Course description
The standard image of corruption entails wealthy elites in poor countries easily breaking weak laws to increase their wealth. Yet Latin America, according to empirical evidence, defies that common trend because it is the only region in the world in which corruption tends to reduce income inequality rather than increase it. This seminar explores the many unusual paradoxes of corruption in Latin America and its effect on economic and social variables. Our goal is to understand the peculiar and enigmatic dance that exists between corruption and politics, a topic that is poorly understood and commonly distorted by ideological rhetoric. We will identify the different forms of corruption that exist, the sweeping anti-corruption efforts that are gaining steam in the region, and the often-questionable political motives behind them. We will examine the conditions under which corruption stifles economic growth, efficiency, and investment; but also, the environments in which corruption effectively substitutes for inadequate or missing laws to grease the wheels for investment. Overall, we aim to show a precise picture of when and how corruption thrives, and how to properly combat it.

Course materials
Your will read 4-5 papers per week, for a total of 120 pages. When I say read, I mean reading strategically, not linearly. Your job is to mine the text you are reading for information. Instead of cruising along with the narrative you need to dive in, find the information you need, and move along to the next stack of readings for class.

All required materials will be uploaded to our website and will remain there for the entire course. The only books that I recommend you buy are (optional):

To succeed in this course, you must read the required readings before class. In each class, I will generally tell you a bit about how to prepare for the next class.

Requirements & grading
- Participation (20%): Students are expected to complete all assigned readings prior to class, actively engage in discussions, and link assigned materials to relevant debates in the media and politics. Readings marked as “additional readings” are not required.
- Midterm exam (40%): Response paper, due on March 15th.
- Final paper (40%): Research can be delivered as a written paper (2000 - 2500 words), podcast (10 minutes), or video (10 minutes) due on May 8th. The project can be authored individually or co-authored with another student. If the project is a co-authored paper, it should be longer (2500 - 3000 words), and the quality of podcast/video is expected to be significantly higher. Quantitative research such as coding quantitative measures or developing original statistical analysis (R, Stata, or Python) can also be delivered as final projects if visualizations of the data and replicable code are provided. You will be required to hand in the following sections (in advance, on the dates indicated) as progress reports throughout the course:
  - February 25: Abstract
  - March 11: Sources and/or primary data
  - April 15: Preliminary results

1Extract from Sweeney 2012, available here: https://miriamsweeney.net/2012/06/20/readforgradschool/
Required readings

Introduction (January 28)

Corruption (February 4)

Types of corruption (February 11)

Clientelism (February 18)

Influence (February 25)
*(Final paper deadline: Deliver an abstract that describes your final paper)*

Electoral corruption & democratization *(March 4)*

*(Response paper due on March 15th, 2019. Papers delivered late won’t be accepted.)*

Economic effects *(March 25)*
*(Final paper deadline: Sources and/or primary data are due)*

Collective action *(April 1)*

Accountability *(April 8)*

Media & transparency *(April 15)*
*(Final paper deadline: Preliminary results are due)*
- Malesky, E., Schuler, P., & Tran, A. (2012). The adverse effects of sunshine: A field experiment on

**Bureaucratic reform (April 22)**

**Auditing (April 29)**

*(Final paper due on May 8th, 2019)*
Additional readings
You do not have to read these. This list will be helpful in case you want to know more about a specific topic.

**Corruption (February 4)**

**Types of corruption (February 11)**

**Clientelism (February 18)**

**Influence (February 25)**
- Bologna, J., & Ross, A. (2015). Corruption and entrepreneurship: Evidence from Brazilian municipal-
Electoral corruption & democratization (March 4)

Economic effects (March 25)

Collective action (April 1)

Accountability (April 8)
Media & transparency (April 15)

Bureaucratic reform (April 22)

Auditing (April 29)