical Junctures, and Sequencing

David Collier and Ruth Berins Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). Chapter 2.

Giovanni Capoccia and R. Daniel Kelemen, "The Study of Critical Junctures," *World Politics* 59 (April 2007): 341-369.

Dan Slater and Erica Simmons, "Informative Regress: Critical Antecedents in Comparative Politics," *Comparative Political Studies* 43, 7 (2010): 886-917.

Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). Chapters to be assigned.

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

Kathleen Thelen, "How Institutions Evolve," in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 208-240.

James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen, "A Theory of Gradual Institutional Change," in Mahoney and Thelen, eds., *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Chapter 1.

Recommended:

Giovanni Capoccia, "Critical Junctures and Institutional Change," in Mahoney and Thelen, eds., *Advances in Comparative-Historical Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 147-179.

Ira Katznelson, "Periodization and Preferences: Reflections on Purposive Action in Comparative Historical Social Science," in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 270-301.

WEEK 6 (2/14): Philosophy of History, Ontology, and Historiography

Carl G. Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History," in Michael Martin and Lee C. McIntyre, eds., *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1994), 43-53.

F.A. Hayek, "The Theory of Complex Phenomena," in Michael Martin and Lee C. McIntyre, eds., *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1994), 55-70.

W.B. Gallie, "Explanations in History and the Genetic Sciences," *Mind* 64, 254: 160-180.

Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 2005). Chapter 10: "Process-Tracing and Historical Explanation."

Arthur Stinchcombe, *Constructing Social Theories* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp.101-129: "Historicist Causal Imagery."

Peter A. Hall, "Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Politics," in James

Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 373-404.
E.H. Carr, *What Is History?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). Chapters 1-4.

Recommended:

Clayton Roberts, *The Logic of Historical Explanation* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995).

John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). Chapter 3.

WEEK 7 (2/21): Durkheim, Religion, and Social Cohesion

Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Read all.

WEEK 8 (3/7): States and War

Charles Tilly, *Capital, Coercion, and European States, AD 900-1990* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990). Chapters to be assigned.

Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1-34.

Miguel Centeno, "Blood and Debt: War and Taxation in Nineteenth Century Latin America," *American Journal of Sociology* 102, 6 (1997): 1565-1605.

Jeffrey Herbst, "War and the State in Africa," *International Security* 14, 4 (1990): 117-139.

WEEK 9 (3/14): Colonialism and State Formation

Atul Kohli, *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Read Introduction, Conclusion, and at least one country study.

James Mahoney, "Long-Run Development and the Legacy of Colonialism in Spanish America," *American Journal of Sociology* 109, 1 (2003): 50-106.

Diana Kim, *Empires of Vice: The Rise of Opium Prohibition across Southeast Asia* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2020). Chapters to be assigned.

Recommended:

Matthew Lange, "Developmental Crises: A Comparative-Historical Analysis of State Building in Colonial Botswana and Malaysia," *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 47 (2009): 1-27.

James Mahoney, *Colonialism and Post-Colonial Development: Spanish America in*

Comparative Perspective (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

WEEK 10 (3/21): Democratization and Political Parties

Gregory Luebbert, "Social Foundations of Political Order in Interwar Europe," *World Politics* 39, 4 (1997): 449-478.

Giovanni Capoccia and Daniel Ziblatt, "The Historical Turn in Democratization Studies: A New Research Agenda for Europe and Beyond," *Comparative Political Studies* 43 (2010): 931-968.

Special issue of Capoccia and Ziblatt, eds., in *Comparative Political Studies* 43 (2010).

Read articles by:

--Stephen E. Hanson, "The Founding of the French Third Republic," 1023-1058.

--Amel Ahmed, "Reading History Forward: The Origins of Electoral Systems in European Democracies," 1059-1088.

--Nancy Bermeo, "Interests, Inequality, and Illusion in the Choice for Fair Elections," 1119-1147.

--Kurt Weyland, "The Diffusion of Regime Contention in European Democratization, 1830-1940," 1148-1176.

WEEK 11 (3/28): Democratization and Political Parties, continued

Daniel Ziblatt, *Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). Chapters to be assigned.

Maya Tudor, *The Promise of Power: The Origins of Democracy in India and Autocracy in Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). Chapters to be assigned.

WEEK 12 (4/4): Rational Choice and Historical Analysis

Douglass C. North, "Institutions," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 5, 1 (Winter 1991): 97-112.

Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984). Chapter 4: "The Live-and-Let-Live System in Trench Warfare in World War I."

Hudson Meadwell, "A Rational Choice Approach to Political Regionalism," *Comparative Politics* 23, 4 (July 1991): 401-421.

Ira Katznelson and Barry Weingast, eds., *Preferences and Situations: Points of Intersection between Historical and Rational Choice Institutionalism* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2005). Chapters to be assigned.

Recommended:

- Margaret Levi, "A Model, a Method, and a Map: Rational Choice in Comparative and Historical Analysis" in Mark Lichbach and Alan Zuckerman, eds., *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- Debra Friedman and Michael Hechter, "The Contribution of Rational Choice Theory to Macrosociological Research," *Sociological Theory* 6 (1998): 201-218.
- Edgar Kiser and Michael Hechter, "The Role of General Theory in Comparative-Historical Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology* 97, 1 (1991): 1-30.
- Avner Grief, "Historical and Comparative Institutional Analysis," *American Economic Review* 88, 2 (1998): 80-84.
- Avner Grief and David Laitin, "A Theory of Endogenous Institutional Change," *American Political Science Review* 98, 4 (2004): 633-652.
- Robert H. Bates, Avner Grief, Margaret Levi, Jean-Laurent Rosenthal, and Barry R. Weingast, *Analytic Narratives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). "Introduction" and Barry R. Weingast, "Political Stability and Civil War: Institutions, Commitment, and American Democracy."

WEEK 13 (4/11): Analogies in History

- Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). Read all.
- Markus Kornprobst, "Comparing Apples and Oranges? Leading and Misleading Uses of Historical Analogies," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 36, 1 (2007): 29-49.
- Clayton Roberts, *The Logic of Historical Explanation* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Press, 1995). Chapter 12: "Causal Explanation and the Uses of History."
- E.H. Carr, *What Is History?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). Chapter 5: "History as Progress."
- Barry Eichengreen, "Economic History and Economic Policy," *The Journal of Economic History* 72, 2 (2012): 289-307.
- Virginia Berridge, "History Matters? History's Role in Health Policy Making," *Medical History* 52 (2008): 311-326.

Recommended:

- Ernest R. May, *Lessons of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).
- Richard Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers* (New York: Freedom Press, 1986).
- David Patrick Houghton, "The Role of Analogical Reasoning in Novel Foreign-Policy Situations," *British Journal of Political Science* 26, 4 (1996): 523-552.