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 organizations are fundamentally political entities, and 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 organizational politics 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 three types of work: (a) the quality of your contributions to class discussions (35%); (b) your performance on a final paper (35%); and (c) three brief memos (30%).

Participation (35%)

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. 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. 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.

Final paper (35%)

There is no final exam for this course. Instead, there is a paper designed to help you strategize for the next few years of your career (as well as beyond). It will give you an opportunity to apply the concepts and lessons of this course to your current position if you are now employed. (Note: You can also write the paper about the type of job you will likely take after graduation.)

Your paper should address the following five questions:

1. What are the power dynamics inherent in your current job?
2. What are the kinds of political and ethical dilemmas for which you need to be vigilant?
3. What sources of power and influence do you need to be effective?
4. Do your current sources of power and influence fit the requirements of the job?
5. What is your plan for developing the sources of power, influence skills, and partnerships necessary to be effective?

Final papers should be typed double-spaced (12-point font; 1-inch margins) and be no longer than 10 pages. Your grade will reflect the breadth and depth of your analysis and the creative insights you offer. Penalties will be exacted for papers that exceed the length limit and/or are late.

Due: TBA

Memos (30%)

During the course of the semester, you will need to draft three written memos. I expect these three written assignments to be relatively brief (each memo is limited to 500 words ~ 2 pages double-spaced). As a set, they are intended to help you reflect and digest the course concepts. They have also proved useful for preparing the final paper.

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: October 12 at the beginning of class**

**MEMO B:** Describe a situation you have faced in your career that relates to a point we discussed in class. 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: October 26 at the beginning of class**

**MEMO C:** 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: November 30 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.

Additional readings and other course materials will be provided on Blackboard or handed out in class.
COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS

I: The Importance of Power and Influence

September 28: Introduction, A Profile of the Naïve Politician

Readings:  Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 1, “Decisions and Implementation”
           Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 2, “When is Power Used?”
           Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 3, “Diagnosing Power and Dependence”
           Jick & Gentile “Donna Dubinsky” HBS case

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?

Video (in class): In the second half of this class, we will watch a short video in which Donna Dubinsky explains her actions.

II: Acquiring Power

October 5: The Acquisition and Distribution of Resources

Readings:  Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 4, "Perspectives on Where Power Comes From"
           Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 5, "Resources, Allies, and the New Golden Rule"

Case (in class video): Excerpts from Rick Burns' “New York” about Robert Moses
       1. What were Moses' sources of power?
       2. What tactics did Moses use to develop these sources of power?
       3. What sources of power did Moses lack? What sources of power did his opponents have? Why weren't they more effective against him?
       4. If you had been an opponent of Moses, what might you have done to oppose him more effectively?
       5. There are many different opinions about Robert Moses. Some hail him as an unselfish hero. Others criticize him for destroying New York’s ethnic neighborhoods. What is your opinion? Is Moses a model or a monster?

Exercise:  Kidney Transplant Dilemma
October 12: Networks & Alliances

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

Readings: Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 6, "Location in the Communication Network"
Valley, “Heidi Roizen” HBS case
Hill, “Amelia Rogers at Tassani Communications” HBS case

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?

Video (in class): A conversation with Heidi Roizen

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)

October 19: Reputation, Performance, & Individual Attributes

Readings: Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 7, "Formal Authority, Reputation, and Performance"
Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 9, "Individual Attributes as Sources of Power"
Caro, TPTP, Ch. 13, "On His Way"
Caro, TPTP, Ch. 16, "In Tune"
Ibarra, “Managing Xerox’s Multinational Development Center” HBS case

Case: Lyndon Johnson
Part I:
1. What things did Johnson do to build his reputation?
2. What was Johnson's formal authority? What did he do to obtain more authority?
3. How did Johnson think about effective performance in his job? What did performance mean to him?
4. What strategies did Johnson use to acquire resources useful for exercising power?

Part II:
5. What are the sources of power that Johnson possessed or developed?
6. Which personal characteristics and aptitudes did Johnson demonstrate?
7. What structural or cultural sources of power did Johnson have or acquire?

Case: John Clendenin and Xerox’s Multinational Development Center (MDC)
1. What techniques did John Clendenin use to (a) attain power for himself, and (b) his department?
2. How did Clendenin’s management style increase the power of MDC?
3. What could Clendenin have done to further consolidate MDC's power? Overall, was MDC's power good or bad for the Xerox Corporation?
4. Imagine you are Clendenin. How would you respond to Hewitt’s offer (i.e., compare and contrast staying at MDC versus leaving)?

