

COMPARATIVE AND HISTORICAL METHODS IN SOCIOLOGY

Overview

Students learn about comparative strategies and historical methods through methodological readings, exercises, and evaluations of exemplary analyses in which investigators of organizational structures, institutional relationships, political conflicts, and cultural patterns bring theory and historical-comparative evidence to bear on one another. Prerequisites are Soc 357 or 358/359 or undergrad methods sequence or consent of instructor.

Course Requirements

1. **Attendance and participation:** Please be prepared at class time to discuss all of the required readings for that week. You are expected to attend class regularly, arrive on time, and be prepared to participate actively and thoughtfully in class discussions. You are encouraged to raise questions during discussions, which counts as participation.
2. **Document Analysis Worksheet** (due Feb. 16): Primary sources must be analyzed for contextual understanding and to extract information to make informed judgments. To practice these skills, please complete a Document Analysis Worksheet for a historical document of your choice from the [online collections](#) of the Wisconsin Historical Society. You may use the worksheet for photos, written documents, artifacts, posters, maps, cartoons, or video or sound recordings. Please select a document that is brief and (if possible) relevant to your own research interests.
3. **Book review** (due Mar. 23) of a monograph in comparative-historical sociology. Please select either a classic study not assigned for class (please consult the instructor for suggestions) or a book that has won or received honorable mention for the Barrington Moore Book Award from the ASA's Comparative and Historical Sociology Section. (See [here](#) or [here](#) for award winners.) Reviews should include both a summary of the book's argument and a discussion of the book's contributions and shortcomings. The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate that you can apply the tools of comparative-historical analysis to evaluate critically scholarship in this field of research. Therefore, your review should focus on methodological issues. The review should be about 800 words. Before writing your review, I recommend that you read "[Suggested ASR Reviewer Guidelines for Comparative Historical Papers](#)." I also recommend that you read Casey Brienza's essay "[Writing Academic Book Reviews](#)."
4. **Oral presentation of research proposal:** During the last two weeks of the semester, each student will make a preliminary, 15-minute oral presentation of his or her research proposal. These presentations allow you to give early expression to your ideas, receive feedback from the instructor and your peers that you may then incorporate into the written proposal (see below), and practice the skill of preparing and delivering conference-style presentations.
5. **Written research proposal:** At the end of the semester, you will be expected to apply what you have learned by writing an original comparative-historical research proposal. The proposal should state the substantive problem you wish to address, review alternative approaches to it, present your own perspective, discuss research design, review sources, and provide a plan for the study. More detailed instructions will be provided in Canvas. The proposal should be 2500 to 3000 words (about 8 to 10 double-spaced pages). The proposal is due May 3 (11:59 pm).

All written work must be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced, and submitted online through Canvas. Each student's overall grade for the semester will be determined as follows:

- Attendance: 10%
- Participation (includes reading): 20%
- Document Analysis Worksheet: 12%
- Book review: 18%
- Oral presentation: 15%
- Written research proposal: 25%

A = 93-100, AB = 88-92, B = 83-87, BC = 78-82, C = 70-77, D = 60-69, F = 59 or below.

Reading Assignments

There is one required book for the course: Matthew Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods* (Sage, 2012). This book is [available online](#) through UW libraries. All other required reading assignments will be available through Canvas. If you experience any problems with the readings, please contact me as soon as possible to let me know.

Week 1 | Jan. 26 | Introduction

Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods*, 1-21.

James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, "Comparative Historical Analysis," in *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, eds. James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3-25.

Craig Calhoun, "The Rise and Domestication of Historical Sociology," in *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences*, ed. Terrance J. McDonald (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 305-337.

Recommended:

Charles Tilly, "Sociology, Meet History," in *As Sociology Meets History* (New York: Academic Press, 1981), 1-52.

Ann Shola Orloff and Theda Skocpol, "Why Not Equal Protection? Explaining the Politics of Social Spending in Britain, 1900-1911, and the United States, 1880s-1920," *American Sociological Review* 49, no. 6 (Dec. 1984): 726-750.

Week 2 | Feb. 2 | Intellectual History and Overview

Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods*, 22-39.

Michael J. Galgano, J. Chris Arndt, and Raymond M. Hyser, "What is History?" in *Doing History*, 2d ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2013), 1-18.

Julia Adams, Elisabeth S. Clemens, Ann Shola Orloff, "Social Theory, Modernity, and the Three Waves of Historical Sociology," in *Remaking Modernity*, ed. Julia Adams, Elisabeth S. Clemens, Ann Shola Orloff (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 1-72.

Week 3 | Feb. 9 | Gathering, Analyzing, and Synthesizing Data

Special guest: historian [Tony Michels](#).

Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods*, 40-69, 140-148.

Galgano, Arndt, and Hyser, *Doing History*, 19-84.

Ivan Ermakoff, "Causality and History: Modes of Causal Investigation in Historical Social Sciences," *Annual Review of Sociology* 45 (2019): 581-606.

Recommended: Galgano, Arndt, Hyser, Appendix A in *Doing History*, 156-197.

Week 4 | Feb. 16 | Analyzing Temporality and Relations among Cases

Document Analysis Worksheet due at 11:00 am

Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods*, 70-85.

Jeffrey Haydu, "Reversals of Fortune: Path Dependency, Problem Solving, and Temporal Cases," *Theory and Society* 39, no. 1 (Jan. 2010): 25-48.

