Please read this syllabus carefully. You are responsible for everything stated below.

CONTACT INFORMATION
Email: clee@sociology.rutgers.edu
Office: Sociology (Davison Hall, Douglass), Room 141
Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. and by appointment

The best way to reach me is by email. Please write “Soc 520” in the subject line so that I can recognize your email quickly. Also, please remember to sign your name in the email.

Comparative-historical sociology includes a diverse set of inquiries and approaches. Despite this diversity, there are some general theoretical issues, methodological frameworks, and substantive topics, which have dominated the field, including studies of multiple case analyses, large-scale social change, and regional and/or historical variation. In the first half of the course, we will evaluate general approaches in comparative-historical methods, delving into issues related to case selection (single, small N, big N), making comparisons, time or path dependence, and constructing causal meaning. In the second half of the course, we will focus on evidence and data, being mindful of the particular social relationships that made the creation and preservation of the kinds of special materials comparative-historical sociologists often employ, including census records, government documents, organizational records, newspapers, personal documents, oral history, and visual evidence. Although we will read many studies considered classics or seminal in the field, we will also read many other works that may not appear regularly on syllabi for comparative-historical methods courses. I include them here, because they employ the methodological approach and the use of sources we see in many of the traditional classics. They also help further the goal of the course, which (in addition to understanding the foundational issues) is to gain critical insight into doing good sociological research.

REQUIREMENTS
1) Weekly memos (30%): Short, one- to two-page memos that critically engage the readings. Do not summarize the materials but instead discuss the strengths and weaknesses (of the comparison, case selection, and/or evidentiary source selection) and discover ways to make theoretical and/or empirical connections. Due every Monday by 5 P.M. PRIOR to our class meeting – so that we all have sufficient time to read them in preparation for our class meetings. Please upload your memos onto Sakai (in Resources, Weekly Memos). Please read your classmates’ memos in preparation for discussion.

I will not grade these memos although I will keep a record of your timely submission. You can take two exemptions from writing these memos. Email me by the deadline and indicate that you are opting out. Failure to submit the minimum number of memos in a timely manner will result in a grade no higher than a “C” for the course.
2) Reading Summaries in Class (10%): Each week, students will provide brief (3 minutes) summaries of the readings. Depending on the number of students in the course, you will present several summaries.

3) Class Participation (20%): A successful seminar requires the full participation of all members. I expect you to come to class prepared to discuss the readings and issues raised in each other’s memos.

4) Research paper (40% for two parts specified below): I realize that many of you are at various stages of your training. For those of you at the start of your research, I encourage you to develop a research proposal or critical paper that evaluates the central issues of this course. Please see me early to get recommendations on additional readings. Those of you who have already begun research on related themes for qualifying papers or dissertation research are encouraged to write a paper that engages the course materials while extending your research agenda. There are two parts to this assignment.

   PART I (10%): You must submit a five-page proposal for the final assignment with a bibliography. PROPOSAL IS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON MARCH 6.

   PART II (30%): Final research paper with full references. I anticipate the final assignment will be at least 20 (but no more than 30) pages long, not including references. FINAL PAPER IS DUE IN MY MAILBOX ON FRIDAY MAY 4TH AT 11 A.M.

READINGS
Most of the articles and book chapters are available online on the Sakai site for this course. For books from which I require more than two chapters, I ask that you borrow them from the library or purchase them online.


COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: January 17
Introduction

Week 2: January 24
Achievements and Agenda


Ragin, The Comparative Method, Chapter 1.

Week 3: January 31
Case Selection and Single-Case Studies

Four articles from Ragin and Becker, What is a Case?
Ragin, Charles. “Introduction”
Abbott, Andrew. “What do Cases Do?”
Walton, John. “Making the Theoretical Case”


Week 4: February 7
Making Comparisons

Ragin, The Comparative Method, Chapter 2.


**Week 5: February 14**

**“Small N” Comparisons**


Lieberson, Stanley. “Small N’s and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases.” in Ragin and Becker, *What is a Case?*


**Week 6: February 21**

**“Large N” Comparisons**


**Week 7: February 28**

**Time and Path Dependence**


**Week 8: March 6  ***PROPOSAL DUE***
*Causation*


**Week 9: March 13
*Spring Break*

**Week 10: March 20
*Evidence and Archives*


**Week 11: March 27
*Census and Government Documents*


Week 12: April 3
Organizational Documents


Week 13: April 10
Newspapers


Week 14: April 17

Personal Documents and Oral History


Week 15: April 24

Visual Evidence


*** FINAL PAPER IS DUE IN MY MAILBOX ON FRIDAY MAY 4TH AT 11 A.M ***