



Department of Sociology

Sociology 753: Methods in Comparative Historical Sociology

Credits: 3

Canvas Course URL: <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/390578>

Graduate course. General education.

Instructor: Ivan Ermakoff
Professor
8116a Social Science Building
email: ermakoff@ssc.wisc.edu

Instructional Mode: all face-to-face

Credit hours: This course meets as a group 150 minutes per week (two 75-minute sessions) and carries the expectation that you will spend an average of 3 hours outside of class for each class period. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of 6 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or working on the term paper.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to various methodological resources relevant for historically grounded social scientific research. In addition, this course will examine the main challenges faced by investigations that purport to fulfill the epistemic standards of both history and social sciences.

REQUISITES

1. Class participation (20 points)

The class format is lectures and in-class discussions. All graduate students are expected to attend weekly class meetings and to participate actively in discussion throughout the semester.

Except in the case of students with special needs, no laptop or electronic device will be allowed in class.

2. One classroom presentation (10 points)

During the semester, you will be required to give one classroom presentation on one required reading.

This presentation will be on one of the required readings assigned for the session. You should assume that everyone has carefully read the material. The main purpose of the presentation is *not* to offer a detailed summary of the reading, but to offer a critical evaluation of the reading, and to launch the discussion by evaluating the main issues and arguments under examination. Therefore, the “summary part” of your presentation should be concise and very clear.

Your presentation should not last more than *ten* minutes. Please calibrate your time accordingly.

I will expect you to use these presentations as opportunities to develop and hone your skills as a lecturer. Your presentation should elicit the interest of an informed audience and should motivate students to be active participants in the Q&A session.

I recommend that you announce very clearly the main points you will be elaborating in your introductory remarks.

I will grade the oral presentation as follows: 2 points for the summary: is it precise and accurate? 6 points for your critical assessment of the reading: are the claims that you are making regarding the reading, clear, relevant, well-grounded and documented? 2 points for the organization of the presentation: do you clearly lay out the points that you are going to make? Is the presentation clearly organized and easy to follow?

3. Four short comments (each on one required reading) (20 points)

In addition to your two presentations, you will need to prepare four short comments (no more than 200 words each). Each comment should be devoted to one required reading and should highlight a point that seems to you relevant and important about the reading whether this point relates to a problem, a limitation, a flaw, a contribution, an insight, an innovation or a strength of the reading.

These comments should be on readings different from those that you will present.

You will send me your comment as a Word attachment by email with the subject heading “Comment # - name of the author commented” at the latest by noon on the Sunday preceding the session devoted to the reading.

In addition, you will post your comment on the discussion board of Canvas at the latest by noon on the Sunday preceding the session devoted to the reading.

4. Term paper (50 points)

You will be expected to write a term paper on any topic connected to the themes of the course. This can be a research proposal or a paper addressing a clearly defined substantive problem. The length should be in the 15-page range (double-space).

To help you think about, and write, your term paper without having to rush in the last two weeks of the semester, I will ask you:

first to submit a one-page prospectus. This prospectus will outline the subject matter of your paper, the research question you will address as well as the sources and the references on which you plan to draw;

second, to send to the Class List a first draft of your paper (no longer than 10 double-space pages).

We will have one or two sessions devoted to the discussion of your drafts.

The term paper should be a research paper and to involve original research: I expect you to go beyond the readings studied in class.

It will be on the last day of class).

Breakdown of the grade for the term paper

Clarity of research question and statements	10
Consistency of claims and arguments	10
Paper organization and structure	10
Originality and insightfulness	10
Relevance of the references	10

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Beyond the specific substantive and methodological content I will cover in this course, the requirements I have just listed as well as my lectures have been designed to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities by the Department of sociology:

- Critical Thinking about Social Processes and Social Phenomena: The purpose of this seminar is to learn how to discern and theorize the logics of social processes beyond commonsensical notions and understandings.
- Critically Evaluate Published Research. We will read and evaluate published research as it appears in academic journals and popular or policy publications.
- Communicate Skillfully: the seminar will be based on lectures, class discussions and oral presentations. Class discussions and oral presentations are intended to help you learn how to organize and deliver a critical evaluation in a clear and effective manner. This skill is crucial in many different occupation settings beyond academia.
- Conduct Research and Analyze Data: the term paper should be based on some original research on your part.

GRADING

The final grade will be based on total number of points accumulated during the semester: 100-91 points is an A, 90-86 an AB, 85-81 a B, 80-76 a BC, 75-66 a C, 65-56 a D, below 55 a F.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As with all courses at the University of Wisconsin, you are expected to follow the University's rules and regulations pertaining to academic honesty and integrity.

According to UWS 14, academic misconduct is defined as:

1. seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
2. uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
3. forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
4. intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
5. engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
6. assists other students in any of these acts.

