

MGMT-GB.3165.W1
Power and Professional Influence

January, 2022 over Zoom
Time: 1/11,13,18,08 6-9PM
1/16 9AM-12PM & 1-4PM

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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) understand your own relationship to power, (3) build your own professional sources of power, and (4) develop influence techniques so that you can resolve conflict more effectively, foster cooperation, and lead 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 (30%), two brief self-reflective and analytic memos (35%), one worksheet documenting your own influence network (10%), and a case analysis (25%).

Participation (30%)

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, 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 (35%)

You will write two memos designed to help you analyze past and present episodes in your career and strategize for your future. These memos should be brief: each one is limited to 1 single-spaced page, 1-inch margins, 12-point font. As a pair, they are intended to help you reflect on and apply course concepts to areas and issues important to your goals. Refer to “Tips for Influential Writing” attached to the Memo A assignment on Brightspace.

MEMO A (15%): What are your goals, with respect to power and influence, for the next five years of your career? Be as concrete as possible in describing your goals (e.g., What position(s) would you like to attain?), discuss why they are important to you (e.g., What do you hope to accomplish in those positions?), and articulate specific action steps that you plan to take to achieve those goals (e.g., What is something you can do within the next year to make progress toward one of your goals?).

For some, 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 medium-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 memo, please give it your best effort.

MEMO B (20%): Analyze a situation you have faced in either your career or a current personal relationship that relates to an idea (or two or three) we discussed in class. Retrospectively, apply the concepts to dissect a particular episode or relationship you now understand in a new light.

The purpose of this memo is to better understand a situation in which you have played a role related to power. Current or recent (last 2 years) situations are best. 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. Please do not use time or space summarizing any cases, readings, or class discussions.

“Your Own Influence Network” Worksheet (10%)

Case Analysis on Crucial Career Moves: John Dean (25%)

Write an analysis of the John Dean case (the *Blind Ambition* readings), 2 single-spaced pages maximum, 1-inch margins, 12-point font. Be sure to address each of the questions listed under Session 3 for this reading.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required

- Power and Professional Influence coursepack available online at Harvard Business Publishing. You will need to create an account if you have not purchased any material at this website before. Most of the readings are contained in this coursepack, unless I could provide them for free on Brightspace (denoted as such in the syllabus). This also grants you access to the in-class simulation. Without it, you will not be able to participate in Session 4.

Optional

- Pfeffer, Jeffrey. (2010). Power: Why Some People Have It and Others Don't. Harper Business.
- Cialdini, Robert B. (2008). Influence: Science and Practice. (5th edition). Allyn & Bacon.

Other Interesting Books on Power

- Battilana, Julie, & Casciaro, Tiziana. (2021). Power, For All. Simon & Schuster.
- Bohns, Vannesa. (2021). You Have More Influence Than You Think. Norton.
- Gruenfeld, Deborah. (2020). Acting With Power: Why We Are More Powerful Than We Believe. Currency.

POLICIES & EXPECTATIONS

Student Accessibility

If you will require academic accommodation of any kind during this course, you must notify me at the beginning of the course (or as soon as your need arises) and provide a letter from the Moses Center for Student Accessibility (212-998-4980, mosescsa@nyu.edu) verifying your registration and outlining the accommodations they recommend. For more information, visit the [CSA website](#).

Student Wellness

Classes can get stressful. I encourage you to reach out if you need help. The NYU Wellness Exchange offers mental health support. You can reach them 24/7 at [212 443 9999](tel:2124439999), or via the “NYU Wellness Exchange” app. There are also drop-in hours and appointments. Find out more [here](#).

Name Pronunciation and Pronouns

NYU Stern students now have the ability to include their pronouns and name pronunciation in Albert. I encourage you to share your name pronunciation and pronouns this way. For additional information, go [here](#).

Religious Observances and Other Absences

NYU’s [Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. You must notify me in advance of religious holidays or observances that might coincide with exams, assignments, or class times to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives. Students may also contact religiousaccommodations@nyu.edu for assistance.

NYU Stern is committed to ensuring an equitable educational experience for all students regardless of identity or circumstances and strives to recognize the obligations its students have outside of Stern. Please review all class dates at the start of the semester and review all course requirements to identify any foreseeable conflicts with exams, course assignments, projects, or other items required for participation and attendance. If you are aware of a potential conflict, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss any potential conflicts to determine whether/how they can be accommodated.

Inclusion Statement

This course strives to support and cultivate diversity of thought, perspectives, and experiences. The intent is to present materials and activities that will challenge your current perspectives with a goal of understanding how others might see situations differently. By participating in this course, it is the expectation that everyone commits to making this an inclusive learning environment for all.

COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS

Session 1: Naïve Influence: Introduction to the Course

*****Memo A due today (or day after)*****

Readings: Jick & Gentile, "Donna Dubinsky" *HBS case*

Case: Donna Dubinsky and Apple Computer, Inc.

1. Why was Dubinsky initially successful at Apple Computer? (1981-1984)
2. How and why did things begin to unravel for Dubinsky?
3. How did Dubinsky react and why?
4. What should Dubinsky have done differently?
5. What were Debi Coleman's advantages and weaknesses?

Optional (after class): Pfeffer, "Introduction"
Pfeffer, Ch 1, "It Takes More than Performance"

Session 2: Paths to Power: Fitting In versus Standing Out

Readings: Mayo & Hull "Rosalind Fox at John Deere" *HBS case*
Isaacson "The Reality Distortion Field" Ch. 11 of *Steve Jobs*

Questions for the Rosalind Fox case and Steve Jobs reading:

1. What individual attributes did Fox and Jobs possess that were/are sources of power?
2. What did effective performance mean to Fox and Jobs?
3. What would you say "standing out" and "fitting in" mean to Fox based on her experiences?
4. What did Fox do to build her reputation?

Optional (after class): Pfeffer, Ch 2, "The Personal Qualities That Bring Influence"
Pfeffer, Ch 8, "Building a Reputation: Perception Is Reality"
Cialdini, Ch 1, "Weapons of Influence"
Cialdini, Ch 5, "Liking: The Friendly Thief"

Session 3: Rise and Fall of Power

*****John Dean Case Analysis due before class*****

Case (video): Excerpts from Rick Burns' "New York" about Robert Moses

Readings: [Brightspace] Dean, "Reaching for the Top, Touching Bottom" Ch. 1 of *Blind Ambition*
[Brightspace] Dean, "Blind Ambition" excerpts of *HBS case* (continuation of "Reaching for the Top, Touching Bottom")

Case: John Dean

1. How did Dean get into this mess? What were the factors outside of his control, and what were attributes of him as a person?
2. How has Dean mismanaged his career with respect to building relationships and his reputation?
3. What specific steps could Dean have taken to avoid this situation?

Optional (after class): Pfeffer, Ch 5, "Making Something Out of Nothing: Creating Resources"
Pfeffer, Ch 11, "How—and Why—People Lose Power"
Cialdini, Ch 6, "Authority: Directed Deference"

Session 4: Practicing Professional Influence: Organizational Change Simulation

Readings: Change Management Simulation Background Materials: 3 documents available on Brightspace/Resources/Readings

Optional (after class): Cialdini, Ch 3, "Commitment & Consistency: Hobgoblins of the Mind"
Cialdini, Ch 4, "Social Proof: Truths are Us"
Cialdini, Ch 7, "Scarcity: The Rule of the Few"

Session 5: Relationships & Reciprocity

In-Class Activity: Analysis of Your Own Network (worksheet due the day before [Monday] at 5pm)

Readings: McGinn, "Heidi Roizen" *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 a high-tech VC?

Optional (after class): Pfeffer, Ch 6, "Building Efficient and Effective Social Networks"
Cialdini, Ch 2, "Reciprocation: The Old Give and Take...and Take"

Session 6: Managing Up, Conflict, & Career Choices

Readings: [Brightspace] Magee & Pettit, "Maggie Hapher-Stepp at Open Bit Mine"
Hill & Rennella, "Martha Rinaldi" *HBS case*

Case: Maggie Hapher-Stepp

1. Identify two major problems facing Maggie Hapher-Stepp. What are the underlying causes?
2. What has Hapher-Stepp done to try to address these problems?
3. How should Hapher-Stepp direct Mike and Dalia's time while they are in the office? How should she prepare for the week ahead?

Case: Martha Rinaldi

1. Based on what you know before she starts at Potomac Waters, did Martha Rinaldi take the right job?
2. What did Follett (her boss), Vaughan (her co-worker), and Rinaldi all do to contribute to the issues that developed?
3. What else could Rinaldi have done to navigate these relationships more effectively? Think of specific moments when she could have taken specific actions.

Optional (after class): Pfeffer, Ch 3, "Choosing Where to Start"
Pfeffer, Ch 9, "Overcoming Opposition and Setbacks"
Pfeffer, Ch 10, "The Price of Power"
Pfeffer, Ch 12, "Power Dynamics: Good for Organizations, Good for You?"

*****Memo B due by Sunday after final class at noon*****