

SOC 5080  
Krishan Kumar

Fall 2014  
Randall Hall 112  
Tuesday 4:00-6:30

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Office hours: Thursday 1:30-3:30, and by appointment

## COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY

The field of comparative historical sociology, long neglected despite its origins in the work of many of the ‘founding fathers’ of sociology, has become a popular and thriving area in recent decades. Its practitioners differ in methods and approaches, but what unites them is the conviction that history is essential to sociology. To that end they conduct historically-based research in many areas of ‘macro-sociology’: the forms of social power, the rise and development of the modern state, the origins and growth of capitalism, the “civilizing process”, the causes and consequences of revolutions, the development and spread of nationalism, war and mass mobilization, and the rise of the West considered in comparative perspective. Newer concerns have included the historical roots of globalization, including the contribution of the historic empires, and the role of memory in society.

This course selects from a range of studies by sociologists and historians. Its bias is towards large-scale events and processes, as indicated above. Our main concern will be with substantive questions, of interest to sociologists and historians alike. But we will throughout consider methodological problems of relating history to sociology.

### Assessment

There will a 48-hour, open- book, take-home, final exam (similar to comps.). In addition you will be required to make a class presentation, which should then be written up in a 5-6 page paper for submission to me. There will also be additional presentations that do not need to be written up.

### Reading.

1. The following books are *required*. All are available in the UVA bookstore, all are paperbacks.

Alexis de Tocqueville *The Ancien Regime and the French Revolution*, translated by Stuart Gilbert (Doubleday 1955)

Max Weber *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, with Other Writings on the Rise of the West*, translated and introduced by Stephen Kalberg, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Oxford University Press, 2009)

Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty* (Crown Publishers/Random House, 2012)

2. You will also need to acquire the *Course Packet*, available at Brillig Books, Elliewood Avenue.

There will in addition be a number of articles and chapters which will be available through Collab.

For reference, the following collections of articles are recommended.

Julia Adams, Elisabeth Clemens, and Ann Shola Orloff (eds.) *Remaking Modernity: Politics, History, and Sociology* (Duke University Press, 2005)  
 Gerard Delanty and Engin F. Isin (eds.) *Handbook of Historical Sociology* (Sage, 2003)  
 James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschmeyer (eds.) *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge University Press, 2003)  
 Terence J. McDonald (ed.) *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences* (University of Michigan Press, 1996)  
 Theda Skocpol (ed.) *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology* (Cambridge University Press, 1984)

### **Course Outline**

CP= Course Packet

#### **Week One, August 26**

What is historical sociology? Why history?  
 Krishan Kumar “Historical Sociology” (CP)  
 (For an alternative account, see the “Introduction” to Adams et al, above).  
 Eric Hobsbawm, “The Sense of the Past” (CP)

#### **Week Two, September 2**

The “invention of tradition”.  
 Trevor-Roper: “The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland” (CP)  
 Eric Hobsbawm: “Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914” (CP)

For other examples, see Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* .

#### **Week Three, September 9**

What kind or kinds of historical sociology? The example of revolutions.  
 Alexis de Tocqueville *The Ancien Regime and the French Revolution* (1)

Krishan Kumar: “The Past in the Present: Mills, Tocqueville and the Necessity of History” (CP)

#### **Week Four, September 16**

Alexis de Tocqueville: *The Ancien Regime and the French Revolution* (2)

#### **Week Five, September 23**

Comparative History and World Development: The Case of China

Jack A. Goldstone “Neither Late Imperial Nor Early Modern: Efflorescences and the Qing Formation in World History” (CP).

#### **Week Six, September 30**

Success and Failure in World Development: How Important is History?

Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty* (1)

#### **Week Seven, October 7**

Acemoglu and Robinson *Why Nations Fail* (2)

#### **Week Eight : October 14**

**Reading Day: No Class**

#### **Week Nine, October 21**

Structure or Event? William Sewell and “Eventful” Sociology

William Sewell, Jr. “The Three Temporalities: Toward an Eventful Sociology” (CP)

William Sewell, Jr. “Historical Events as Transformations of Structure: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille” (CP)

Theda Skocpol “France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions” (CP)

#### **Week Ten, October 28**

Norbert Elias: *Court Society and the Civilizing Process*

“An Outline of the Civilizing Process”, etc (CP)

Extracts from *The Court Society* (CP)

#### **Week Eleven, November 4**

Max Weber and the Uniqueness of the West

Max Weber: “Prefatory Remarks to Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion”, in Kalberg (ed.), *The Protestant Ethic ...*, pp. 205-220

Max Weber *The Protestant Ethic* (1)

### **Week Twelve, November 11**

Max Weber: *The Protestant Ethic* (2)

Max Weber: “China: Confucianism” and “Confucianism and Puritanism”, in Kalberg (ed.), *The Protestant Ethic*, pp. 268-289.

### **Week Thirteen, November 18**

Civilization as a Concept for Historical and Sociological Analysis

Krishan Kumar: “The Return of Civilization – and of Arnold Toynbee?” (CP)

Arnold Toynbee: “The Graeco-Roman Civilization” and “Islam and the West” (CP)

### **Week Fourteen, November 25**

Situating comparative-historical sociology: problems and perspectives

Craig Calhoun “The Rise and Domestication of Historical Sociology” (CP)

George Steinmetz: “The Epistemological Unconscious of U. S. Sociology and the Transition to Post-Fordism: The Case of Historical Sociology” (CP)

### **Week Fifteen, December 2**

History and Sociology: Reprise

**Final (48-hour) Exam: Tuesday December 9-Thursday December 11**