COMPARATIVE SOCIOLOGY

Syllabus

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

First academic year, Fall semester

Academic year 2014-2015

Professor: Juan J. Fernández
Coordinator: Juan J. Fernández
Department of Social Sciences
Compulsory class
ECTS Credits: 6

SKILLS TO BE LEARNED IN THIS COURSE

General skills
- The capacity to understand and utilize abstract concepts and social theories
- The capacity to summarize and formulate theoretical and social problems
- Initial familiarity with empirical research
- Teamwork capacities
- The capacity to conduct a critical analysis of arguments and theories
- An improved oral and written communication

Specific skills
- Initial familiarity with central methods and approaches in comparative social sciences
- The ability to identify a sociological theory and a sociological approach
- The capacity to identify the main dimensions of contemporary societies
- The capacity to distinguish structural, economic, cultural and political approaches in comparative sociology.
- The capacity to identify cross-national differences based on descriptive evidence.
- The capacity to link theoretical approaches to socioeconomic and political indicators.

BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE CLASS AND OFFICE HOURS

- Main lectures. A lecture given by Professor Fernández that will explain the main theoretical approaches and empirical findings regarding each particular topic.
- Discussion section. Exercises about the topic of each week, which will be analyzed by the students and Professor Fernández.
- Office hours will be held in Professor Fernández’ office (18.2.C.07) on Tuesdays between 10:30 and 12:30. If the student has another commitment at that time, it is possible to schedule a meeting at some other time.

BASIC BEHAVIOURAL RULES

1. Active and non-disruptive participation. Class assistance is recommended but it is not compulsory and not necessary to pass this course. All class participants have to behave with civility with their fellow students and the main instructors. No parallel conversations should take place. Moreover, the ideas of fellow students and the main instructor have to be listened carefully and without interruptions.

2. Mobile phones, tables and laptops. The use of technological devices is a common distraction in class both for those who use them and those around them. Therefore, expect for students with disabilities, it is completely banned to use mobile phones, tables or laptops in class.

3. Plagiarism. Plagiarism is ethically wrong and intellectual sterile. It doesn’t benefit to the student that does it and degrades him/her as a free and autonomous citizen. The main instructor will make sure that all written essays and presentations do not conduct plagiarism. If it is identified, the student will have a 0 in that particular exercise.

COURSE MATERIALS
Professor Fernández selected a broad range of articles and book chapters to be read by throughout the course. From time to time, reading materials will be supplemented with contemporary videos. Students will be asked to read between 40 and 60 pages per week. All the course materials will be available at the Aula Global website.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**
The final grade in this course will be based on two in-class exams, three compulsory essays, one class presentation, as well as on your participation in class.

Two essays: Each student will have to write two short essays regarding three of the 14 topics covered in the course. Students can decide which of the 14 topics will be covered by their essays and the have to be submitted on Friday in the week that that topic was covered in lecture. The maximum length of those essays is 1,500 words. Essays should test a hypothesis, have a strong empirical and comparative focus and draw on the compulsory readings. More information about this essays will be provided in class. Each of these two essays will be 20% of the final grade.

One class presentation: Students will have to do a 10-15 minutes presentation about one of the 14 topics covered in the course. This presentation should be done in pairs. They will take place on Fridays in the Discussion Section. This presentation will represent 10% of the final grade.

Two In-Class Exams: Students will conduct two exams. One exam will be a mid-term and the other exam a final exam. The mid-term will take place at the beginning of Week 8 on October 28 in class. This exam will include questions regarding the first seven topics of the course. The final exam will take place on January 23. This exam will include questions regarding topics 8-14 of the course. It is not necessary to pass these exams to pass the course. Students who fail the mid-term exam will not be asked again in the final exam about the first seven topics of the course. One of the exams will be a multiple-choice and other one will be an open question exam. Each of the exam will represent 20% of the final grade.

Class Participation: Class participation includes coming to class and participating with questions and comments. The instructor will keep attendance starting in Week 3. This will be monitored through a series of one-paragraph comments about the weekly readings. The instructor will not give credit for missed attendance unless (1) the student has a doctor’s notice that preventer him/her from being present, or (2) other valid excuse, for which the student informed the instructor in advance of class. Coming to class and class participation will have the same weight. Together they will represent 10% of the final grade.
COURSE TIMELINE

Week 1
Wednesday September 9: Introduction
Friday September 11: Lecture: What is Sociology and Comparative Sociology?

Week 2
Wednesday September 16: Lecture: Scientific Logic of Inquiry and Causality in Qualitative and Quantitative Research
Friday September 18: Presentations and submission of the essay regarding methodology

Week 3
Wednesday September 23: Lecture: Paths to Modernity, Capitalism and Political Regimes
Friday September 25: Presentations and submission of the essay regarding Barrington Moore’s book

Week 4
Wednesday September 30: Lecture: Comparative Demography
Friday October 2: Presentations and submission of the essay regarding comparative demography

Week 5
Wednesday October 7: Lecture: Comparative Urbanization
Friday October 9: Presentations and submission of the essay regarding urbanization

Week 6
Wednesday October 14: Lecture: International Migration
Friday October 16: Presentations and submission of the essay regarding international migration

Week 7
Wednesday October 21: Lecture: Comparative Sociology of the Family
Friday October 23: Presentations and submission of the essay regarding family relations

Week 8
**Wednesday October 28: Mid-term exam in class**
Friday October 30: Lecture: Comparative Gender Inequalities

Week 9
Wednesday November 4: Lecture: Social Values in Comparative Perspective
Friday November 6: Presentations and submission of the essay regarding gender inequalities and social values

Week 10:
Wednesday November 11: Lecture: Religiosity and Secularization
Friday November 13: Presentations and submission of the essay regarding secularization
Week 11
Wednesday November 18: Lecture: Education Expansion in Comparative Perspective
Friday November 20: Presentations and submission of the essay regarding education

Week 12
Wednesday November 25: Lecture: Civil Society in Comparative Perspective
Friday November 27: Presentations and submission of the essay regarding civil society

Week 13
Wednesday December 2: Lecture: Welfare Regimes
Friday December 4: Presentations and submission of the essay regarding welfare regimes

Week 14
Wednesday December 9: Lecture: Labor Market Dualization
Friday December 11: Presentations and submission of the essay regarding labor market dualization

Final exam: Friday January 23, 17:00-20:00

WEEKLY READINGS

To obtain the greatest benefit from the lectures, students are strongly encouraged to complete the readings before Tuesdays’ lectures.

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Scientific Logic of Inquiry

Week 3: Modernization

Week 4: Demography
Week 5: Urbanization

Week 6: International Migration

Week 7: Family Structures

Week 8: Gender Inequalities

Week 9: Social Value Change

Week 10: Religiosity and Secularization

Week 11: Education Expansion

Week 12: Civil Society and Social Capital

**Week 13: Welfare Policy**

**Week 14: Labor Market Dualization**