

SOU33144 - Comparative Sociology 2

Module Information	
Module Code	SOU33144
Module Title	Comparative Sociology 2
Department	Sociology
Year Group	Junior Sophister
Module Personnel	Dr Nicole Kapelle
Academic Year	2026-27
Credit Weighting	5 credits
Semester	Semester 2
Contact Hours	1 Lecture and 1 tutorial per week

Module Content	
Module Description	Cross-national comparative research is a fundamental building block of sociological research. While different views on its purpose and methodology co-exist, one can argue that comparative sociology in general aims to advance sociological knowledge by either describing and exploring social phenomena across various countries and societies, establishing the degree of generalizability of findings, considering the significance and effects of nation-specific contexts and institutions for social outcomes, or providing causal explanations at multiple levels of theoretical inference. A long tradition of comparative research has furthered our understanding in numerous fields such as social revolutions, social policy and welfare programs, occupational and social stratification, inter- and intragenerational social mobility, education and schooling, poverty, health inequalities, or gender relations. Comparative Sociology 2 introduces students to the intellectual world of comparative sociology and cross-national research. The module explicitly eschews a textbook approach because principles of

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	comparative research develop heavily in the practice of comparative research and few if any good introductory textbooks exist. Instead, the module approaches the breadth of comparative sociological research by focusing on selected seminal works and debates as they have been emerging in the field. Therefore, the tutorials will predominantly rely on high-quality peer-reviewed journal articles and material from selected books and edited volumes. Students will benefit of this approach as they will, first, discover the variety of perspectives as well as the partly fierce debates characterizing the corpus of comparative sociology and, second, get familiar with actual research that build upon comparative rationales and cross-national data. The module setup follows two major objectives. First, students will learn more about the foundations of comparative sociology including the aims as well as theoretical and methodological underpinnings of comparative research programs. This also includes foundational understanding of welfare state classifications and social policies as well as broader trends in value and attitude changes. Second, students will explore how comparative approaches are useful across various topic areas, such as health, family, education, or migration.
Module Learning Aims	The module 'Comparative Sociology 2' aims: • To provide an overview to theoretical and analytical debates on international comparative research across Europe and beyond; • To assess common challenges in applying quantitative and qualitative techniques to specific 'real-world' sociological questions from a comparative perspective; • To provide a complex understanding of how European societies differ around key selected sociological phenomena at the social, policy and cultural level; • To critically address various empirical strategies to study cross-country differences in contemporary social science research.
Learning Outcomes	On successful completion of this module students should be able:

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	• To reflect on theoretical approaches to cross-national comparative sociology; • To describe the peculiarities, diversity, and similarities of contemporary European societies in their social and demographic structures and dynamics; • To critically examine comparative research to reflect the advantages and shortcomings of various types of research designs; • To develop the ability to use advanced methodological strategies to rigorously compare countries and regions around 'real-world' sociological phenomena.
Indicative Reading / Resources	Each module week will contain one 'required reading'. Students are expected to carefully read and study this central reading, which will represent the essential material of discussion in the tutorial and course development. In addition to this, each lecture topic will contain various 'optional readings' that are recommended for students to prepare the module, the tutorials, their presentations and final assignment. Some general books, while only recommended, can provide useful knowledge for students to prepare the content of the module around some of the key topics covered in class. The following books could provide a useful guide for students: • Breen, R. (Ed.) (2004). Social Mobility in Europe. Oxford: Oxford University Press. • Esping-Andersen, G. (1999). Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies. Oxford: Oxford University Press. • Immerfall, S., and Therborn, G. (2010). Handbook of European Societies. Social Transformations in the 21st century. New York et al: Springer. • Mau, S., and Verwiebe, R. (2010). European Societies. Mapping Structure and Change. Bristol: Policy Press.

Assessment

Assessment Components	(1) a tutorial presentation (20%) and (2) an assignment at the end of term (80%).
Assessment Details	Tutorial Presentation (20% of overall grade) Students will give an oral presentation during the tutorial sessions which is graded by the lecturer. In Teaching Week 2, each student will

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be randomly assigned a tutorial reading to be presented on a specific date. Each presenter will have to prepare an 8–10-minute oral presentation based on the assigned reading. The tutorial presentation is mandatory and failure to deliver results in zero points for the presentation coursework component. Presenters must come to the tutorial room 5-min before starting the session with their presentation slides prepared. Presenters must upload their slide sets via Blackboard the day before the presentation. The presentation on the reading should concentrate on five aspects: (1) what are the objective and aims of the paper; (2) what is the analytical approach or method (if any); (3) what are key substantive points or findings; (4) what are the study implications and potential limitations; (5) how does the reading connect to the lecture topic and required reading more broadly. The assessment of individual presentations will be divided in two aspects equally evaluated. One part of the assessment will be based on the content of the slides by considering: (i) content of slides; (ii) plan and structure of the PowerPoint; (iii) effective/creative design and visuals; (iv) good balance of quantity-quality of information. The other part assessed in the tutorial is the oral presentation and engagement by addressing: (i) plan and structure of oral presentation; (ii) analysis in presentation; (iii) engagement with the tutorial group; (iv) time management.

End-of-term assignment (80% of overall grade) The end-of-term assignment will cover the entire module (the content of lectures and tutorials) and consist of a mix of 20 multiple-choice questions (1 mark each) and 2 essay-style questions (10 marks each). The assignment will be available from Monday, 13th April 2026 at 1 pm and remain open until Midnight on Sunday, 19th April 2026. You can complete it at any time during this window, but once you begin, you will have 60 minutes to finish. The system will submit your assignment automatically when the time expires. You can pause and return during the 60-minute window, but the timer will continue running while you're away. Each question will appear individually, and once an answer is saved, you cannot go back to it. There will be no negative marking for incorrect or skipped questions, and the questions will be drawn randomly from a question bank, ensuring each assignment is unique. Note that copying of work by peers or plagiarising published sources (including self-plagiarism) is unacceptable and will be detected and penalised by the Department and

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	may also lead to disciplinary measures. Find the general TCD plagiarism policy here: https://www.tcd.ie/teachinglearning/assets/pdf/PlagiarismPolicy%2002-06-2016.pdf
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Additional Information

Prerequisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Any other information	