

POL 370R: Design of Russian Corruption

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Spring 2020

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Office Hours: MW 3:00–4:00 p.m.

Class Hours: MW 10:05–11:25 a.m.

Office: 9 MacMillan Hall

Class Room: 202 Harrison Hall

Course Description

In light of concerns about Russian corruption's infiltration of American democracy, this course will untangle the inner-workings of Russian corruption to unearth the country's dark underbelly. The course will define corruption, reveal its design, and describe two of its political manifestations (organized crime and kleptocracy). Students will then trace corruption as it existed in the Russian Empire through today to learn about corruption's evolution in Russia. Next, the course will demonstrate how the web of Russian corruption permeates and influences Western governments. At the end of the course, students will learn about anti-corruption strategies and their politicization in Russia. Students will write policy briefs and op-eds that reflect topics covered in the course's reading materials, spanning social sciences, humanities, investigative reporting, primary sources, and fictional literature.

Course Objectives

1. Develop writing and reading techniques
2. Distinguish between corruption and other informal activities
3. Provide historical context for and contemporary implications of Russian corruption

Required Readings

All readings are available on Canvas or as active links in this syllabus.

Grading

- 5% Event Attendance and Report
- 15% Reading Reactions
- 5% In-Class Activities
- 45% Policy Brief Paper and Components
- 15% Policy Brief Presentation
- 15% Op-Ed

Grading Scale

Grade	Minimum %	Grade	Minimum %
A+	97%	C	73%
A	93%	C-	70%
A-	90%	D+	67%
B+	87%	D	63%
B	83%	D-	60%
B-	80%	F	0%
C+	77%		

Course Policies

Class Communications and Lecture Policies

- Lectures and PowerPoints will be posted online, but these slides should be considered an outline of lectures. It is the student's responsibility to take notes.
- Feedback will not be provided on assignments before assignment due date unless otherwise noted.
- Course communications will be sent via Canvas. It is your responsibility to check your Canvas messages to stay updated on announcements, assignments, grades, feedback, and other instructor communications.
- Any concerns with grades should be discussed with the instructor in person during office hours rather than through email.
- Mute all electronic devices and avoid using cell phones during class.
- Studies show that students retain more information when taking notes by hand (e.g. [Mueller and Oppenheimer 2014](#)). Nevertheless, laptops may be used in class but only for the purposes of taking notes and other class-related exercises. Students may not use laptops during film screenings.
- Written and typed work submitted as attachments on Canvas or in emails must be in one of the following formats: .pdf, .doc, .docx, or as direct text on a Canvas submission form. Other file formats will not be accepted.

Attendance Policies

- Students are expected to attend every class unless excused and actively participate in class discussions.
- Students are responsible for making up any missed work, regardless of the reason for their absence. It is also the absentee's responsibility to gather missing notes or materials.
- Students wishing to excuse any absences must let the instructor know the reason for their absence. The instructor reserves the right to accept or deny requests for absence excusals. Permissions granting excused absences include but are not limited to death in the family, serious illness, and religious observances. Other requests for excused absences will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Late Work Submission

- Unexcused late work will receive a deduction of a letter grade for every 24 hours after the deadline.
- In some circumstances, determined by the instructor, late work may be accepted without penalty. Please contact the instructor with a reason for requesting no penalty on a late submission of work.
- Students concerned about their general academic performance or university experience are encouraged to contact the [Student Success Center](#).

Disabilities

- If you have a physical, learning, medical and/or psychiatric disability and feel that you may need a reasonable accommodation to fulfill the essential functions of the course that are listed in this syllabus, you are encouraged to contact the Miller Center for [Student Disability Services](#) at 529-1541 (V/TTY), located in the Shriver Center, Room 304.

Mental Health

- If you are experiencing mental or emotional distress, you are encouraged to call [Student Counseling Service](#) (513-529-4634). For emergencies outside of business hours, the Community and Counseling and Crisis Center (844-427-4747) has a 24-hour hotline.

Academic Integrity

- Academic integrity is an important component of education and professionalization. Therefore, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, unauthorized collaboration, misrepresentation, and gaining an unfair advantage on coursework will not be tolerated. Please review Miami University's [Student Code of Conduct](#). You may also see Chapter 5 of the Student Handbook for a list of penalties students face for academic dishonesty.
- Course materials provided to you are copyright protected. You may make copies of course materials solely for your own use. You may not copy, reproduce, or electronically transmit any course materials to any person or company for commercial or other purposes without the faculty member's express permission. Violation of this prohibition may subject the student to discipline/suspension/dismissal under the Miami's Code of Student Conduct or Academic Integrity Policy.