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison's community of scholars in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university.

Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review.

For more information, refer to: <http://www.studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/>

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life.

Providing reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Please inform me of your need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. I will work either directly with you or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations.

Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA." <http://mcburney.wisc.edu/facstaffother/faculty/syllabus.php>

If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for religious observances, send an email by the end of the third week of the course stating the specific date(s) for which you request accommodation; campus policy requires that religious observances be accommodated if you make a timely request early in the term.

See the university's web page for details: <https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698>

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.” <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>

READING MATERIAL

The readings in each section are grouped under two categories: required and recommended. All participants should be prepared at class time to comment and critique the required readings. Additional readings are recommended for delving deeper into a topic and preparing for preliminary examinations.

The books indicated below have been ordered at the **University Book Store**.

These books are also on reserve at the College Library.

Ermakoff, Ivan. 2008. *Ruling Oneself Out. A Theory of Collective Abdications*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Franzosi, Roberto. 2010. *Quantitative Narrative Analysis*. Los Angeles, London & New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Petersen, Roger D. 2001. *Resistance and Rebellion. Lessons from Eastern Europe*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ragin, Charles. 2000. *The Comparative Method: moving beyond qualitative and quantitative strategies*. Berkeley: The University of California Press.

Ragin, Charles. 2008. *Redesigning Social Inquiry: Fuzzy sets and Beyond*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

All the other required readings are available on Canvas.

Department of Sociology

8128 Sewell Social Sciences Building University of Wisconsin-Madison 1180 Observatory Drive Madison, Wisconsin
53706-1393

608/262-2921 Fax: 608/265-5389 www.ssc.wisc.edu/soc

1. Introduction

Ermakoff, Ivan. 2019. "Causality and History: modes of causal investigation in historical social sciences," *The Annual Review of Sociology* 45.

II. Prolegomena

2. Concepts

Mann, Michael. 2005. *The Dark side of Democracy: explaining ethnic cleansing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1: pp. 1-20.

Collier, Ruth Berins and David Collier. 1991. *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: chapter 1: pp. 27-39 ("Framework: Critical Junctures and Historical Legacies").

Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press: pp. 131-148 in chapter 4.

Ermakoff, Ivan. 2017. "Shadow Plays: On Theory's Perennial Challenges," *Sociological Theory*, 35(2): 128-137.

Recommended readings:

Sartori, Giovanni. 1970. "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics," *The American Political Science Review*, 64(4): 1033-053.

Capoccia, Giovanni, and R. Daniel Kelemen. 2007. "The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism," *World Politics*, 59(3): 341-69.

3. Cases

Geddes, Barbara. 2003. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias and Related Issues," pp. 89-129 in *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Mahoney, James and Gary Goertz. 2004. "The Possibility Principle: Choosing Negative Cases in Comparative Research," *The American Political Science Review* 98(4): 653-669.

Ermakoff, Ivan. 2014. "Exceptional Cases: Epistemic contributions and Normative Expectations," *The European Journal of Sociology*, 55(2): 223-243.

Recommended readings:

Gerring, John. 2007. "What is a Case Study? The Problem of Definition," pp. 17-36 in *Case Study Research: Principles and Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Seawright, Jason, and John Gerring. 2008. "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options," *Political Research Quarterly*, 61(2): 294-308.

Svolik, Milan W. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2: pp. 19-50 ("The World of Authoritarian Politics).

4. Evidence

Davenport, Christian. 2010. *Media Bias, Perspective and State Repression: The Black Panther Party*. New York: Cambridge University Press: pp. 25-51 (chapter 1: "Objectivity and Subjectivity in Event Catalogs").

Hung H. 2011. *Protest with Chinese Characteristics: Demonstrations, Riots, and Petitions in the Mid-Qing Dynasty*. New York: Columbia University Press: pp. 47-60 in chapter 2 ("Documenting the Three Waves of Mid-Qing Protest").

Ermakoff, Ivan. 2008. *Ruling Oneself Out. A Theory of Collective Abdications*. Durham: Duke University Press. **Appendix A.**

Goldthorpe, John H. 2007. *On Sociology*, volume 1: Critique and Program. Second Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 30-38 in chapter Two ("The Uses of History in Sociology: Reflections on Some Recent Tendencies").

Møller, Jørgen and Svend-Erik Skaaning. 2021. "The Ulysses principle: a criterial framework for reducing bias when enlisting the work of historians," *Sociological Methods and Research*, 50(1): 103-134.

Recommended readings:

Anderson, Elisabeth. 2013. "Ideas in action: the politics of Prussian child labor reform, 1817-1839," *Theory and Society*, 42(1): 81-119.

Earl, Jennifer, Andrew Martin, John D. McCarthy, and Sarah A. Soule. 2004. "Newspapers and Protest Event Analysis," *Annual Review of Sociology* 30:65–80.

