

Spring 2019

SOCI 860: Historical and Comparative Sociology

Time: Tuesday 7:20 to 10:00 pm

Venue: Research Hall 202

Instructor: Manjusha Nair

Email: mnair4@gmu.edu

Office hours: Thursday 10-12, B 311, Robinson Hall

Course Description

This is a theory and practice-focused seminar on the historical and comparative methods in sociology. It is useful for graduate students (including those outside of sociology) curious about thinking with the help of explicit comparisons (implicitly we all do) and accept the historical/contextual dimension of things. In sum, what distinguishes historical and comparative sociology as a field are:

- a) A dependence on more than one case,
- b) One or more of the cases are outside of the United States,
- c) Finding the connectedness of the global units of society than their separation, and
- d) Asking of big questions that involve some form of social change connecting the present to the past.

We follow the premise of historical and comparative sociology: the response to the criticism that apples and oranges cannot be compared is simple, they are both fruits.

Historical and comparative sociology encompasses a wide variety of traditions of research relying on archival, oral history, newspaper, and statistical sources of evidence. Along with learning about the theory and history of these practices, we will also examine some of these methods using a “hands-on” approach.

In this course, we will discuss many classics, delineate the methodology employed by the authors, and apply them in a few empirical exercises. At the end of the course, I hope to not only enlighten, but inspire you about the merits of historical and comparative sociology.

Evaluation

Evaluation is based on the sum of your scores in the following:

1. Reaction papers 10%

In each class, you will prepare a one page evaluation of the reading. You need to submit only 10 reaction papers and they will be graded for completion (yes=1; n=0, incomplete=0.5). Refer to the reading guide (uploaded) for writing these papers. You submit them on blackboard on Monday.

2. Class Presentation 15%
Each of you will present a book of your choice (from the reading list) in class. The presentation will be for 15-20 minutes. The grade will depend on the quality of your presentation as well as the write up you submit to me after the presentation.
3. Empirical Exercise 1 10%
Comparison Exercise (download): In this exercise, you come up with an interesting comparative puzzle to explore. This can be the basis for your research design
4. Empirical Exercise 2 15%
Document Analysis Exercise (download): In this exercise, you analyze a document or set of documents from library or archive.
5. Empirical Exercise 3 15%
Oral History Exercise (download): In this exercise you analyze a transcribed oral history interview.
6. Empirical Exercise 4 25%
Research Design (download): You formulate a research design (around 2000 and 3000 words) that calls for a historical and comparative methodology.
7. Participation, Constructive Criticism, Energy, Enthusiasm 10%

Readings

We will mostly read books to understand the themes as well as methodology. These will be supplemented by a methodology reading each week. These are required readings.

The following books have been ordered at the GMU Bookstore. They have been placed on reserve at the Fenwick Library (if they are not available online). All required articles will be uploaded in blackboard.

1. Abu-Lughod, Janet L. 1991. Before European hegemony: the world system AD 1250-1350. Oxford University Press, USA.
2. Bockman, Johanna. 2011. Markets in the name of socialism: The left-wing origins of neoliberalism. Stanford University Press.
3. Clarno, Andy. 2017. Neoliberal Apartheid: Palestine/Israel and South Africa after 1994. University of Chicago Press.
4. Geertz, Clifford. 1973. Interpretation of Cultures. Basic books.
5. Hung, Ho-fung. 2015. The China boom: Why China will not rule the world. Columbia University Press.
6. Milanovic, Branko. 2016. Global inequality. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
7. Moore, Barrington. 1993. Social origins of dictatorship and democracy: Lord and peasant in the making of the modern world. Boston: Beacon.

8. Nair, Manjusha. 2016. Undervalued Dissent: Informal Workers' Politics in India. SUNY Press.
9. Tilly, Charles. 1992. Coercion, capital, and European states, AD 990–1990. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
10. Tilly, Charles. 1984. Big structures, large processes, huge comparisons. Russell Sage Foundation.
11. Young, Crawford. 2012. The postcolonial state in Africa: Fifty years of independence, 1960–2010. University of Wisconsin Press.

Other requirements, policies and services

GMU email: Students should check their GMU email accounts regularly to receive messages related to this class.

Blackboard: You should access the Blackboard site for this course using your GMU username and PatriotPass password. This site has the syllabus and the readings and the updates that I will do occasionally.

Academic Writing: You should be able to write a short paper with a coherent argument, proper grammar and citation. You should use a standard citation format like the ASA (American Sociological Association).