Graded Materials

Reading Reactions (15%)

For each class period (unless instructed otherwise), you are expected to write down each of the following:

- Question: one thing you that confused you about the readings or that you did not understand
- Takeaway: one thing that you learned about the readings
- Critique: one thing from the readings with which you disagreed or did not like
- Relevance: one recent piece of news that relates to any of the readings

Amnesty: You're all busy! I get it! I will forgive you for not reading and/or writing a reaction on 3 class days. No excuse needed.

In-Class Activities (5%)

In-class activities during the semester will offer students opportunities to actively engage with course topics. Students will be awarded up to 5 points for active participation in these activities.

Event Attendance and Report (5%)

Final Deadline: May 8

Students are required to attend one university event (e.g., guest speakers and lectures) and submit a one-page report about that event. A list of events that students may attend and write about for credit will be listed on Canvas under the *Assignments* tab.

Policy Brief Topic (5%)

Meeting Deadline: February 12

Submission Deadline: February 14

By February 12, students must meet with me to discuss their topic and have it approved (1 point). Students may meet with me during office hours or schedule an appointment with me outside of office hours.

By February 14, students must submit a 250-word topic submission that includes a one-sentence description of their topic followed by an elaboration on a proposed argument.

Policy Brief Outline (10%)

Deadline: February 21

By February 21, students will submit a outline or map of their policy brief in addition to a 500-word argument description that builds on their description from the previous assignment.

The following links describe the expected formats for argument outlines and maps:

- libguides.gatech.edu/c.php?g=54271&p=350394
- philosophy.hku.hk/think/arg/complex.php

Annotated Bibliography (10%)

Deadline: March 6

By March 6, students will submit a 10-item annotated bibliography with 100 words written per item.

Cornell University provides a guide to annotated bibliographies developing annotated bibliographies at guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography.

Policy Brief Draft (5%)

Deadline: April 10

Policy brief drafts, approximately 2,000 words in length, must be submitted by April 10. Feedback will be provided on these drafts.

The University of Southern California describes policy briefs at libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/policymemo.

Good examples of policy briefs that should help guide your writing can be found at the following links:

- wilsoncenter.org/publications?content_type=393
- brookings.edu/series/policy-brief-series-on-the-new-geopolitics/
- cfr.org/publications
- belfercenter.org/research/publication-type/policybriefs-testimony

Policy Brief Slide Submission (3%)

Deadlines: April 27 and April 29

Each student will present on their policy briefs. These presentations, totalling about 8-12 minutes each, will be accompanied slides. These slides must submitted on Canvas **one week prior to the date of their presentation**. I will provide feedback on these slides.

If you are scheduled to present on May 4, your slides must be submitted on Canvas by April 27. If you are scheduled to present on May 6, your slides must be submitted on Canvas by April 29.

Policy Brief (15%)

Deadline: May 1

Final policy briefs, approximately 2,000 words in length, must be submitted by May 1.

Policy Brief Presentation (12%)

Presentations held on May 4 and May 6

During the last week of classes (May 4 and May 6), students will present their policy brief to their peers for 8-12 minutes, depending on class size.

Tips for effective presentations are available at the following links:

- libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/oralpresentation
- youtube.com/watch?v=Iwpi1Lm6dFo

Op-Ed (15%)

Deadline: May 13

By May 13, students will submit an opinion piece based on their policy brief but meant for a general audience. This opinion piece should be no more than 750 words.

A guide to writing op-eds is available at inims.illinois.edu/images/MemberResources/TenStepsWritingOpEd.pdf.

Good examples of op-eds can be found at the following links:

- nytimes.com/section/opinion
- theguardian.com/uk/commentisfree
- project-syndicate.org/

Class Schedule

Students are expected to come to class having completed the readings assigned for that day and with written reports on those readings (see above for reading report instructions). All readings will be hyperlinked from in the below schedule or made available in the Canvas site's *Files* section. The course schedule and readings are subject to change. Any such changes will be announced in class and/or through email.

Course Foundations

Week 01, 01/27 - 01/31: Course Introduction

Monday, January 27: Course Introduction

Wednesday, January 29: Formal and Informal Institutions

- North, Douglass. *Institutions, institutional change, and economic performance*. Cambridge University Press. (1990). Pgs. 3-10.
 - Canvas

Week 02, 02/03 - 02/07: Succeeding in the Course

Monday, February 3: Strategies for Reading and Finding Sources

- Greengross, Gil, Paul J. Silva, and Emily C. Nusbaum “Sex differences in humor production ability: A meta-analysis.” *Journal of Research in Personality*. (2020)
 - Canvas
- Greengross, Gil. “Are men really funnier than women?” *Psychology Today*. (2019)
 - Link: psychologytoday.com/us/blog/humor-sapiens/201910/are-men-really-funnier-women
- Watson, Paul Joseph. “New study finds women aren’t as funny as men.” *Infowars*. (2019)
 - Canvas

