The course examines the bases of power in organizations and the ways in which power can be built and used effectively. It also explores the positive and negative effects that power-oriented behavior can have on organizations. The ethics of power will be of recurrent concern throughout the course. Class sessions will be devoted to discussing “case” materials in light of theoretical arguments advanced in “readings.” Case materials include standard Harvard Business School cases, book chapters about individuals (Lyndon Johnson, Robert Moses, and Henry Kissinger), corporations (Lehman Brothers), and industries (e.g., auto), and in-class videos (e.g., a “Bill Moyer’s Journal” segment on David Rockefeller).

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Final course grades will be based on student performance on one written assignment and on student participation in class discussions. Students have two written assignment options to choose from: a final examination or a final term paper.

**Final Examination Option.** The final examination will be a take home case analysis. The final exam and associated case will be distributed at the end of Session #8 and analyses must be returned by the beginning of session 9.

**Final Term Paper Option.** The preferred final paper topic will be a case study of a real organization. The research for this case study can be carried out using primary sources (e.g., participation observation and/or interviews) or secondary sources (e.g., books, articles, or prepared cases about a target organization). Thus, a student need not have worked in an organization to use it as the subject of his/her final paper. Other paper topics may also be acceptable. Students selecting the final paper option must follow the guidelines stipulated below.

1. Students must *speak with me* regarding the topic of his/her final paper sometime during the week of the 5th session. Failure to discuss your final paper topic with me by the end of this week will result in a one-half grade point deduction from your final course grade (e.g., from A to B+).
2. Students should *obtain approval from me* for their final paper topic by the 7th session. Failure to obtain approval for a final paper topic by this time will result in a one-half grade point deduction from your final grade. Students may change their final paper topic after this time, but should notify me of any such change as soon as possible. The submission of a final paper on an unproved topic will result in a one grade point deduction from your final course grade (e.g., from A to B).
3. Final papers *must be submitted to me* at the beginning of session #10. The final paper will be worth 80% of the final grade.
Class Participation. The material covered in this course will be largely learned through in-class discussion. For this reason, it is absolutely imperative that all students complete all of the assigned reading before coming to class. Likely discussion questions have been provided for each class session (with the exception of the first session) that can help you prepare for class discussion. The Professor’s evaluation of the quantity and quality of students whose performance on the final exam or final paper places them on the borderline between two letter grades (e.g., a student who received an A-for his /her work on the final exam or final paper could receive an A or B+ for the course, depending on the character of his/her contribution to class discussions).

COURSE READINGS


Anthology of case materials and other readings.

SESSION OUTLINE

SESSION #1: INTRODUCTION

TOPIC 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

TOPIC 2. WHY POWER IS IMPORTANT: ANALYSIS, DECISION-MAKING, AND IMPLEMENTATION

Readings: Managing with Power (MWP), Ch.1, “Decisions and Implementation”
MWP, Ch. 13, “The Politics of Information and Analysis.”

Case: Donna Dubinsky and Apple computer (A through E) HBS cases 9-486-083 through 9-486-087.

SESSION#2: HOW TO ASSESS THE POLITICAL TERRAIN

TOPIC 1. DETERMINING WHEN POWER WILL BE IMPORTANT

Readings: MWP, Ch.2. “When is Power Used?”

Case: Textile Corporation of America. HBS case 470-044

Video: Textile Corporation of America: Part Two. HBS case 882-002

TOPIC 2. DETERMINING WHO HAS POWER

Readings: MWP, Ch. 3, “Diagnosing Power and Dependence.”

Case: Markham Instrument Company (A). HBS case 9-409-083
SESSION #3: HOW TO DEVELOP POWER—PART 1

TOPIC 1. WHERE DOES POWER COME FROM: PERSONS, SITUATIONS OR WHAT?

Readings: MWP, Ch. 4, “Where Does Power Come From?”

TOPIC 2. THE CONTROL OF RESOURCES

Readings: MWP, Ch. 5, “Resources, Allies and the New Golden Rule.”

SESSION #4: HOW TO DEVELOP POWER—PART 2

TOPIC 1. ADVANTAGEOUS COMMUNICATION NETWORK POSITION

Readings: MWP, Ch. 6, “Location in the Communication Network.”

TOPIC 2. PERSONAL REPUTATION AND PERFORMANCE

Readings: MWP, Ch. 7, “Formal Authority, Reputation, and Performance.”

SESSION #5: HOW TO DEVELOP POWER: PART 3

TOPIC 1. SUBUNIT CHARACTERISTICS

Readings: MWP, Ch. 8, “The Importance of Being in the Right Unit.”
MWP, Ch. 14, “Changing the Structure to Consolidate Power

TOPIC 2. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Readings: MWP, Ch. 9, “Individual Attributes as Sources of Power.”
Case: Mike Rose (A and B). HBS case 0-482-007.
“Interview with Mike Rose,” by John Kotter, HBS Case Services (19--
SESSION #6:  TIME CHANGES EVERYTHING

TOPIC 1.  TIMING
Readings:  MWP, Ch.12, “Timing is (Almost Everything)"

TOPIC 2.  FALLING DOWN
Readings:  MWP, Ch. 16, “Even the Mighty Fall:  How Power is Lost.”

SESSION #7:  HOW TO MANAGE POWER DYNAMICS FROM THE TOP

TOPIC 1.  MANAGING POWER IN A ZERO-SUM ENVIRONMENT:  PART 1
Readings:  MWP, Ch. 17, “Managing Political Dynamics Productively.”
Case:  John Sculley at Apple Computer (B).  HBS case 9-486-002

TOPIC 2.  MANAGING POWER IN A NON-ZERO-SUM ENVIRONMENT
Case:  American Express Travel Related Services Company. HBS case 9-485-174
Lou Gerstner.  HBS case 9-485-174
Beth Horowitz.  HBS case 9-487-040

SESSION #8:  THE ETHICS OF DEVELOPING, EXERCISING, AND MANAGING POWER

TOPIC 1.  POWER AND GOOD
Readings:  MWP, Ch. 18, “Managing with Power.”
Gerald Cavanaugh et. al, “The Ethics of Organizational Politics,”

SESSION #9:  IN-CLASS DISCUSSION OF FINAL CASE ANALYSIS

SESSION #10:  IN-CLASS DISCUSSION OF FINAL CASE ANALYSIS