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Факультет Социологии

Программа дисциплины

Сравнительная социология (Comparative Sociology)

для направления 040100.68 «Социология» подготовки магистра для магистерской программы «Сравнительные социальные исследования»

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Ученый секретарь ________________________________

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Настоящая программа не может быть использована другими подразделениями университета и другими вузами без разрешения разработчика программы.
Comparative Sociology

Course description

The ability to compare effectively involves the ability to be clearheaded about what is to be compared. Questions regarding the “unit of analysis/comparison” are therefore at the center of any comparative endeavor in sociology and the social sciences more generally. These questions are approached in this course primarily from a meta-theoretical vantage point. Accordingly, we will focus not so much on “what is compared” as on “what sort of thing is compared” and on “how to go about comparing it.”

The issue of “how to compare” is one with varied ramifications in sociological research. Many of these ramifications extent to questions regarding the techniques of data collection and data analysis, which is to say, to the area of methodology. But this course is not a methodology course. It is rather a course on the big picture about methodology. Without getting into the technicalities of particular methods, therefore, the course will consider the presuppositions of comparative sociological research, which in a broad sense regard the views on reality (ontology) and the views on the knowledge of reality (epistemology). But as it will be seen, the relation among ontology, epistemology, and methodology is knotty, entailing most particularly the vexing topics of causality, analysis, and explanation. These perplexing topics are the stuff of this course!

In short, this course is designed to be a first orientation to the different methodologies featured in the program in International Master in Comparative Social Research. It therefore aims to be comprehensive about the pertinent topics, even though its time constraints render comprehensiveness an elusive goal. It aims also to level the playing field among course attendees. That is, it assumes that they bring on board diverse skills and academic backgrounds – some of them may have strengths in quantitative methodology, others in the philosophy of science, yet others in areas of inquiry outside the social sciences, and so on. The goal at hand is to strengthen whatever weaknesses the course attendees may have on the topic and to improve their ability to become, down the road, intelligent about methodology as well as proficient.

Reading Assignments and Grade Assessment

I expect the course attendees to complete the weekly readings ahead of the class sessions, and to read them carefully – which is why I kept the length of the readings relatively short.

The final grade will be based on a final paper and a series of “response papers.” The final paper will be due during the final exams week. There will be no in-class exam.

Each “response paper” will relate to the readings of a given week, be due at the beginning of that week’s class session, and be around one page long (double-spaced, font size 12). It will be assessed according to the pertinence of the ideas it develops, the comprehension of the readings it demonstrates, and the clarity of the exposition. I will not accept late “response papers” (save for truly extraordinary circumstances) nor arrange for make-up assignments. For determining the final grade, I will select each student’s top five paper scores.
Accordingly, the final grade will be determined as follows:

- **Response papers:** 75 points maximum (15 point maximum per paper)
- **Final paper:** 25 points maximum
- **Final grade:** 100 points maximum

**Schedule of Class Sessions**

**WEEK ONE: Introduction**

**WEEK TWO: Epistemology in the Social Science**


Kratochvil, Friedrich (2008): Constructivism: what it is (not) and how it matters” in *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*, edited by Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating. Cambridge University Press (pp. 80-98)

**WEEK THREE: Concepts and Conceptualizations**


**WEEK FOUR: Variables and Causality**


**WEEK FIVE: Variables, Cases, and Events**

Perspective, edited by Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating. Cambridge University Press (pp. 198-222)


WEEK SIX: Mechanisms and Processes I

McAdam, Doug, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly (2001): Dynamics of Contention. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4 (pp. 3-123)

Criticisms of McTT – tba

WEEK SEVEN: Mechanisms and Processes II


WEEK EIGHT: Values and Sociological Reflection


WEEK NINE: Final Exams