IR 215: Corruption and Good Governance

Instructor: Olesya Tkacheva
Tuesday and Thursday, 4:50-6:05PM
Harkness Hall 115
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Course description: Why does corruption flourish in some countries but not in others? Why do voters elect corrupt politicians? When do anti-corruption reforms succeed and when do they fail? Does the structure of corrupt networks differ in democratic and non-democratic countries? When and how can the Internet be used for combating corruption? This course lays out the foundation for answering these and many other important questions about government accountability by introducing students to the institutional approach to the study of corruption. The readings examine how incentives created by political institutions can lead to cross-country variation in corruption, and how such factors as culture, natural resources, free media and the Internet can impact the quality of governance. The course begins with the description of the alternative measures of corruption, followed by theoretical models of corruption. Empirical studies of the cross-county variation in corruption are examined next. The course concludes by discussing the successes and failures of anti-corruption reforms. Since the major part of the course is dedicated to large-n studies, some background in econometrics will be helpful, but not required. Students from any department are welcome to the class. Working in groups is strongly recommended.

Evaluation:

- Class participation and quizzes: 20%
  Students are expected to complete assigned readings before the class and to participate in discussion. Simply coming to class and sitting quietly does not count as participation. Occasionally, there will be short quizzes at the beginning of the class based on the reading assigned for that day.
- In-class midterm (March 3, 2011): 40%
- In-class midterm (April 26, 2011): 40%

Readings:

All required readings are posted on the Course Tools in a corresponding for that week folder.

Introduction (Week 1: January 13)

No readings

Part I: Conceptualizing and Measuring Corruption (Week 2: January 18-20)


Suggested:


**Part II: Theoretical Models of Corruption** (Weeks 3-4: January 25-February 3)


Suggested:


**Part III: Corruption and Elections** (Weeks 5-8: February 8-March 1)

A. **Background** (Week 5: February 8-10)


B. **Elections and Electoral Systems** (Weeks 6-8: February 15-March 1)


Suggested:

Marcus André Melo; Carlos Pereira, Carlos Mauricio Figueiredo, “Political and Institutional Checks on Corruption: Explaining the Performance of Brazilian Audit Institutions,” *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 42, no.9 (September 2009): 1217-1244.


**Midterm: March 3 (in class)**

**Part IV: Corruption in Non-Democracies** (Week 9: March 15-17)


Suggested:


Part V: Other Determinants of Corruption (Weeks 10-11)

A. Fragmentation of State (Week 10: March 22-24)


Suggested:


B. Culture, Ethnicity and Other Factors (Week 11: March 29-31)


Suggested:


Part V: Anti-Corruption Reform (Weeks 12-15)

A. Approaches to Reform (Week 12: April 5-April 7)


B. *Evaluating the Success of Reforms* (Week 13: April 12)

Franklin Steves and Alan Rousso, “The Effectiveness of Anti-corruption Programs: Preliminary Evidence from the Transition Countries”, EBRD Working Paper


C. *The Role of the Old and New Media in Fighting Corruption* (Weeks 13-14: April 14-21)


Midterm: April 26 (in class)