

**SOCIOLOGY 268, FALL 1997**  
**INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE SOCIOLOGY**

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**Introduction**

This course exposes students to a broad comparative perspective on the structure and change of societies of varying political and economic systems. First, students are introduced to the goals and strategies of social research, especially how to use comparative method to study different societies. We begin the substantive section of the class by placing development and social change in a global context. The comparative focus will be on the diverse and uneven paths of economic development and social change in the industrialized countries (the United States, Japan), the reforming and former socialist countries, (Eastern Europe, China), the East Asian and Latin American newly industrializing countries (NICs) and the developing nations in Africa.

**Requirements and Grading**

Students are required to keep up with the readings. The lectures often go beyond the textbooks and journal articles, so regular attendance and note-taking in class is important to performing well in the exam. Active participation in class discussion is required and part of your grade. Class assignments include an in-class midterm exam (consisting of multiple choice and essay questions), an oral presentation on comparing two countries (which is to be handed in as a 2-4 page written report), and a term paper of 12-15 pages. The term paper should have a comparative focus and may be an extension of the oral presentation based on further research. The midterm constitutes 30% of your overall grade, and the paper 40%, with the remaining 30% based on the oral presentation/written report (20%) and class discussion (10%).

**Texts**

Charles C. Ragin. Constructing Social Research. Pine Forge Press. 1994.

Philip McMichael. Development and Social Change. Pine Forge Press. 1996.

Several journal articles (on reserve in the main library).

**Course Outline and Readings**

Week 1: Introduction: The ABC of Social Research  
 8/26 Introduction and course procedures.  
 8/28 Ragin, Chapter 1, pp. 1-30.

Week 2: The Goals and Process of Social Research  
 9/2 Ragin, Chapter 2, pp. 31-53.  
 9/4 Ragin, Chapter 3, pp. 54-76.

Week 3: Strategies of Social Research  
 9/9 Ragin, Chapter 4, pp. 82-91.  
 9/11 Ragin, Chapter 4, pp. 91-103.

Week 4: Comparative Research Methods  
 9/16 Ragin, Chapter 5, pp. 105-120.  
 9/18 Ragin, Chapter 5, pp. 120-130.

Week 5: The Complexity and Promise of Comparative Research

- 9/23 Kohn, Melvin. 1987. "Cross-Natioal Research as an Analytical  
9/25 Strategy." American Sociological Review 52:713-31.

Week 6: Cross-National and Cross-Regional Comparison

- 9/30 Gereffi, Gary. 1989. "Rethinking Development Theories: Insights from East Asia and Latin  
America." Sociological Forum 4:505-533.  
10/2 Ragin, Afterword, pp. 155-166.

Week 7: Midterm Review and Exam

- 10/7 Review.  
10/9 Midterm Exam.

Week 8: Development in Global and Historical Perspectives

- 10/14 McMichael, Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 1-43.  
10/16 McMichael, Chapter 2, pp. 45-75.

Week 9: A Global Production System and Infrastructure

- 10/21 McMichael, Chapter 3, pp. 79-110.  
10/23 MiMichael, Chapter 4, pp. 111-143.

Week 10: A Comparative Approach to Case Studies

- 10/28 Chen, Xiangming. 1994. "The Changing Roles of Free Economic Zones in Development: A  
Comparative Analysis of Capitalist and Socialist Cases in East Asia." Studies in Comparative  
International Development 29:3-15.  
10/30 Bradshaw, York and Michael Wallace. 1991. "Informing Generality  
and Explaining Uniqueness: The Place of Case Studies in Comparative Research." International  
Journal of Comparative Sociology XXXII:154-170.

**Comparative Case Studies and Oral Presentations on Countries Begin**

Week 11: Four Case Studies

- 11/4 McMichael, Chapter 5, pp. 147-156.  
11/6 McMichael, Chapter 5, pp. 157-177.  
Students' presentations.

Week 12. Five More Case Studies

- 11/11 McMichael, Chapter 6, pp. 179-190.  
11/13 McMichael, Chapter 6, pp. 190-208.  
Students' presentations continue.

Week 13: Additional Case Studies

- 11/18 McMichael, Chapter 7, pp. 210-226.  
11/20 McMichael, Chapter 7, pp. 226-239.

Week 14: Additional Case Studies

- 11/25 No readings; students' presentations continue.  
11/27 **Thanksgiving holiday.**

**Term Paper Due**

Week 15: Overview and Summary

- 12/2 McMichael, Chapter 8, pp. 241-258.