COMPARATIVE POLITICS SEMINAR:
CORRUPTION and GOVERNANCE
POLSW3952

R 9-10:50 in 302 Fayerweather
Spring 2013
Office hours: M 11-12, or by appt.

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Introduction
Over the past 20 years scholars, policymakers, and academics have devoted increasing attention to the rule of law and corruption as obstacles to economic development. This body of research has raised many interesting questions. What do we mean by “corruption” and the “rule of law”? How can we study “illegal” activity? Can anything be done about it? These questions will be at the center of our attention. We will examine debates about the sources and consequences of corruption and the rule of law. We will also explore theories of corruption and legal development rooted in politics, culture, institutions, economic endowments, and society. One goal is to assess different theories of the rule and law and corruption. Another goal is to design policies based on these arguments. The syllabus should serve as a guide and may be revised depending on student interest and expertise. The suggested readings are designed to help generate ideas for your research papers.

Some of the readings rely on quantitative analyses, but this is not a course in econometrics. In reading pieces with quantitative analyses, you should try to grasp the logic of the argument which can be done without recourse to econometrics. I will give guidance on how to read these papers.

The readings are designed to introduce you to important topics in the study of corruption. If there are related topics that you would like to see on the syllabus, please feel free to make suggestions. The course is designed to help you educate yourself.

Requirements:
One Research Paper 50%
Participation 20%
Presentation 20%
Review 10%

Research Papers
Students will write an original research paper that examines a debate broadly related to corruption, the rule of law, and/or economic development. Students have great freedom to choose the topic. One common approach is to examine variation in the extent of corruption between two countries. For example, students may compare two countries and ask: “Why is corruption higher in Russia than in neighboring Estonia?” Alternatively, they may be a drive by a theoretical question such as: Does the expansion of markets promote or inhibit corruption?

Papers that make policy prescriptions based on a debate in the literature are also welcome. For example, students may examine attempts to combat corruption, such as the Financial Action Task Force’s efforts to reduce money laundering or the World Bank’s various programs to promote the rule of law. Students may examine why countries seek different legal solutions to similar problems.

They may also explore why people obey the law. Students can conduct their own surveys to measure corruption and legality.
Another approach is to analyze media coverage of issues related to corruption. We will talk more about the paper as the semester unfolds, but it is helpful to start thinking about topics for the research paper early.

Students may also review the *Vladivideos* which detail corruption in Peru for evidence about theories of corruption (they are in Spanish).

You may use survey monkey to conduct a poll about cheating and plagiarism at Columbia.

You might examine the re-election rates of public officials accused of corruption.

You may ask whether judges invoke the death penalty more in election years.

There are many possibilities and please start thinking very early in the semester about your research paper.

**Participation**

Active participation in the seminar is essential. Each student should be prepared to discuss each work on the syllabus during each class. You should be able to summarize each work, discuss its strengths and weaknesses, and relate it to broader debates on corruption and the rule of law.

In weeks 2-11 you will circulate a paragraph to the class via e-mail by Tuesday at 5:00 based on the readings. These paragraphs should help stimulate discussion. You will also be asked to make comments on each other’s paper proposals at various stages in the writing process. Feel free to ask me how you are doing on your participation grade at any time.

**Presentation**

Each week, 15-30 minutes of the course will be devoted to presentations by students on questions that are posed on the syllabus. These presentations should be 15 minutes each, and should be presented using slides. In general, weak presentations will simply summarize the readings ("Smith says x, Jones says y"). Strong presentations will

1. Describe any key conceptual issues that must be addressed by work on the question (e.g., a presentation on inequality might discuss different ways of conceptualizing inequality);
2. Describe the central arguments/debates in the literature on the question (e.g., a presentation on corruption might focus on different types of variables –such as regime type, decentralization, level of development -- that influence corruption levels);
3. Describe thorny methodological issues that bedevil work on the question (e.g., a presentation on politics and corruption might discuss the problems of using surveys to measure corruption);
4. Offer criticisms and/or suggest pathways for future research.

To help students get started, the syllabus lists a reading or two. These might serve as a place to begin, but students should also do their own bibliographic research. Students should post their presentations on the "Lecture" section of CourseWorks. They should also create a bibliography of the works they have consulted.
Review
Each student will write a three page “review” of one of the readings which assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the work and makes a recommendation to a hypothetical editor. The review is due by 5:00 on Wednesdays prior to the class that we will discuss the reading. These are not summaries, but opportunities to demonstrate your understanding of the article and your ability to make a cogent assessment of the reading. A strong review will point out strengths as well as weaknesses and make recommendations about how to improve the reading. You should treat the reading as if it has been submitted to a journal or publisher for publication and you have been asked to provide a recommendation about whether the work should be rejected, accepted or revised and resubmitted. If it is to be revised resubmitted, what issues must the authors address.

