Comparative Corruption – Soc 113/PoliSci 143S
Stanford University, Fall 2015

Course description and objectives
Corruption has been drawing increasing policy-making and scholarly attention since the 1990s, 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 mechanisms of corruption, and their similarities and differences in various environments, can help assess the proposed solutions to this widespread issue. The course starts with a discussion of the definitions and measurement of corruption across countries, and then addresses corruption in specific environments, such as the politics and the economies of 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 the forms and causes of corruption 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 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 midnight the night before the class when the respective readings will be discussed (Sunday or Tuesday 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 12-15-page analytical report on corruption in a country of your choice, detailing a main form of corruption by reference to class material and your own research. 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, in addition to policy reports and other applied sources. Papers are due at 6:30pm on Friday, December 11. I will read a draft of your final paper if it is ready by Dec 8.

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

All readings will be available on-line on Coursework.
Class schedule

September 21: Course Introduction

Sept 23: What is corruption?


Sept 28: What is corruption? Continued


Sept 30: Measuring corruption


Review Transparency International’s corruption indices and reports at: [www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org)

Oct 5: Corruption and development


**Oct 7: Corruption and development continued**


**Oct 12: Corruption, markets, and inequality**


**Oct 14: Unequal influence in mature democracies**


**Oct 19: Corruption and the private sector in advanced market democracies**


Oct 21: Corruption in advanced market democracies continued


Oct 26: Market transition and corruption


Oct 28: Clientelism


Nov 2: Corruption in authoritarian regimes


Other: TBD.

Nov 4: Corruption in post-conflict societies


Nov 9: Corruption in international business


Nov 11: Corruption and the media


Nov 16: Anti-corruption agencies


Other: TBD.

Nov 18: Other anti-corruption approaches


Nov 30: TBD.

Dec 2: Course conclusion/ Final thoughts.
