POWER AND INFLUENCE (MGT/MGP 223)

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 a 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 (Robert Moses and Henry Kissinger), corporations (e.g., Lehman Brothers and Time Warner), and industries (e.g., the auto industry), 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 four written assignments and on student participation in class discussions.

Analyses of Three Cases Discussed in Class.

Each student should form a group with two or three other students to complete analyses of three cases discussed in class. The three cases should be selected according to the following schedule.

- One case discussed in either Session 2 or 3.
- One case discussed in either Session 4 or 5.
- One case discussed in either Session 6 or 7.

The analyses should indicate how the case in question illustrates (provides evidence supportive of) the principles of power and influence covered in the class session for which the case was assigned. Analyses should be submitted no later than the beginning of the class session following the session for which the case was assigned. And they should be no more than 525 words in length. Analyses will be graded on a scale of 1-10 (with an anticipated range of 8-10). Each analysis will be worth 8% of a student’s final course grade.

Analysis of a Student-Selected Case

Each student should also form a group with three or four other students to complete 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, group
members need not have worked in an organization to use it as the subject of their final case analysis. Other case analysis topics may also be acceptable. Final group case analyses will be presented in class (during the last two sessions) and will be written up in no more than ten double-spaced typewritten pages. The group case analyses will be graded on a traditional letter grade scale, and will comprise 76% of a student’s final course grade. Groups must follow the guidelines stipulated below.

1. Groups must speak with me regarding the topic of their 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. Groups 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. Groups may change their final paper topic after this time, but they 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.

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.”
Case: Nicole Tempest, Heidi Roizen (HBS Case 9-800-228)

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.”

SESSION #6: MATTERS OF TIMING AND PACE
Readings: MWP, Ch.12, “Timing is (Almost Everything)”

SESSION #7: HOW POWER IS LOST
Readings: MWP, Ch. 16, “Even the Mighty Fall: How Power is Lost.”
SESSION #8: PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

TOPIC 1. MANAGING POWER IN A ZERO-SUM ENVIRONMENT

Readings: MWP, Ch. 17, “Managing Political Dynamics Productively.”

Case: John Sculley at Apple Computer (B). HBS case 9-486-002

TOPIC 2. THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW


SESSION #9: THE ETHICS OF DEVELOPING, EXERCISING, AND MANAGING POWER

Readings: MWP, Ch. 18, “Managing with Power.”

Gerald Cavanaugh et. al, “The Ethics of Organizational Politics,”


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