Comparative Corruption – Soc 113
Stanford University, Summer 2016

Course description and objectives

Corruption has been recently drawing increasing policy-making and scholarly attention, in the wake of several waves of political and economic openings in the developing world, as well as several regional and global economic/financial crises. Identifying the commonalities and differences between manifestations, causes, and effects of corruption in various environments can help assess the dangers and the proposed solutions to this widespread issue. The course starts with a discussion of the definitions, impact, and causes of corruption across countries, and then addresses corruption in specific environments, such as developed and developing countries, conflict-ridden societies, and international investment. The pros and cons of various anti-corruption approaches are also discussed. At the end of the course, students will be able to:

• Identify, compare and contrast forms of corruption and their causes and effects in various environments
• Use social scientific concepts to understand corruption, and its proliferation and persistence
• Critically assess various solutions proposed to address corruption, and think creatively about new remedies

Assessment

Participation: 20%

This is a discussion-based course. Your participation and reading preparation are key to both your success and to a successful course. You will be evaluated based on attendance and participation in class discussion and in small-group exercises.

Reading response papers: 30% (15% each)

On two occasions of your choice, you will prepare a 5-page reading memo summarizing your critical reaction to the readings and ending with two questions for class discussion. The memo should address all of the assigned readings for one class, and should be organized around major themes or arguments about corruption that run through the readings. Lengthy summaries of the readings are strongly discouraged, but you need to use the readings’ arguments to write about the themes you select. You
may compare and contrast the readings based on the themes you identify, or assess how well the readings address a certain issue. **Each response paper is due at midnight the night before the class when the respective readings will be discussed (Thursday night).**

**Presentation: 10%**

For one class of your choice, present an applied example that speaks to the reading for that class. This can be based on a relevant newspaper article or a policy report, and the connections to the reading should be emphasized after a summary of the example (and possibly of the main points of the reading). You should end by raising at least one discussion question. You may present this example alone or with a classmate (two people max per class). The presentation should be about 10-15 minutes long. You are responsible to send or share with me your presentation slides no later than noon on the day of the presentation. Presentation dates will be decided in advance.

**Final paper: 40%**

Imagine you are a political risk consultant working for an important think tank. You are assigned to write a 10-15-page report on corruption in a country of your choice, detailing the forms, causes, and consequences of the phenomenon by reference to class material. The paper should have a comparative section highlighting the similarities and differences of corruption in this country relative to other relevant countries. Another section should discuss the anti-corruption efforts and perspectives of this country, and explain what is more likely to be successful (e.g. by reference to failed attempts previously or elsewhere). The report should use at least three sources from academic journals. Papers are due at midnight on **Friday, August 12.**

Each student should write a short proposal (1 page), including a few relevant sources, and meet with me during office hours (or at another agreed-upon time) to discuss paper ideas.

**Students with Documented Disabilities:**

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) located within the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). SDRC staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the SDRC as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk, phone (650) 723-1066.

**Readings**

Readings will be available on-line on Canvas. Articles should be read before each class.
Class schedule

Week 1 (June 26): Introduction to the course; Corruption Definitions and Measurement


Week 2 (July 1): Causes and consequences of corruption


Week 3 (July 8): Corruption in advanced market democracies


**Week 4 (July 15): Corruption in developing countries**


**Week 5 (July 22): Corruption in postcommunism and China**


Week 6 (July 29): Corruption and International interactions


Week 7 (Aug 5): Corruption control


Week 8: Final Papers due Aug 12.