Angel Adams Parham, *American Routes: Racial Palimpsests and the Transformation of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 1-18, 68-119. [2018 Barrington Moore Book Award winner]

Recommended:

James Mahoney, "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology," *Theory and Society* 29, no. 4 (Aug. 2000): 507-548.

Paul Pierson, "Big, Slow-Moving, and ... Invisible: Macrosocial Processes in the Study of Comparative Politics" (2003), in *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, 177-207.

Week 5 | Feb. 23 | Analyzing Temporality and Relations among Cases (cont'd)

Angel Adams Parham, *American Routes*, 120-220.

Week 6 | Mar. 2 | Types of Comparison

Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods*, 86-116.

Theda Skocpol, "Emerging Agendas and Recurrent Strategies in Historical Sociology," in *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology*, ed. Theda Skocpol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 356-391.

Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* (New York: Russell Sage, 1984), 80-147.

Recommended:

Charles C. Ragin, *The Comparative Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), especially Preface and Overview, Chapter 2, Chapter 6.

Charles Tilly, "History and Sociological Imagining," *Tocqueville Review* 15, no. 1 (1994): 57-72.

Charles Tilly, "To Explain Political Processes," *American Journal of Sociology* 100, no. 6 (May 1995): 1594-1610.

Week 7 | Mar. 9 | Universalizing vs. Individualizing Approaches

Kai Erikson, *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: Wiley, 1966), v-xi, 3-29, 67-71, 137-159.

Reinhard Bendix, "Social Stratification and the Political Community," *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 1, no. 2 (1960): 181-210.

Reinhard Bendix, *Nation-Building and Citizenship: Studies of Our Changing Social Order* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, [1964] 1996), 173-180, 212-217.

Reinhard Bendix, "The Mandate to Rule: An Introduction," *Social Forces* 55, no. 2 (Dec. 1976): 242-256.

Week 8 | Mar. 16 | Variation-Finding Comparison and Analysis of Causal Regularities

Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), xvii-xxiv, 111-155, 413-432.

Theda Skocpol, "France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 18, no. 2 (Apr. 1976): 175-210.

Recommended: Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979). Skim pp. 3-33. Read carefully 33-43. Skim pp. 47-157. Read 284-293.

Week 9 | Mar. 23 | Criticism of the Causal-Analytic (Millian) Approach

Book review due at 11:00 am

Michael Burawoy, "Two Methods in Search of Science: Skocpol versus Trotsky," *Theory and Society* 18, no. 6 (Nov. 1989): 759-805.

William H. Sewell, Jr., "Three Temporalities: Toward an Eventful Sociology" (1996), in *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences*, 245-280.

James Mahoney, "Nominal, Ordinal, and Narrative Appraisal in Macrocausal Analysis," *American Journal of Sociology* 104, no. 4 (Jan. 1999): 1154-1196.

Recommended:

William H. Sewell, Jr., "Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille," *Theory and Society* 25, no. 6 (Dec. 1996): 841-881.

George Steinmetz, "Odious Comparisons: Incommensurability, the Case Study, and 'Small N's' in Sociology," *Sociological Theory* 22, no. 3 (Sep. 2004): 371-400.

Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods*, 117-139.

Week 10 | Mar. 30 | Encompassing Comparison vs. the Weberian Approach

Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, [1974] 2011), 1-13, 346-357.

Richard E. Lee, "And for Just One Case? Tools for Historical Social Science," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 39, No. 1/4 (2016): 241-264.

Stephen Kalberg, "Max Weber's Critique of Recent Comparative-Historical Sociology and a Reconstruction of His Analysis of the Rise of Confucianism in China," in *Current Perspectives in Social Theory* 19 (1999), ed. Jennifer M. Lehmann (Stamford: JAI Press), 207-246.

Recommended:

Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 16, no. 4 (Sep. 1974): 387-415.

Richard E. Lee, *Knowledge Matters: The Structures of Knowledge and Crisis of the Modern World-System* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2011).

Week 11 | Apr. 6 | Selecting Cases, Building and Testing Theory

Lange, *Comparative-Historical Methods*, 148-174.

Ivan Ermakoff, "Exceptional Cases: Epistemic Contributions and Normative Expectations," *Archives Européennes de Sociologie/European Journal of Sociology* 55, no. 2 (Aug. 2014): 223-243.

Barry Eidlin, "Why Is There No Labor Party in the U.S.? Political Articulation and the Canadian Comparison, 1932-1948," *American Sociological Review* 81, no. 3 (2016): 488-516. [2017 Charles Tilly Best Article Award winner]

Recommended: Rebecca Jean Emigh, "The Power of Negative Thinking: The Use of Negative Case Methodology in the Development of Sociological Theory," *Theory and Society* 26, no. 5 (Oct. 1997): 649-684.

Week 12 | Apr. 13 | Comparing Classification Struggles and Social Thought

Chad Alan Goldberg, "T. H. Marshall Meets Pierre Bourdieu: Citizens and Paupers in the Development of the US Welfare State," in *Bourdieu and Historical Analysis*, ed. Philip S. Gorski (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 215-241.

Chad Alan Goldberg, *Citizens and Paupers: Relief, Rights, and Race, from the Freedmen's Bureau to Welfare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 1-8, 153-67, 180-86. [Honorable Mention for 2010 Barrington Moore Book Award]

Chad Alan Goldberg, *Modernity and the Jews in Western Social Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 1-15, 43-75.

Weeks 13-14 | Apr. 20 and 27 | Discussion of Research Proposals

Presentation and discussion of your research proposals

Written research proposals due May 3 (11:59 pm)

Deadline for instructors to submit final grades is Monday, May 10, 2021 (11:59 pm)