Course description

This course is designed for individuals interested in learning more about the art and science of influence in organizations. Many people are ambivalent, if not disdainful, of those who seek to wield power and influence at work, but power and influence are key mechanisms by which things get done.

For those considering careers in management, it is important to be able to diagnose situations as opportunities to exercise power and influence in order to form and implement new strategies. In addition, managers are usually on the receiving end of these processes. An astute manager knows how to anticipate moves that others will make, how to block or avoid them when they have undesirable consequences, and how to help these moves succeed when their consequences are beneficial.

The course aims to provide you with “political intelligence” in a sense. After taking this course, you will be able to: (1) diagnose the true distribution of power in organizations, (2) identify strategies for building sources of power, (3) develop techniques for influencing others, and (4) understand the role of power in building cooperation and leading change in organizations. These skills will be invaluable throughout your career.

Course requirements

You will be evaluated on the quality of your contributions to class discussions (40%) and three brief memos (60%).

Participation (40%)

Much of what you gain from this course will be an exposure to the ideas and insights of other students. As such, it is essential that you come to class prepared to share your perspective with others and to test your analyses against the analyses of your classmates.

All class sessions will involve active discussion based on the readings and cases, with an emphasis both on theoretical questions and practical implications. You should be prepared to share your ideas and to listen to and interpret the issues presented by others. The use of laptops and tablets is not permitted in our classroom, so adequate preparation prior to class meetings is essential. Keep in mind that your goal should be to contribute high quality, rather than high quantity, discussion comments and questions. High quality contributions reflect (a) rigorous analysis or diagnosis, (b) integration across material,
and/or (c) thoughtful recommendations for the characters in cases or your peers in the classroom.

Attendance and participation in each class session is expected, and it is graded for each meeting rather than using a summary judgment at the end of the course. If you must miss a class, it is essential that you notify me at least 24 hours in advance so I can make arrangements for any in-class exercises. You will receive no class participation credit for any classes missed. If you miss more than two class meetings, you will receive an incomplete. These attendance and class participation policies apply to any and all reasons for missing class.

**Memos (60%)**

There is no final exam or final paper for this course. Instead, you will need to write three memos designed to help you analyze past and present episodes in your career and strategize for your future. These memos should be relatively brief: each one is limited to 2 double-spaced pages, 1-inch margins, 12-point font. As a set, they are intended to help you reflect on and digest the course concepts.

**MEMO A:** What are your goals, with respect to power and influence, for the next five years of your career? For the following five years? (e.g., What position(s) would you like to attain? What broader goals do you have that will require some degree of power and influence?)

For many of you, this may be a difficult memo to write because you are not used to adopting a long-term perspective in thinking about your career path. Nevertheless, identifying a set of long-term goals is a necessary first step in taking a course such as this. Having no clear set of goals is like having no clear sense of direction. Although you may struggle with this endeavor, please be patient with it and give it your best effort.

**Due: Week 2 at the beginning of class**

**MEMO B:** Describe two situations in your professional life, one in which you have flourished and one in which you have had difficulty. What aspects of your personality, skills, or abilities contributed to your outcomes in each situation? What about your relationships or social network contributed to your outcomes in each situation?

**Due: Week 3 at the beginning of class**

**MEMO C:** Describe a situation you have faced in your career that relates to a point we discussed in class (NOTE: The situation should be different from any situations discussed in prior memos). I don’t want you to regurgitate what we have covered in class. Instead, apply the concepts we have introduced to dissect a particular episode or relationship you now better understand.
The purpose of this memo is to present thoughts and reactions to the material covered in a given class. The criteria for this assignment are similar to the criteria for a good comment in class. That is, the memo should be relevant, concise, and extend the analysis of the class material in a useful way. In writing this memo, you should assume that we share the common ground of the class experience and start from there. Don’t waste time summarizing the case or the class discussion.

I want to encourage you to think about and apply the material in the class and to force you to organize your thoughts on paper. I find that I understand things much better when I force myself to write them down clearly. I hope this memo will give you an incentive to do this sort of clarifying.

**Due: Week 6 at the beginning of class**

**Required course materials**

Available online through the NYU Professional Bookstore, [http://www.bookstores.nyu.edu/professional.store/](http://www.bookstores.nyu.edu/professional.store/):

- Power and Politics Harvard Case/Reading packet.
- Please also pay the following fees for in-class materials/simulations:
  - Class handout (at NYU Professional Bookstore)
  - Change Management: Power and Influence simulation

Additional readings and other course materials will be provided on *NYU Classes* or handed out in class.

**Laptop/Tablet Policy**

No laptops or tablets are allowed in class, except on the day of the Change Simulation. The course depends too much on your participation to allow the temptation to be distracted.
COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS

October 31: Naïve Influence: Introduction to the Course

Readings: Jick & Gentile “Donna Dubinsky”

Case: Donna Dubinsky and Apple Computer, Inc.
1. Why was Donna Dubinsky initially successful at Apple Computer? (1981-1984)
2. How and why did things begin to unravel?
3. How did Dubinsky react and why?
4. What should she have done differently?