Academic Honesty: All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. No cheating or plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas without proper attribution). Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to university policy. If you have any questions about what needs to be cited and what does not, please talk with me.

Special Needs: Students with disabilities will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs and I will do everything possible to accommodate you.

No extensions without a medical or family emergency. You will need to bring documentation and notify me prior to the due date for the assignment. If you fail to do so, there is little I can do at that point without being unfair to the other students. This is important.

Jan. 24. Week 1. Introduction to the Seminar: Thinking About Thinking
Chip Heath and Stan Heath, Made To Stick. *

Jan 31. Week 2 Concepts: Corruption, the State, and the Rule of Law
What is corruption and how does it differ from bad policy?


Recommended:


Presentation Topic: Is Corruption Bad?


Week 3. February 7. Methods and Measurement

How can we study corruption?

Sandrea Sequira. “Advances in Measuring Corruption in the Field.” Ms. [http://personal.lse.ac.uk/sequeira/Chapter_Corruption_Sequeira_February.pdf](http://personal.lse.ac.uk/sequeira/Chapter_Corruption_Sequeira_February.pdf)


Daniel Treisman. 2007. “What Have We Learned About Corruption.” *Annual Review of Political Science.* Data are available. JSTOR

Also please review the following cross-national measures of corruption.

Transparency International Index, [http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi](http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi)


Recommended:


Presentation Topic: Are the World Bank Governance Indicators Useful?


Steven Voight. “How (Not) to Measure Institutions?” ms.*

Suggested Readings:


**Week 4. February 14. More Methods and Measurement**


Daniel Corstange. 2009. “Sensitive Questions and Truthful Answers: Modeling the List Experiment with Listit,” *Political Analysis* 17: 45-63. JSTOR

Alexandra Scacco. “Who Riots?” ms. NYU. Department of Politics.*


http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2012/12/19/1206770110.full.pdf?with-ds=yes

**Presentation Topic: Can we measure electoral fraud? Or We Don’t Believe Mr. Churov, We Believe Gauss.**


**Week 5. February 21. Politics and Petty Corruption**


**Presentation Topic: Is the state the main obstacle to corruption?**

Hernando de Soto. 1989. *The Other Path: The Economic Answer to Terrorism*


**Week 6. February 28. Politics and Grand Corruption:**

2-page initial paper proposal due wed. 2/27


Joel Hellman and Geraint Jones and Daniel Kaufmann. 2003. “Seize the state, seize the day: an empirical analysis of state capture and corruption in transition economies.” *Journal of Competitive Economics* 31(4):751—73 JSTOR

**Recommended:**


Presentation Topic: Can Foreign Aid Promote the Rule of Law?


Presentation Topic Two: Is Clientelism Corruption?


Suggested:

Week 7. March 7. Culture, Corruption, and The Rule of Law


Presentation Topic: Why Do People Obey the Law?


Presentation Topic: How have different scholars conceived of culture in their analyses of its effects on corruption?

**Week 8. March 15. Media and Corruption**


**Recommended:**


**Presentation Topic: Does the internet reduce corruption?**


**March 22. Spring Break**

**Week 9. March 29. Societal Explanations for Corruption**


Presentation Topic: Can Social Groups Police Themselves?


Presentation Topic Two: Does natural resource wealth increase corruption? 


Week 11. April 2. ******FIVE PAGE PAPER PROPOSALS DUE**********
Organized Small Group Meetings to Discuss the Five-Page Research Proposal.

Week 11. April 9. States, Rackets, and Informal Economies


http://www.columbia.edu/~tmf2/Private%20Protection%20in%20Russia%20and%20Poland.pdf


Presentation Topic: Are Informal Economies Increasing, Why? And How do We Know? 

http://lnweb90.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf/0/0e1efcae7d9efa4185256a940073f4e5?OpenDocument

Suggested:


**Week 12.** April 16. Student Workshops - Presentations

**Week 13.** April 23. Students Workshops – Presentations

**Week 14.** April 30. Students Workshops- Presentations

Papers due: Friday, May 11 at 4:00 in my office at 1215 Harriman Institute in the International Affairs Building. Hard Copy please. And email a copy to me at tmf2@columbia.edu as a PDF if at all possible. Late Papers lose 1 letter grade per day that they are late.