

Sociology 602 (Winter 2017)—Comparative-Historical Methods

Instructor: Professor Matthew Lange
Class Time: Mondays, 9:35-11:25
Class Location: Leacock 917
Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:00-12:00
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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? How did colonialism affect postcolonial development? In this graduate-level 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 Lange's *Lineages of Despotism and Development*. The paper is due at the beginning of class on November 4th 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, a research paper using comparative historical methods, or a methodological paper discussing some aspect of comparative-historical methods. The final project is worth 40 percent of the final grade and is due on December 16th. 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 noté.

Readings

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

Course Calendar

September 9: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE-HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY: (1) Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, "Comparative-Historical Analysis"; (2) Adams, Clemens, and Orloff, *Remaking Modernity*, 1-69; (3) Mahoney, "On the Second Wave of Historical Sociology"; (4) Lange, *CHM*, Chapters 1 and 2

September 16: EXAMPLE: (1) Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, 3-157.

September 23: COMPARATIVE METHODS: (1) Skocpol and Sommers "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry"; (2) Slater and Ziblatt, "The Enduring Indispensability of Controlled Comparison"; (3) Lieberson, "Small N's and Big Conclusions"; (4) Lange, *CHM*, Chapter 5

September 30: WITHIN-CASE METHODS: (1) Collier, Brady, and Seawright, "Sources of Leverage in Causal Inference," 161-199 (Chapter 9 of *Rethinking Social Inquiry*); (2) Lange, *CHM*, Chapter 3; (3) Roberts, *The Logic of Historical Explanation*, 16-88, 105-133; (4) Bennett, "Process Tracing and Causal Inference," 207-219 (Chapter 10 of *Rethinking Social Inquiry*).

October 7: HISTORY, TEMPORAL PROCESSES, & COUNTERFACTUALS: (1) Mahoney, "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology"; (2) Pierson, "Big, Slow-Moving, and . . . Invisible"; (3) Lange, *CHM*, Chapter 4; (4) Levy, "Counterfactuals and Case Studies"; (5) Schenoni et al., "Was the Malvinas/Falklands a Diversionary Tactic?"

October 14: No Class. Happy Thanksgiving!

October 21: STATISTICS AND MIXED-METHODS DESIGNS: (1) Lieberman, "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research"; (2) Rolfing, "What You See and What You Get," 1492-1514; (3) Mahoney and Goertz, "A Tale of Two Cultures"; (4) Kreuzer, "Historical Knowledge and Quantitative Analysis"; (5) Lange, *CHM*, Chapter 6

October 28: No class

November 4: METHODOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT: (1) Lange, *Lineages of Despotism and Development*.
Methodological assessment paper due in class

November 11: CASE SELECTION: (1) Ragin, "Constituting Populations"; (2) King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* 3-7, 115-149; (3) Collier, Mahoney, and Seawright, "Claiming Too Much: Warnings about Selection Bias"; (4) Seawright and Gerring, "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research, 294-308; (5) Lange, *CHM*, second section of Chapter 7.

November 18: HISTORICAL DATA AND INTERPRETATION: (1) Lange, *CHM*, first section of Chapter 7; (2) Milligan, "The Treatments of an Historical Source"; (3) Howell and Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources*, 1-3, 17-20, 69-87; (4) Goldthorpe, "The Uses of History in Sociology: Reflections on Some Recent Tendencies."

November 25: FUZZY-SET METHODS: (1) Ragin, *Fuzzy-Set Social Science*, 120-145, 149-180, 203-260; (2) Katz et al., "Explaining the Great Reversal in Spanish America."

December 2: NETWORK ANALYSIS & NATURAL EXPERIMENTS: (1) Gould, "Uses of Network Tools in Comparative Historical Research"; (2) Erikson and Bearman, "Malfeasance and the Foundations for Global Trade"; (3) Gerring and McDermott, "Internal Validity: An Experimental Template"; (4) Darden, "Lessons from a Natural Experiment"; (5) Kocher and Monteiro, "Lines of Demarcation."

December 3: CONCLUSIONS: (1) Lange, *CHM*, Chapter 8

FINAL PAPERS DUE ON DECEMBER 16th BY 3PM