**Political Corruption: Causes, Consequences, and Control**

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**Introduction to the Course:**

As one of the oldest and most perplexing phenomena in human society, political corruption exists in almost every country in the contemporary world. Social scientists and policy makers have long been baffled by the relationship between corruption and political and economic development and the question of how to successfully contain corruption. Conventional wisdom is that corruption harms rule of law, demoralizes the society, and inhibits economic growth. But it is more often assumed than tested and proven. Much has been written about political corruption. Yet many questions still remain. In this class, we will address five sets of broad questions that are most common in the discourse on corruption and governance:

1. **Definition of Corruption:** Is the concept of corruption universal? Is it possible to find a commonly accepted and applicable definition of corruption? Should there be a universal standard of “good governance”?  
2. **Causes of Corruption:** What are the possible causes of political corruption in general? What are the causes of corruption in different types of regimes? Is there a general theory of corruption?  
3. **Patterns of Corruption:** What are the various patterns of political corruption in countries of different political and economic development? How does it occur? In what form?  
4. **Consequences of Corruption:** How does corruption affect social and economic development? Why has corruption inhibited economic growth and democratization in some countries but not others? Can corruption be “efficient” and “positive”?  
5. **Control of Corruption:** Can corruption be controlled? If so, how? What are the most effective ways to reduce, contain, and eliminate corruption?

This intensive class will introduce students to theories and key social science debates on the causes and effects of political corruption. Through discussions about whether corruption hurts economic development and political stability, this class will provide a better understanding of the impact of corruption on bureaucracy, the economy, and society at large. At the end of the class, we will make an assessment for mapping out strategies and codes of conduct to control corruption.

**Required readings:**

Recommended readings:


The instructor will provide the required readings on the class website.

I. Conception, Perception, and Definition

**Lecture One: What is Corruption? Corruption Perceptions across Time and Countries**

Definitions of corruption

a. Public-interest-centered definitions.

b. Market-centered definitions.

c. Public-office-centered definitions.

How is corruption perceived in different societies and at different times? Is there a universal standard for defining what is corrupt?

Cases: gift-giving vs. bribery, guanxi (connection) and corruption

Readings:

Heidenheimer, *Political Corruption*, pp.3-136, 139-191; 885-905.


II. Explaining Corruption

**Lecture Two: Regime, Institutions, and Corruption**

Mainly historical-sociological approach to explaining causes of corruption.

Readings:


**Lecture Three: Economy, Market, and Corruption**

Economic approach to explaining corruption, which is based on the rational choice assumptions.


2. Macro-economic approach: the rent-seeking theory
Readings:
Klitgaard, pp.52-97.
Rose-Ackerman, pp. 1-25.
UNDP on “Economic Causes of Corruption” (class website).

Lecture Four: Society, Culture, and Corruption
(1) The socio-structural approach.
(2) The psychological and attitudinal approach.

Readings:
Heidenheimer, pp.539-558.

III. Patterns of Corruption

Lecture Five: Corruption in Developing Countries
(1) Personal rule and kleptocracy
(2) Crony-capitalism
(3) Rent-seeking and booty capitalism
(4) Rentier state and “natural resources curse”

Readings:
Heidenheimer, Political Corruption, pp.375-460.
Additional articles and papers

Lecture Six: Corruption in Transition and Emerging Economies
(1) Informal relations and modes of operation.
(2) Privatization of the state.
(3) Rent-seeking in the emerging markets.
(4) Organized crime and corruption.

Readings:
Johnston, pp.120-184.
Additional articles and papers.
Lecture Seven: *Democracy, Democratization and Corruption*

1. Political scandals and electoral politics
2. Public contracts and rent-seeking
3. Influence peddling

Readings:
- Heidenheimer, pp. 623-794.
- Rose-Ackerman, pp. 127-142.
- M. Johnston, pp60-119.

**IV. Consequences of Corruption**

Lecture Eight: *Political and Economic Consequences of Corruption*

Readings:
- Rose-Ackerman, pp.143-174.
- Heidenheimer, pp. 303-371.

**V. Corruption Control**

Lecture Nine: *Reduce Corruption: Theory and Practice*

How to reduce corruption has been a theoretical and policy challenge in the contemporary world. In this lecture we explore some international and domestic best practices against corruption, examining the reasons for success and failure of anti-corruption efforts.

Readings:
- Heidenheimer, pp. 909-959.
- Rose-Ackerman, pp. 175-222.
- Johnson, chapter 8
- Additional articles and papers.