Wednesday, February 5: Strategies for Writing

- Bayles, Martha. “How not to defend free speech”. *Hudson Institute*. (2017)
 - Canvas
 - Also found at hudson.org/research/13451-how-not-to-defend-free-speech
- Hanlon, Aaron R. “The myth of the ‘marketplace of ideas’ on campus.” *The New Republic*. (2017)
 - Canvas
 - Also found at newrepublic.com/article/141150/myth-marketplace-ideas-campus-charles-murray-milo-yiannopoulos

Week 03, 02/10 - 02/14: What is Corruption?

Monday, February 10: Defining Corruption

- Rose-Ackerman, Susan and Bonnie J. Palifka. *Corruption and government: Causes, consequences, and reform*. Cambridge University Press. (2016). Chapter 1.
 - Canvas
- Warren, Elizabeth. “Anti-Corruption and Public Integrity Act.”
 - Canvas
- Gessen, Masha. “What ‘corruption’ means in the impeachment hearings.” *The New Yorker*. (2019)
 - Canvas

Wednesday, February 12: Corruption’s Manifestations: Organized Crime and Kleptocracy

- Gambetta, Diego. *The Sicilian mafia: the business of private protection*. Harvard University Press. Pgs. 1-11.
 - Canvas
- TraCCC Center. “Kleptocratic regimes and national security: A pervasive threat and how it can be neutralized.” Pgs. 1-18.
 - Canvas
- **Last day to meet with me about policy brief topic**

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14: POLICY BRIEF TOPIC DUE

Week 04, 02/17 - 02/21: What is Russia?

Monday, February 17: Russia Before Putin

- Malyukova, Anna. Three-part series on life in Soviet Russia.
 - Canvas.
- Lloyd, John. “The Russian devolution.” *The New York Times*. (1999)
 - Canvas

Wednesday, February 19: Russia Under Putin

- Putin, Vladimir. “Russia at the turn of the millenium.”
 - Canvas
- McFaul, Michael. “Is Putinism the Russian norm or an aberration?” *Current History*. (2018)
 - Canvas

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21: POLICY BRIEF OUTLINE DUE

Evolution of Russian Corruption

Week 05, 02/24 - 02/28: Corruption in Russia’s Early Days

Monday, February 24: Everyday Corruption in Imperial Russia

- Saltykov-Schedrin, Mikhail. *The history of a town*. (1870). Translated by I.P. Foote in 1980. Chapters TBD.
 - Canvas

Wednesday, February 26: Policy Brief Workshop

- Come to class with materials necessary to work on policy briefs

Week 06, 03/02 - 03/06: High-Level Corruption in the Soviet Union

Monday, March 2: High-Level Corruption in the Soviet Utopia

- Simis, Konstantin. *USSR: the corrupt society*. Simon & Schuster. (1982). Chapter 2.
 - Canvas

Wednesday, March 4: The Origins of Russian Organized Crime

- Varese, Frederico. “The society of the vory-v-zakone, 1930s-1950s.” *Cahiers du Monde russe*. (1998)
 - Canvas

FRIDAY, MARCH 6: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

Week 07, 03/09 - 03/13: Blat and Other Variations on Corruption

Monday, March 9: A Culture of Corruption

- Ledeneva, Alena. *Russia’s economy of favours: Blat, networking and informal exchange*. Cambridge University Press. (1998). Chapter 1.
 - Canvas

Wednesday, March 11: James Heinzen Visit

- Heinzen, James. *The art of the bribe: Corruption under Stalin*. Yale University Press. (2016). Chapters 3 and 4.
 - Canvas

Week 08, 03/16 - 03/20: The Russian Wild East

Monday, March 16: Corruption in a New Russia

- Seymour M. Hersh. “The Wild East.” *The Atlantic*. (1995)
 - Canvas
- Wedel, Janine. “The Harvard boys do Russia.” *The Nation*. (1998)
 - Canvas

Wednesday, March 18: Russian Organized Crime Expands West

- The Tri-State Soviet Emigre Organized Crime Project Report. (1998)
 - Canvas
- In Class: BBC’s [The Brainy Dollar Don](#)

Week 09, 03/23 - 03/27: SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)

Week 10, 03/30 - 04/03: Putin’s Corruption

Monday, March 30: Putin’s Corrupt Origins

- Dawisha, Karen. *Putin’s kleptocracy: Who owns Russia?*. Simon & Schuster. (2014). Chapter 1–2.
 - Canvas

Wednesday, April 1: The Power Vertical

- Dawisha, Karen. *Putin’s kleptocracy: Who owns Russia?*. Simon & Schuster. (2014). Chapter 6.
 - Canvas
- Listen at home for class: The Asset’s *The Sistema*. (2019)
 - Link: theassetpodcast.org/episode/the-sistema/

Week 11, 04/06 - 04/10: Creating a Kleptocracy

Monday, April 6: What’s in it for Putin?