Plagiarism policy: Cheating, plagiarism, or any other kind of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. It will result in a failing grade and a referral to the Dean of Students. The Mason Honor Code defines cheating, plagiarism and lying as threats to academic integrity. The University Policy on Academic Integrity is at <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>

Diversity Policy: Students are expected to abide by the Mason pledge of diversity <https://diversity.gmu.edu/diversity>.

Class room behavior policy: Just as your grade depends on your adhering to certain basic rules of academic integrity, so, too, will it depend on your adhering to certain fundamentals of appropriate classroom behavior, as follows: I encourage the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Thus, behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, discourteous remarks, and other behaviors specified by individual instructors. Courteous and lawful expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, permitted, and encouraged.

Email policy: The instructor will respond to emails in less than 36 hours. Be patient.

Office of Disability Services: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services at the beginning of the semester at 993-2474.

The University Writing Center: If you want help in writing, you can make an appointment with a tutor at the writing center: (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>).

Counseling services: If you need some counselling help, call the Counseling and Psychological Services at 993-2380 or visit the website, <https://caps.gmu.edu/>.

While the syllabus can be understood as an agreement between the instructor and student, I reserve the right to make changes in the syllabus, course requirements and evaluation in the course of the class. Students will be notified of such changes through announcements on the Blackboard.

Course Schedule

January 22

Introduction

Reading:

Adams, Julia, Elisabeth S. Clemens, and Ann Shola Orloff, eds., "Introduction: Social Theory, Modernity, and the Three Waves of Historical Sociology," in Julia Adams, Elisabeth S. Clemens, and Ann Shola Orloff, *Remaking Modernity: Politics and Processes in Historical Sociology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

(Available online as a working paper)

Recommended Reading:

Clemens, Elisabeth S., 2007. Toward a historicized sociology: Theorizing events, processes, and emergence. *Annu. Rev. Sociol.*, 33, pp.527-549.

January 29

Invitation to Historical and Comparative Sociology

Readings:

Tilly, Charles. 1984. *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

McMichael, Philip. 1990. "Incorporating Comparison within a World Historical Perspective: An Alternative Comparative Method." *American Sociological Review* 55: 385-397.

Recommended Readings:

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

Skocpol, Theda and Margaret Somers. 1980. "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosociological Inquiry." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22: 174-97.

February 5

On revolution and state formation OR Comparison of "a few" cases

Readings:

Moore, Barrington. 1993. *Social origins of dictatorship and democracy: Lord and peasant in the making of the modern world*. Boston: Beacon.

Skocpol, Theda. 1984. "Sociology's historical imagination." *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology*, edited by Theda Skocpol. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Recommended readings:

Skocpol, Theda. 1979. Pp. 47-111 in *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sohrabi, Nader. 1995. "Historicizing Revolutions: Constitutional Revolutions in the Ottoman Empire, Iran, and Russia 1905 1908." *American Journal of Sociology* 100 (May): 1383 1447.

Goldstone, Jack A. 1991. *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Class Presentation 1

February 12

On state formation OR Writing historically as a sociologist

Readings:

Tilly, Charles. 1992. *Coercion, capital, and European states, AD 990–1990*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Aminzade, Ronald. 1992. "Historical sociology and time." *Sociological Methods & Research* 20, no. 4: 456-480.

Recommended readings:

Anderson, Perry. 1974. Chapter 2: "Class and State: Problems of Periodization," in *Lineages of the Absolutist State*. London: Verso.

Mann, Michael. 1986. Chapter 13, "The European Dynamic: II. The Rise of Coordinating States, 1155-1477," in *The Sources of Social Power. Volume 1: A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760*.

Gorski, Philip S. 2003. *The disciplinary revolution: Calvinism and the rise of the state in early modern Europe*. University of Chicago Press.

Ertman, Thomas. 1997. *The Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Exercise 1 due

Class Presentation 2

February 19

On global hegemony OR Using a world historical lens

Readings:

Abu-Lughod, Janet L. 1991. *Before European hegemony: the world system AD 1250-1350*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Arrighi, Giovanni. 2000. "Globalization Meets Historical Sociology." Pp. 117-33. in Janet Abu-Lughod (ed.) *Sociology for the Twenty-First Century. Continuities and Cutting Edges*. Chicago: University of Chicago press.

www.soc.jhu.edu/people/Arrighi/gaglobalppr.pdf

Recommended readings:

Pomeranz, Kenneth. 2000. *The Great Divergence: Europe, China, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Arrighi, Giovanni. 2007. *Adam Smith in Beijing: Lineages of the Twenty-First Century*. Verso.

Class Presentation3

February 26

China and global hegemony OR A single case analysis

Readings:

Hung, Ho-fung. *The China boom: Why China will not rule the world*. Columbia University Press, 2015.