October 26: Formal Structure, Informal Networks, & Subunit Performance

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

Readings: Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 8, "The Importance of Being in the Right Unit"
Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 14, "Changing Structure to Consolidate Power"
Pfeffer, “Pacific Gas and Electric” Stanford case
Friedman, “Black Caucus Groups at Xerox Corporation (A)” HBS case

Case: Pacific Gas and Electric
1. What was the environment in which PG&E was operating?
2. What power advantages did engineering possess? What advantages did the lawyers possess?
3. Why did the lawyers take over so completely at PG&E?
4. If you had been in engineering or operations, what might you have done to retain more of your power?

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?

Video (in class): Black Caucus Groups at Xerox Corporation
III: Exerting Influence

November 2: Power and Influence in Negotiations

Reading: Keros & McGinn, “Basil ‘Buzz’ Hargrove and de Havilland, Inc.” HBS case

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?

Exercise: 4-3-2 Coalition Exercise

November 9: Communicating for Influence I: Interpersonal Strategies

Reading: Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 11 “Interpersonal influence”
Tannen, “The Power of Talk: Who Gets Heard and Why” HBR article
Gunther, Witter, & McGinn, “Katharine Graham” HBS Case

Case: Katharine Graham
1. What were Katharine Graham’s professional values, and how did they affect the choices she made throughout her career? How did she use them to guide her organization?
2. Graham faced a difficult road as a female executive in the 1960s and 70s, particularly in the traditionally male newspaper industry. How did she respond to this challenge? What tactics did she use to gain respect and power in her role? What elements of her personality did she draw upon to make the transition from Washington socialite to Washington power broker?
3. How did Graham travel the road to mastery in becoming a successful publisher and CEO? What inflection points were critical for her development of her legitimacy as a leader? How did her influence style change as she took on more power in the organization?

Exercise: Performance Appraisal Exercise
November 16: Communicating for Influence II: Strategies for Audiences

**Reading:**
- Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 10 "Framing: How We Look at Things Affects How They Look"
- Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 13 "The Politics of Information and Analysis"
- Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 15, "Symbolic Action: Language, Ceremonies and Settings"
- Ridout & Fenn, “Job Corps” *HBS case*
- Wheeler & Nelson, “Nonverbal Communication in Negotiation” *HBS note*
- Cuddy & Sharma, “Congressional Candidate Ron Klein and KNP Communications” *HBS case*

**Case:**
**Job Corps**
1. What interpersonal influence tactics does Bill Kelly use to try to save Job Corps? How does he use the concepts of reciprocity and consistency (from the Cialdini reading for this week)?
2. How does Kelly use data to make his case at the congressional hearings? How does he use stories?
3. Do you see any influence or presentation strategies that could have backfired for Kelly?

**Case:**
**Ron Klein and KNP Communications**
1. Think about the situation, Ron Klein, the audience, and Klein’s relationship with the audience. What are the challenges and considerations that Klein is facing? How would you assess the big picture to decide what to do?
2. What are Klein’s communication problems, and how does KNP address them?

November 30: Star Power

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

**Exercise:**
**Star Power**

There is no preparation needed for today's exercise. You will receive all the materials and instructions in class.

December 7: Using Influence for Organizational Change

**Exercise:**
**EIS Simulation**

For this exercise, I will assign you to groups in advance. One member of each group will need to download the EIS simulation onto a laptop and bring the laptop (and power cord) to class for the group to complete the simulation.
IV: Managing Your Career

December 14: Beginnings and Endings I: Seizing Place and Time

Readings:
- Pfeffer, MWP, Ch. 12, "Timing is (Almost) Everything"
- Hill & Conrad, “Kevin Simpson” HBS case
- 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

In Class: We will debrief the EIS Simulation (from the previous session)

Case:
- Kevin Simpson
  1. What is your assessment of the power dynamics at Eli Lilly? At Haemonetics?
  2. What sources of power and influence skills will be necessary for Simpson to be effective at Eli Lilly? At Haemonetics?
  3. What additional information, if any, should Simpson collect before making the decision? How would you obtain that information?
  4. Which job should he take? Why?
  5. Based on your answer #4, develop an action plan for Simpson to proceed (a) before taking the job, and (b) in his first month on the job.

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?

December 21: Beginnings and Endings II: Encountering Ethical Issues

*REMEMBER: Your final paper is due at the beginning of class.

Readings:
- 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"
- Dean, excerpts from "Blind Ambition"

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?

We will finish discussing ethical issues and also wrap up the class, discuss your final papers, and revisit our ambivalence toward using power. You should spend some time thinking about your feelings toward managing power and what that implies for your career.