Mayrl Damon and Nicholas Hoover Wilson. 2020. "What Do Historical Sociologists Do All Day? Analytic Architectures in Historical Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology* 125(5): 1345-1394.

II. Morphology

5. Sequence Analysis

Abbott, Andrew and Alexandra Hrycak. 1990. "Measuring Resemblance in Sequence Data : An Optimal Matching Analysis of Musicians' Careers," *American Journal of Sociology*, 96(1): 144-185.

Stovel, Katherine. 2000. "The Structure of Lynching in the Deep South, 1882-1930," *Social Forces*, 79(3): 843-880.

Recommended readings:

Bison, Ivano. 2010. "Lexicographic Index: A New Measurement of Resemblance Among Sequences," pp. 422-441 in Malcom Williams and W. Paul Vogt: *The Sage Handbook of Innovation in Social Science Research Methods*. Los Angeles and London: Sage.

Abbott, Andrew and Angela Tsay. 2000. "Sequence Analysis and Optimal Matching Methods in Sociology: Review and Prospect," *Sociological Methods and Research* 29(1): 3-33.

Wu Lawrence L. 2000. "Some Comments on "Sequence Analysis and Optimal Matching Methods in Sociology: Review and Prospect." *Sociological Methods and Research*. 29(1): 41-64.

6. Event Structure Analysis

Griffin, Larry J. 1993. "Narrative, Event-Structure Analysis, and Causal Interpretation in Historical Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology*, 98(5): 1094-1133.

Ermakoff, Ivan. 2015. "The Structure of Contingency," *American Journal of Sociology*, 121(1): 64-125.

Recommended readings:

Isaac, Larry W., Debra A. Street, and Stan J. Knapp. 1994. "Analyzing Historical Contingency with Formal Methods. The case of the "relief Explosion" and 1968." *Sociological Methods and Research*, 23(1): 114-141.

Brown, Cliff. 2000. "The Role of Employers in Split Labor Markets : An Event-Structure Analysis of Racial Conflict and AFL Organizing, 1917-1919," *Social Forces* 79(2) : 653-681.

Heise, David R. 1989. "Modeling event structures," *The Journal of Mathematical Sociology*, 14:2-3, 139-169.

7. Quantitative Narrative Analysis

Franzosi, Roberto. 2010a. *Quantitative Narrative Analysis*. Los Angeles, London & New Delhi: Sage Publications. **Chapters 2 & 4.**

Franzosi, Roberto P. 2010b. "Sociology, narrative, and the quality versus quantity debate (Goethe versus Newton): Can computer-assisted story grammars help us understand the rise of Italian fascism (1919-1922)?" *Theory and Society*, 39(6): 593-629.

Franzosi, Roberto, Gianluca De Fazio and Stefania Vicari. 2012. "Ways of Measuring Agency: An Application of Quantitative Narrative Analysis to Lynchings in Georgia (1875—1930)," *Sociological Methodology*, 42: 1-42.

III. Variable-centered

8. Boolean comparative analysis

Ragin, Charles. 2000. *The Comparative Method: moving beyond qualitative and quantitative strategies*. Berkeley: The University of California Press. **Chapters 6-8.**

Ragin, Charles. 2008. *Redesigning Social Inquiry: Fuzzy sets and Beyond*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. **Chapters 2, 3 & 5.**

Beck, Colin. 2014. "Reflections on the revolutionary wave in 2011," *Theory and Society*, 43(2), 197-223.

Recommended readings:

Ragin, Charles, C. 2000. *Fuzzy-Set Social Science*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Skocpol Theda and Margaret Somers 1980. "The uses of comparative history in macrosocial inquiry," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 22(2): 174-97.

Beers, Steve. 2015. "QCA as competing or complementary method? A qualitative comparative analysis approach to protest event data," *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*: 1-16.

9. Boolean comparative analysis 2

Goldthorpe, John H. 2007. *On Sociology*, Volume 1: Critique and Program. Second Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter Three: Current Issues in Comparative Macrosociology: pp. 39-60.

Lieberson Stanley. 2004. "Comments on the use and utility of QCA," *Qualitative Methods*, 2(2): 13–14.

Hug, Simon. 2013. "Qualitative comparative analysis: how inductive use and measurement error lead to problematic inference," *Political Analysis*, 21(2): 252-65.

Lucas Samuel R. and Alisa Szatrowski. 2014. "Qualitative comparative analysis in critical perspective," *Sociological Methodology*, 44(1): pp. 1-27.

Seawright Jason. 2014. "Comment: limited diversity and the unreliability of QCA," *Sociological Methodology* 44(1): 118-21.

