

SC3227 (AY2016-2017, Sem 2) MODERNITY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Instructor: Dr. Xiaohong Xu

Lecture Time: Wednesdays 12:00-14:00

Office Hours: By appointment

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Aims and Objectives

This module introduces students to the theoretical and methodological approaches through which sociologists analyze major historical changes that have deeply shaped the modern world. From its beginning, sociology has engaged in comparative and historical analysis, innovatively using historical sources to address big questions like the origins of capitalism and revolutions. In recent decades, comparative historical sociology has emerged as an influential field in the social sciences. In this module, we will search for the roots of comparative historical sociology in the classical traditions and examine the contemporary sociological reflection and debates on the various challenges and analytical strategies in making generalizable arguments based on historical cases and events. Central issues include the logic of comparative thinking, understanding of historical specificity and contingency, analysis of temporality, role of culture and agency in structural transformation.

The readings are dense and intensive and require efforts of critical engagement from the students. The goal is not for students to memorize facts and references, but to cultivate your intellectual creativity and to think critically about the subject matters and to think beyond them. You are expected to do the readings before the lecture, in order for you to enhance your understanding of the lectures and readings. Do NOT postpone your reading assignments until before the final exam—you would find yourself in a difficult situation if you did so.

Attendance and Tutorials

Students are expected to attend all lectures and tutorials. Attendance will be taken in tutorials and occasionally in lectures as well. There will be five tutorial sessions, starting in Week 3 and meeting biweekly. Active participation in the tutorial discussion is important for your final grade. Bear in mind that you should participate actively in the tutorials, not only because you want a good grade, but also because your ideas matter. The biggest impediment to creativity is lack of faith in the power of your own ideas or questions. There are also students who have great ideas and questions but are too shy or unwilling to share them. If you are like them, remember that, by articulating your ideas and questions in public, you give yourself and others a chance to improve them, while also building up your leadership skills.

Three Short Essays

You are expected to write three short essays of 3 pages double-spaced. Specific questions will be announced in class.

Grading Components

Attendance	10%
Discussion participation	10%
Three Short Essays	30%
Final Exam	50%

Readings

All required readings will be available for download from IVLE. And there will be no textbooks. I have previously assigned two textbooks for this module. They, however, proved difficult to most students. So I list them here only for students who would like to further explore topics of their interests:

Lachmann, Richard. 2013. *What is Historical Sociology?* Cambridge, UK: Polity.
Delanty, Gerard, and Engin E. Isin. 2003. *Handbook of Historical Sociology*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Communication

There are no regular office hours. Please contact me for an appointment if you need consultation. You are welcome, and are encouraged to talk with me about essays, lectures, or any questions of your interest. I enjoy talking with my students.

While I am generally responsive with emails, do not expect me to reply right away. Depending on the time you send your email, it may sometimes take 12 hours or longer before I see your email and reply.

Intellectual Integrity

As NUS students, you are obliged by the University's code of student conduct (see: http://www.nus.edu.sg/osa/images/osa/downloads/code_of_student_conduct.pdf) . Any violation of intellectual integrity and honesty will incur a failed grade and disciplinary action.

Tentative Course Schedule

11 Jan	Introduction, Overview, and Logistics
	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>Skocpol, Theda. 1984. "Sociology's Historical Imagination," in Skocpol, ed., <i>Vision and Method in Historical Sociology</i> (New York: Cambridge University Press), pp.1-6.</p> <p>Calhoun, Craig. 1996. "The Rise and Domestication of Historical Sociology." <i>The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences</i>, 305–38.</p>
18 Jan	Classical Roots: Marx on Class, Capitalism, and Revolution
	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>Marx, Karl (and Frederick Engels). 1978. Pp.143-45 of "Theses on Feuerbach" [1845], pp.469-500 of "The Manifesto of the Communist Party" [1848]; pp.594-617, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" [1852], in <i>The Marx-Engels Reader</i> (New York: W. W. Norton & Company).</p>
25 Jan	Classical Roots: Tocqueville on State and Revolution
	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>Tocqueville, Alexis de. 1955 [1856]. <i>The Old Regime and the French Revolution</i> (New York: Anchor Books), pp.vii-xv, 1-19, 32-41, 72-96, 120-148, 169-187.</p>
1 Feb	Classical Roots: Weber on Culture and Capitalism
	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>Weber, Max. 1958 [1904]. <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> (London: George Allen & Unwin), pp.35-46,61-71, 114-121, 155-183.</p> <p><u>Essay 1 due on Friday noon.</u></p>
8 Feb	State Formation: The Structuralist Approach
	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>Tilly, Charles. 1985. Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., <i>Bringing the State Back In</i> (Cambridge University</p>

	<p>Press), pp.165-91.</p> <p>Ertman, Thomas. 1997. <i>Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe</i>. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Chapter. 1.</p>
15 Feb	Revolution: The Structuralist Approach
	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>Skocpol, Theda. 1976. "France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions." <i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i> 18 (02): 175–210.</p> <p>Skocpol, Theda, and Margaret Somers. 1980. "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry." <i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i> 22 (02): 174–97.</p>
1 Mar	Revolution: Methodological Debates
	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>Liebertson, Stanley. 1991. "Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases." <i>Social Forces</i> 70 (2) (December 1): 307–320.</p> <p>Sewell, William H, Jr. 1985. "Ideologies and Social Revolutions: Reflections on the French Case," <i>The Journal of Modern History</i> 57 (1):57-85.</p>
8 Mar	Rethinking the Rise of the "West"
	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>Pomeranz, Kenneth. 2000. "Introduction", pp.1-27. <i>The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy</i>. Princeton University Press.</p> <p>Hung, Ho-fung. 2008. "Agricultural Revolution and Elite Reproduction in Qing China: The Transition to Capitalism Debate Revisited." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 73 (4): 569–88.</p> <p><u>Essay 2 due on Friday noon.</u></p>
15 Mar	Empires and Colonization

	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>Steinmetz, George. 2003. "The Devil's Handwriting': Precolonial Discourse, Ethnographic Acuity, and Cross-Identification in German Colonialism." <i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i> 45 (01): 41–95.</p> <p>Goh, Daniel. 2008. "From Colonial Pluralism to Postcolonial Multiculturalism: Race, State Formation and the Question of Cultural Diversity in Malaysia and Singapore," <i>Sociology Compass</i>, 2(1):232-52.</p>
22 Mar	Time and Event
	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>Mahoney, James. 2000. "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology," <i>Theory and Society</i> 29 (4): 507-48.</p> <p>Sewell, Williams, Jr. 1996. "Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille," <i>Theory and Society</i> 25: 841-881.</p>
29 Mar	Culture in Time
	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>Darnton, Robert. 1984. "Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Séverin," in <i>The Great Cat Massacre and Other Stories in French Cultural History</i> (New York: Vintage), 75-104.</p> <p>Xiaohong Xu. 2013. "Belonging Before Believing: Group Ethos and Bloc Recruitment in the Making of Chinese Communism," <i>American Sociological Review</i>, 78 (5): 773-796.</p>
5 Apr	So, What is Historical and What Do We Compare?
	<p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>Steinmetz, George. 2004. "Odious Comparisons: Incommensurability, the Case Study, and 'small N's' in Sociology." <i>Sociological Theory</i> 22 (3): 371–400.</p> <p><u>Essay 3 due on Friday noon.</u></p>
12 Apr	Review