

Some Guidance on the Optional Research Paper in the Course “Combating Corruption”

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The Paper. Students in this course have the option of submitting a research paper in lieu of taking the final exam. This document provides some guidance on how to write the paper and some sample topics that would be appropriate for the paper.

Deadline. If you choose to write a paper, the deadline for submitting the paper is 22 May 2020.

Language and Length. The research paper must be written in the English language. It should consist of at least 2,000¹ words and no more than 5,000 words.

Legal Component. Much of the literature about corruption has been written by social scientists (e.g., economists, sociologists, political scientists, international relations specialists). It is perfectly acceptable to include insights from these disciplines in your paper. However, because this is a course in law, your paper should include at least some references to legal doctrines, rules, or instruments, such as international treaties, national legislation, European Union legislation, judicial decisions, etc.

English Grammar. This course is not intended primarily to test your knowledge or application of English grammar. Although your paper should be as grammatically correct as possible, I am much more interested in the substance of the papers than in the precision of your grammar. For this reason, if you have any anxieties about your ability to express yourself in written English, please relax and focus on substance, organization, and clarity.

Format. The paper may be structured and written in any format that is intelligible to the instructor. This means that you are not required adhere to any particular style of writing or citation, such as the [Chicago Manual of Style](#), the [American Psychological Association \(APA\) citation style](#), etc. The paper **should** contain citations to sources relied upon or quoted in the paper, but you may use footnotes, endnotes, in-text citations, or whatever method helps the reader understand that you are referring to a source.

Research Materials. For general information from the social sciences about corruption, the course textbook is a very good source. Likewise, the alternative readings that are mentioned in the course presentation slides on <https://corruptioncourse.online> may be useful sources for your paper. Copies of the major anti-corruption treaties (OECD, United Nations, etc.) are also linked on the course website, as are some of the major United States and Latvian laws on corruption. Any other materials on the website may also be cited in your paper. You should also consult at least some materials beyond the textbook and website materials. Within reason, I am willing to help you find additional research materials that you can use to write your paper. If you would like to ask for help, please send me an email with an idea of the type of information you wish to use.

¹ Previously I stated that the paper needs to be at least 3,000 words. However, because this course includes undergraduates and is given entirely in a foreign language, I have decided to reduce the minimum word limit to 2,000 words.

What an Ideal Paper Looks Like. The following may be helpful in enabling you to write an excellent paper. The ideal paper should:

- Be logically well organized. Among other things, in most cases, this means that you should introduce general principles before discussing specific principles.
- Demonstrate the student's understanding of core concepts which are accurately and completely applied.
- Include some critical, original analysis of your own. This does not mean that you must think of something that no one ever thought of or wrote about before. It simply means that you do more than summarize someone else's materials but instead provide **your own** thoughts in your analysis. Ideally, the student will make the conclusions or analyses his or her own rather than simply repeating what others have said.

What to Avoid. In drafting your paper, you should try to avoid excessively repeating your points. Above all, please avoid plagiarism. This means that when you use information from any source, unless you clearly indicate that you are quoting that source (e.g., through quotation marks), you must write in your own words rather than cut and paste a verbatim copy of another person's text. If you have any questions about how to avoid plagiarism, please feel free to contact me.

Sample Paper Topics. Below are some ideas for research papers in the course "Combating Corruption." If you do not see anything here that you like, you may choose your own topic, but please let me know by email the topic you have chosen at least four weeks before the paper submission deadline. If you would like me to review an outline of your proposed paper before it is submitted, you may (but do not have to) send it to me by email at sullivan@sullivanlaw.net. If you do want me to review your outline, please allow me at least two weeks before the 22 May submission deadline to provide my comments on your outline.

- Critically evaluate the anti-corruption laws of one or more countries (for example, Latvia, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Spain, United States, Brazil, etc.). One possible structure for this paper (but not the only possible structure) could begin with an introduction to the phenomenon of corruption and include a short history of attempts to prevent and punish public corruption in domestic and international laws, together with some of the lessons that have been learned from the social sciences (e.g., economics, sociology, political science, etc.) Then the student could describe in detail the anti-corruption legislation of the country or countries the student has selected. Then the paper could compare the chosen legislation with the "lessons learned" from detailed studies of corruption and critically assess what the student thinks works and what doesn't work, what is strong, and what is weak about the legislation. The paper could conclude with the student's own conclusions about what could be done to improve the legislation, or the student's predictions of the likely success of the legislation in achieving its aim.
- Similar to the above, compare and contrast the anti-corruption laws of two or more different countries (or perhaps compare and contrast multiple anti-corruption treaties such as the OECD and UN conventions), highlighting similarities and differences, and what you may perceive as shortcomings or illogical or unhelpful aspects. Be sure to include your own critical analysis.
- Conduct a case study of an industry, a government department, a company, or some other sector or entity that has faced problems with corruption and implemented a program to reduce or prevent corruption. The student could evaluate in detail the extent to which he or she believes the program has been successful in achieving its aims. The student could also offer suggestions for improvement or criticisms (if warranted) about the program.

- Conduct a case study of a specific investigation or prosecution of alleged corruption. The case may be from Latvia, the United States, Germany, Brazil, or any other country in the world. In structuring the paper, you might provide an introduction followed by the facts of the alleged corrupt practice and a description of how those facts came to the attention of the authorities. You might describe how the authorities investigated and prosecuted the alleged violations of law and the results of the investigation or prosecution. Be sure to provide some critical analysis of some aspect of the investigation or prosecution. This might include your views of what was done wrong, what was done right, or how the authorities might have approached the case differently.
- Write a paper on the extraterritorial application of one or more countries' anti-corruption laws to foreigners. You might, for example, consider how the United States Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) is often used to address foreign bribery and shady accounting practices involving European companies. In addition, the "Magnitsky" sanctions laws adopted in Latvia, the United States, the United Kingdom, etc., are often applied extraterritorially in cases of alleged corruption. In this paper, you might describe the rationales and specific mechanisms by which these laws are applied to foreigners, and you might critically evaluate the fairness and overall effectiveness of such laws.
- You might write about cases in which you believe that anti-corruption laws have been applied in unjust ways or in ways that aggravated rather than improved the situation.

If you have questions or comments about any of this guidance, please direct them to me by email at sullivan@sullivanlaw.net