Texas A&M University
Departmental Request for a New Course
Undergraduate • Graduate • Professional
• Submit original form and attach a course syllabus.

1. This request is submitted by the Department of Sociology

2. Course prefix, number and complete title of course: Soci 604/689 Comparative Historical Methods

3. Course description (not more than 50 words): Surveys key methodological issues, including the logic of comparative design and analysis of primary and secondary sources. Exemplars of important comparative historical research—both classics and more recent publications—will be reviewed.

4. Prerequisite(s): Graduate Classification Cross-listed with Cross-listed courses require the signature of both department heads.

5. Is this a variable credit course? ☐ Yes ☑ No If yes, from _____ to _____.

6. Is this a repeatable course? ☐ Yes ☑ No If yes, this course may be taken _____ times. Will the course be repeated within the same semester/term? ☐ Yes ☑ No

7. Has this course been taught as a 289/489/689? ☑ Yes ☐ No If yes, how many times? Indicate the number of students enrolled for each academic period it was taught. 96A-12; 07A-7 (taught as Soci 607 08A-9, 06A-9)

8. This course will be:
   a. required for students enrolled in the following degree program(s) (e.g., B.A. in history)

   b. an elective for students enrolled in the following degree program(s) (e.g., M.S., Ph.D. in geography)

   M.S., PhD in Sociology

9. If other departments are teaching or are responsible for related subject matter, the course must be coordinated with these departments. Attach approval letters.

10. Prefix Course # Title (excluding punctuation) Soci 604 Comparative Historical Methods

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Approval recommended by:

[Signature] 2/4/2008
Head of Department

[Signature] 5/19/08
Chair, College Review Committee

[Signature] 5/18/08
Dean of College

[Signature] 6/25/08
Dean of College

Submitted to Coordinating Board by:

[Signature] Date
Director of Academic Support Services

Effective Date

Questions regarding this form should be directed to Sandra Williams at 845 8836.

OAR 85 111 57

1 of 8 C14
SOCIOLOGY 604
COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL METHODS

Instructor: Robert Mackin, Ph.D.
Spring 2008

Academic 307
Wednesday: 9:00am – 12:00pm

Office: 428 Academic Bldg
Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00 – 4:00pm
Office Phone: 862-1548
Email: Mackin@tamu.edu

Course Description:
This course provides a broad introduction to the field of comparative and historical sociology. The objective of the course is twofold: First, to expose the student to a variety of methodological issues that confront comparative/historical sociologists, including how to interpret documents. A second objective is to expose the student to a variety of exemplary works of comparative/historical sociology. The first third of the course will be devoted to reviewing statements on the method and theory of comparative/historical research. The final two-thirds of the course will be dedicated to surveying major works in the field. Books selected reflect research on a variety of topics (states & state building, race, revolution, social movements, etc.) and in a variety of theoretical traditions (Marxism, Weberianism, Rational Choice theory, and so on.) The overall objective is for students to develop a deeper understanding of, and appreciation for, comparative historical research by becoming familiar with and critiquing excellent works of comparative/historical sociology – both classics and more recent publications.

Grading and Evaluation
Seminar participants are expected to carefully read each week’s assignment and to engage in class discussion on the material. Attending and participating in the seminar are crucial to the success of the course.

One-half (50%) of your grade will be derived from your participation in the seminar. Participation grades have a written and oral component. All students (including auditors) will be expected to organize the discussion for 2-3 weeks over the course of the semester. This will include, but not be limited to, writing a 3-5 page summary of the week’s reading and broadcasting it to all participants in the class by 5pm Tuesday, the night before class. Students may present on their own research in lieu of one of their required presentations. More details will be provided in class.

The participation grade is broken down in the following way. The memos are worth 40 points and will be graded and will constitute 40% of your grade. Attendance and participation in class is worth 10 points and will be worth 10% of your grade.
The other half (50%) of your grade will be derived from a 15-20 page seminar paper. The seminar paper is worth 50 points and should be on a topic to be approved by the instructor. Depending on where you are in the course of your graduate careers, students are encouraged to write a literature review, thesis/dissertation proposal, or article/dissertation chapter. All students will be required to turn in a 1-page memo discussing their plans for the seminar paper. This memo will be due March 5.

Summarizing the above: There are a total of 100 points possible in this course. Grades will be based on the following scale:

A = 90 – 100%,
B = 80 – 89%,
C = 70 – 79%,
D = 60 – 69%,
F = 59% and below.

In other words you must earn 90 points to receive an A, 80 points to receive a B, 70 points to receive to receive a C, 60 points to receive a D, and 59 points or less will result in an F.

A Note on Academic Dishonesty
As members of a community of learning, it is imperative that all students be aware of and abide by the rules of academic integrity. These can be downloaded at [http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule20.htm](http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule20.htm). Furthermore, as of September 1, 2004 the Aggie Honor Code has been in effect (www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor). In short, they state that students and faculty will refuse to participate in or tolerate plagiarism, cheating or falsification of information.

A Note on Disability
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities, in Cain Hall or call 845-1637.

Required Books:

NB: This book should be available for purchase by the end of February.


**Recommended Books:**


**Grading and Evaluation**
Though class participation and weekly memos will not be assigned weekly grades, they will be considered cumulatively and account for 50% of a student’s grade. Final papers will count for the other 50%.

**Course Schedule** (subject to change):

**Week 1: Introduction to Course**
(January 16)
Today, we will have an overview of the course as well as introductions from the instructor and seminar participations.

**Week 2: What is Comparative Historical Sociology?**
(January 23)
Readings:


ASSIGNMENT: Discuss Literature Review

Week 3: Analytic Tools: Comparative Analysis & Concept Formation (I)
(January 30)
Readings:


Week 4: Analytic Tools: The “Small N” problem (II)
(February 6)
Readings:


Recommended:

Week 5: The Debate over General Theory
(February 13)
Readings:


Week 6: Exemplar #1: Skocpol on Social Revolutions (I)
(February 20)
Readings:
Recommended:

Week 7: Skocpol on Social Revolutions: Critiques (II)
(February 27)
Readings:


Week 8: Exemplar #2: Theory-driven Causal Analysis, A Marxian Approach
(March 5)
Readings:


Recommended:

ASSIGNMENT: 1-page memo on seminar paper due.

SPRING BREAK: MARCH 10 - 14

Week 9: Exemplar #3: Theory-driven Causal Analysis, A Weberian Approach
(March 19)
Readings:

Recommended:


**Week 10: Exemplar #4: Theory-driven Causal Analysis, Political Process Theory (March 26)**

**Recommended:**


**Week 11: Exemplar #5: Theory-driven Causal Analysis, Rational Choice Theory (April 2)**
Readings:


**Recommended:**


**Week 12: Exemplar #6: Archival Research: Race, Class & Intersectionality (I) (April 9)**
Readings:
Selections to be announced.

Recommended:

**Week 13: Exemplar #7: Archival Research: Social Movements in Authoritarian Settings (II)**
(April 16)
Readings:
Selections to be announced.

Recommended:

**Week 14: Student Presentations**
(April 23)
Readings:
Student papers to be broadcast on email by Tuesday, 4/22 at 5pm.

**MAY 9: SEMINAR PAPERS DUE** (by noon, in my office, 428 Academic).