Calhoun, Craig. 1998. "Explanation in Historical Sociology: Narrative, General Theory, and Historically Specific Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 104 (3): 846-871.

Recommended readings:

Lee, Ching Kwan. 2018. *The specter of global China: Politics, labor, and foreign investment in Africa*. University of Chicago Press.

Duara, Prasenjit. 2014. *The crisis of global modernity: Asian traditions and a sustainable future*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Class Presentation 4

March 5

Postcolonial state formations Or A critique of methodological nationalism

Readings:

Young, Crawford. The postcolonial state in Africa: Fifty years of independence, 1960–2010. University of Wisconsin Press, 2012.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1991. "A Comment on Epistemology: What is Africa?" Pp. 127-9 in *Unthinking Social Science: The Limits of Nineteenth-Century Paradigms*. New York: Polity Press. OR: Canadian Journal of African Studies, XXII,2, 1988.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1991. "Does India Exist?" Pp. 130-4 in *Unthinking Social Science: The Limits of Nineteenth-Century Paradigms*. New York: Polity Press.

Recommended Readings:

Bratton, Michael and Nicolas Van de Walle. 1997. *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transition in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Centeno, Miguel Angel. 2002. *Blood and Debt: War and the Nation-State in Latin America*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Chibber, Vivek. 2003. *Locked in Place: State-Building and Late Industrialization in India*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Exercise 2 due

Class Presentation 5

March 12 spring break!

March 19

On Markets OR Archival research

A library session led by Professor Bockman from 7:20-9pm at Fenwick followed by class.

Readings:

Bockman, Johanna. 2011. *Markets in the name of socialism: The left-wing origins of neoliberalism*. Stanford University Press.

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

Recommended Readings:

- Wade, Robert. 2004. *Governing the Market: Economic Theory and the Role of Government in East Asian Industrialization*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Stark, David and Laszlo Bruszt. 1998. *Postsocialist Pathways: Transforming Politics and Property in East Central Europe*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Adams, Julia. 1996. "Principals and Agents, Colonialists and Company Men: The Decay of Colonial Control in the Dutch East Indies." *American Sociological Review*, 61(Feb):12-28.

Class Presentation 6

March 26

Interpretation OR An excellent method in qualitative analysis

Readings:

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic books.

Recommended Readings:

- Hadiz, Vedi R. 2006. "The Left and Indonesia's 1960s: The Politics of Remembering and Forgetting." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 7,4: 554-69.
- Hays, Sharon. 1994. "Structure and Agency and the Sticky Problem of Culture," *Sociological Theory* 12:1, pp. 57-72.

Class Presentation 7

April 2

On Dissent OR The ethnographic method/use of oral history

Readings:

- Nair, Manjusha. 2016. *Undervalued Dissent: Informal Workers' Politics in India*. SUNY Press.
- Portelli, Alessandro. 1998. "What Makes Oral History Different." Pp. 63-74 in Robert Perks and Alistair Thompson (eds.) *The Oral History Reader*. London: Routledge.

Recommended Readings:

- Nair, Manjusha. 2011. "Differences in Workers' Narratives of Contention in Two Central Indian Towns." *International Labor and Working-Class History* 79, no. 1: 175-194.
- Gordillo, Luz Maria. 2010. *Mexican Women and the Other Side of Immigration: Engendering Transnational Ties*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Riley, Karen L. 2001. *Schools behind Barbed Wire: The Untold Story of Wartime Internment and the Children of Arrested Enemy Aliens*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Class Presentation 8

April 9

State, Race and Nation OR Curious Comparisons

Readings:

Clarno, Andy. 2017. *Neoliberal Apartheid: Palestine/Israel and South Africa after 1994*. University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Burawoy, Michael. 1989. "Two Methods in Search of Science. Skocpol versus Trotsky." *Theory & Society*, 18:759-805.

Recommended Readings:

arx, Anthony W. 1998. *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of South Africa, the United States, and Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lustick, Ian. 1993. *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands; Britain and Ireland, France and Algeria, Israel and West Bank-Gaza*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Class Presentation 9

April 16.

Measuring global inequality OR The global scale

Readings:

Milanovic, Branko. Global inequality. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016.

Recommended Readings:

Brady, David. 2009. *Rich Democracies, Poor People: How Politics Explains Poverty*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Bornschier, Volker & Christopher K. Chase-Dunn. 1978. "Cross-national Evidence of the Effects of Foreign Investment and Aid on Economic Growth and Inequality: A Survey of Findings and a Reanalysis." *American Journal of Sociology*, 84(3):651-83.

Exercise 3 due

Class Presentation 10

April 23 instructor away! Keep working on the last exercise.

April 30 conclusion

Exercise 4 due on April 30