- Milov, Vladimir, Boris Nemtsov, Vladimir Ryzhkov, and Olga Shorina. “Putin. Corruption. An independent white paper.” (2011)
 - Link: putin-itogi.ru/putin-corruption-an-independent-white-paper

Wednesday, April 8: The New Face of Russian Organized Crime

- Galeotti, Mark. *The vory: Russia’s super mafia*. Yale University Press. (2018). Part 4.
 - Canvas

FRIDAY, APRIL 10: POLICY BRIEF DRAFT DUE

Globalizing Russian Corruption

Week 12, 04/13 - 04/17: Hiding Russian Money

Monday, April 13: Money Laundering

- Weber, Alexander, Boris Groendahl, and Nicholas Comfort. “Money to launder? Here’s how (Hint: Find a bank).” *Bloomberg*. (2019)
 - Link: [bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-03-09/money-to-launder-here-s-how-hint-find-a-bank-quicktake](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-03-09/money-to-launder-here-s-how-hint-find-a-bank-quicktake)
- Harding, Luke. “Revealed: the \$2bn offshore trail that leads to Vladimir Putin.” (2016)
 - Link: [theguardian.com/news/2016/apr/03/panama-papers-money-hidden-offshore](https://www.theguardian.com/news/2016/apr/03/panama-papers-money-hidden-offshore)
- Hope, Bradley, Drew Hinshaw, and Patricia Kowsmann. “How one stubborn banker exposed a 200-billion dollar Russian money laundering scandal.” *Wall Street Journal*. (2018)
 - Canvas
 - Also found at [wsj.com/articles/how-one-stubborn-banker-exposed-a-200-billion-russian-money-laundering-scandal-1540307327](https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-one-stubborn-banker-exposed-a-200-billion-russian-money-laundering-scandal-1540307327)
- In Class: [ARD’s PanamaPapers – The Shady World of Offshore Companies](#)

Wednesday, April 15: NO CLASS

Week 13, 04/20 - 04/24: Russian Corruption and Politics

Monday, April 20: Russian Corruption and Global Destabilization

- Der Spiegel Staff. “A Russian billionaire’s Monaco fiefdom.” *Spiegel Online*. (2018)
 - Link: [spiegel.de/international/world/as-monaco-dmitry-rybolovlev-and-his-influence-in-monaco-a-1238822.html](https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/as-monaco-dmitry-rybolovlev-and-his-influence-in-monaco-a-1238822.html)
- Reynolds, Nathaniel. “Putin’s not-so-secret mercenaries: Patronage, geopolitics, and the Wagner Group.” *Carnegie Endowment*. (2019)
 - Canvas

Wednesday, April 22: Russian Corruption and the Trump Administration

- Steele, Christopher. “Trump-Russia Dossier.” (2016)
 - Canvas
- Burgis, Tom. “Tower of secrets: the Russian money behind a Donald Trump skyscraper.” *Financial Times*. (2018)
 - Canvas
 - Also found at [ft.com/trumptoronto](https://www.ft.com/trumptoronto)

So You Want To Fight Corruption?

Week 14, 04/27 - 05/01: Fighting Corruption

Monday, April 27: Politicizing Anti-Corruption Efforts

- O’Brien, Timothy L. “The capitalist in the cage.” *The New York Times*. (2004)
 - Canvas
- Appel, Hilary and Wendy Chuyi Sheng. “Putin’s renationalization campaign.” *PONARS Eurasia*. (2017)
 - Canvas
- **Slides due for May 4 presentations**

Wednesday, April 29: The Price of Grassroots Anti-Corruptionism

- Watch at home for class: *Enemy of the state: Navalny*. CBS.
 - [youtube.com/watch?v=40XR3TZPD-Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40XR3TZPD-Q)
- Holmes, Leslie. “A fish rots from the head: Corruption scandals in post-communist Russia.” (2018)
 - Canvas
- **Slides due for May 6 presentations**

FRIDAY, MAY 1: POLICY BRIEF DUE

Week 15, 05/04 - 05/08: Policy Brief Presentation Week

Monday, May 4: Policy Brief Presentations

Wednesday, May 6: Policy Brief Presentations

FRIDAY, MAY 8: LAST DAY TO SUBMIT EVENT ATTENDANCE REPORTS

Week 16, 05/11 - 05/15: Finals Week

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13: OP-ED DUE