In class: I will ask you to share your motivation for taking this class and how you see power and influence relating to your job/career.

Read after class: Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 1, “Decisions and Implementation”
Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 2, “When is Power Used?”
Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 3, “Diagnosing Power and Dependence”

November 7: Savvy Influence: Reputation, Performance, & Resources

*REMINDER: Memo A is due at the beginning of class.

Readings: Caro, TPTP, Ch. 13, "On His Way"
Caro, TPTP, Ch. 16, "In Tune"

Case: Lyndon Johnson, Part I (Questions for the Caro readings)
1. What things did Johnson do to build his reputation?
2. How did Johnson think about effective performance in his job? What did performance mean to him?
3. What strategies did Johnson use to acquire resources useful for exercising power?

Case (in class video): Excerpts from Rick Burns' “New York” about Robert Moses

Read after class: Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 4, "Perspectives on Where Power Comes From"
Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 5, "Resources, Allies, and the New Golden Rule"
Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 7, "Formal Authority, Reputation, and Performance"

November 14: Individual Attributes, Networks, and Alliances

*REMINDER: Memo B is due at the beginning of class.

Readings: Caro, M of A, Ch. 6, "Buying and Selling"
Auletta, “A Woman’s Place” New Yorker article
Valley, “Heidi Roizen” HBS case
Hill, “Amelia Rogers at Tassani Communications” HBS case
Case: Lyndon Johnson, Part II (Questions for the Caro reading)
1. What are the sources of power that Johnson possessed or developed?
2. Which personal characteristics and aptitudes did Johnson demonstrate?
3. What structural or cultural sources of power did Johnson have or acquire?

Case: Heidi Roizen
1. What steps did Roizen take, over various jobs, to develop a network? To maintain it?
2. What are the strengths of Roizen’s network as we see it at the end of the case? The weaknesses?
3. What suggestions would you give Roizen for adjusting and maintaining her network as she becomes more involved as an Internet venture capitalist?
4. What has made Roizen so successful?

Case: Amelia Rogers at Tassani Communication
1. What is going on here? Why did Burns call Johnson? Why did Johnson call Rogers?
2. What should Rogers do? Should she speak to Burns? Should she speak to Paglia? (Please be specific about the influence strategy and tactics she should use)

Read after class: Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 6, "Location in the Communication Network"
Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 9, "Individual Attributes as Sources of Power"

December 21: Trust and Conflict

Readings: Friedman, "Black Caucus Groups at Xerox Corporation (A)" HBS case

Case: Black Caucus Groups at Xerox Corporation
1. Which sources of power were not available to black employees at the beginning of the case?
2. What different tactics did employees use to gain access to the different sources of power?
3. David Kearns has many constituencies to which he must answer. What position should Kearns take at the Toronto meeting?
4. As a leader of one of the black caucus groups, how would you approach the Toronto meeting? What is your most important goal at this meeting?

Case: Basil ‘Buzz’ Hargrove and de Havilland, Inc.
1. What are the crucial issues facing Buzz Hargrove at the end of the case?
2. Why was Hargrove unable to convince Gray and the rest of the bargaining committee to support what Hargrove believed was an excellent proposal from de Havilland management?
3. Compare and evaluate Hargrove’s and Gray’s sources of power. How do these different power bases affect the events we see unfolding in the case?
4. If you were in Hargrove’s position at the end of the case, what would be your action plan for getting the proposal accepted?

Video (in class): Hargrove and de Havilland

Exercise (in class): Lie Detection

Read after class: Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 8, "The Importance of Being in the Right Unit"
Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 14, "Changing Structure to Consolidate Power"

December 5: Change Simulation

There is no preparation needed for today’s class, but you will be assigned to pairs/small groups that will need to bring a laptop to class.

December 12: Timing and A Cautionary Tale

*REMINDER: Memo C is due at the beginning of class.

Readings: Kramer, “The Harder They Fall” HBR article
Auletta, "Power, Greed and Glory on Wall Street" Times article
Auletta, "The Men, the Money, the Merger" Times article
Dean, “Reaching for the Top, Touching Bottom”
Dean, excerpts from "Blind Ambition" HBS case (continuation of Reaching for the Top…) (on NYU Classes)

Case: Lehman Brothers
1. What did Glucksman do to orchestrate Peterson’s ouster?
2. What was favorable, and what was less favorable, about Glucksman's timing in his ousting Peterson?
3. What happened to Glucksman’s power base once he took over?
4. How did Glucksman’s personality traits contribute to his fate?
5. What should Glucksman have done differently?

Case: Blind Ambition
1. How did John Dean get into this mess?
2. How could he have avoided this situation? Be specific.
3. Could this ever happen to you?

Read after class: Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 12, "Timing is (Almost) Everything"
Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 16, "Even the Mighty Might Fall: How Power is Lost"
Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 17, "Managing Political Dynamics Productively"
Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 18, "Managing with Power"