Brown, Cliff, and Terry Boswell. 1995. "Strikebreaking or Solidarity in the Great Steel Strike of 1919: A Split Labor Market, Game-Theoretic, and QCA Analysis," *American Journal of Sociology*, 100(6): 1479-519.

Recommended readings:

Burawoy, Michael. 1989. "Two Methods in Search of Science," *Theory and Society*, 18 (6): 759-85.

Ragin, Charles C. 2014. "Comment: Lucas and Szatrowski in critical perspective," *Sociological Methodology* 44(1): 80-94.

Lucas, Samuel R. 2014. "Rejoinder: taking heat and giving light—reflections on the early reception of "Qualitative Comparative Analysis in Critical Perspective," *Sociological Methodology* 44(1): 127–58.

Collier, David. 2014. "Comment: QCA should set aside the algorithms," *Sociological Methodology* 44(1): 122-26.

10. Term paper presentations

11. Natural Experiments

Bloome, Deirdre, James Feigenbaum, and Christopher Muller. 2017. "Tenancy, Marriage, and the Boll Weevil Infestation, 1892-1930." *Demography*, 54(3): 1029–1049.

Ferwerda, Jeremy and Nicholas L. Miller. 2014. "Political Devolution and Resistance to Foreign Rule: A Natural Experiment," *American Political Science Review* 108(3): 642–60.

Kocher, Matthew A. and Nuno P. Monteiro. 2016. "Lines of Demarcation: Causation, Design-Based Inference, and Historical Research," *Perspectives on Politics* 14 (4): 952–75.

Recommended readings:

Dunning, Thad. 2012. *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences: A Design-Based Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.

Hyde, Susan D. 2007. "The Observer Effect in International Politics: Evidence from a Natural Experiment." *World Politics* 60(1): 37–63.

III. Genetic approaches

12. Mechanisms in history

Petersen, Roger D. 2001. *Resistance and Rebellion. Lessons from Eastern Europe*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press. Introduction, chapters 2 & 3.

Lohmann, Susanne. 1994. "The Dynamics of Informational Cascades. The Monday Demonstrations in Leipzig, East Germany 1989-91," *World Politics*, 47: 42-101.

Recommended readings:

Elster, Jon. 1998. "A Plea for Mechanisms," pp. 45-73 in Peter Hedström and Richard Swedberg (eds.): *Social Mechanisms: An Analytical Approach to Social Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stinchcombe, Arthur L. 1991. "The Conditions of Fruitfulness of Theorizing About Mechanisms in Social Science," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 21(3): 367–388.

Gould, Roger V. 2002. "The Origins of Status Hierarchies: A Formal Theory and Empirical Test." *American Journal of Sociology* 107, no. 5: 1143-178.

13. Tracing processes

Gerring, John and Thomas W. Craig. 2007. "Internal Validity: Process Tracing," pp. 172-186 in John Gerring: *Case Study Research: Principles and Practice* by. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bennett, Andrew and Jeffrey T. Checkel. 2015. *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: pp. 3-14.

Ermakoff, Ivan. 2008. *Ruling Oneself Out. A Theory of Collective Abdications*. Durham: Duke University Press. **Preface, chapters 6 & 8.**

Recommended readings:

Traugott, Mark. 2002. *Armies of the Poor: Determinants of Working-Class Participation in the Parisian Insurrection of June 1848*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

Pfaff, Steven, 2006. *Exit-Voice Dynamics and the Collapse of East Germany*. Durham: Duke University Press: chapter 5.

14. Formal analysis of interactions

Lohmann, Susanne. 1994. "The Dynamics of Informational Cascades. The Monday Demonstrations in Leipzig, East Germany 1989-91," *World Politics*, 47: 42-101.

Ermakoff, Ivan. 1997. "Prelates and Princes: Aristocratic Marriages, Canon Law Prohibitions and Shifts in Norms and Patterns of Domination in the Central Middle Ages." *American Sociological Review*. 62:405-422.

Recommended readings:

Biggs, Michael. 2005. "Strikes as Forest Fires: Chicago and Paris in the Late Nineteenth Century," *American Journal of Sociology*, 110: 1684-1714.

Gould, Roger V. 2002. "The Origins of Status Hierarchies: A Formal Theory and Empirical Test." *American Journal of Sociology* 107, no. 5: 1143-178.

15. Counterfactuals

Fearon, James D. 1991. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science." *World Politics* 43(2):169–95.

King, Gary, and Langche Zeng. 2007. "When Can History Be Our Guide? The Pitfalls of Counterfactual Inference." *International Studies Quarterly* 51(1): 183-210.

Bateman, David A. and Dawn Langan Teele. 2020. "A developmental approach to historical causal inference," *Public Choice* **185**, 253–279.

Recommended readings:

Hawthorne, Geoffrey. 1991. *Plausible Worlds. Possibility and Understanding in History and the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.