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Lecture Class                      T/TH, 10:00-11:50 a.m. / HOH 422

Office Hours:                      By appointment

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### **Introduction and Course Objective**

Power, Politics, and Influence is an elective course designed to help you become knowledgeable about power as well as help you develop the skills and strategies necessary to maximize the positive impact you can have throughout your life. Courses on power are among the most popular electives at top business schools due largely to the fact that power is a reality in organizational life and those who try to achieve significant goals and/or advocate ideas (no matter how noble) without attending to power dynamics often fail. The focus of this course is to help you get a significant head start on your path to power and influence. You will learn how to recognize and deal effectively with the power dynamics you encounter throughout your career as well as think deeply about the particular approach to power and influence that represents the strongest fit for you. It is also designed to be a fun and interactive course.

### **Learning Objectives**

Although a popular elective, this course is not for everyone. It requires a high level of engagement and commitment, both inside and outside of class. It is a good fit for those who have a passion to make a difference and who are willing to explore new and challenging ideas along the way.

- Global Objective
  - Gain knowledge, skills, and strategies related to power that will help you to become highly effective and impactful in your career of choice.
- Detailed Objectives
  - Have you *see* the world differently. After the course, you will be able to recognize power dynamics and assess the effectiveness of various decisions that people (including yourself) make. You will also be able to identify alternative actions and opportunities that would have been more/less likely to lead to power.
  - Have you *act* differently. After the course, you will have a personal strategic plan that will help you identify and develop your own personal path to power. The path that you choose will be a good fit for you based on your individual strengths, professional goals, and personal values. You will also have new skills, such as acting and speaking with power, that you tried out throughout the class and that you will continue to hone throughout your career.
  - Develop a healthy *respect* for power and how it can affect people. After the course, you will know the benefits as well as the costs and pitfalls associated with the pursuit and acquisition of power. This understanding will be incorporated into your personal plan for developing power.

**Required Materials**

- *Power: Why Some People Have It – And Others Don't*, Jeffrey Pfeffer, HarperCollins 2010
- Course Reader.

**Prerequisites:** None

**Course Notes:** Class information is available through your Blackboard account.

**Grading Summary:**

<b><u>Components</u></b>		<b><u>Points</u></b>	<b><u>% of Grade</u></b>
<b>SELF-REFLECTIVE ASSIGNMENTS (5)</b>		100	25.0%
<b>GROUP PROJECT (paper + presentation)</b>		100	25.0%
<b>CLASS PARTICIPATION</b>		40	10.0%
<b>TESTS</b>	<b>Mid-Term</b>	80	20.0%
	<b>Final Exam (Paper)</b>	<u>80</u>	<u>20.0%</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>		400	100.0%

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING DETAIL**

*Self-Reflective Assignments (25%).* Individual, self-reflective writing assignments will be assigned 5 times throughout the semester. These assignments are an integral part of the course and designed to help you explore the content of the course in the context of your own plans, objectives, values, and experiences. If taken seriously, these self-reflective assignments will be useful as work in process for your individual project. Previous experience suggests that these are among the most useful course activities. The individual assignments are due (in written, not electronic form) at the start of the class for which they are assigned. Late papers will not be accepted, unless in the case of a true emergency, when cleared before class with the instructor. If for some reason you must miss class, you must submit your assignment electronically before it is due. The tentative schedule for these assignments (as well as the assignments themselves) is listed at the end of this syllabus. You are required to do all 5 of these assignments. Thus, each assignment is worth 5% of your grade.

*Group Project (25%).* The group project is described on an addendum at the end of the course syllabus. It is intended to have you explore the ideas of the course in a real-world setting. Learning by doing and learning through more intensive involvement is much more likely to result in real mastery and retention of the material than are more passive forms of learning. Learning from and with your colleagues is also very beneficial. That is why I encourage you to take the group project seriously and have some fun with it to explore the ideas of the course. You may wish to use the group project to study people in other countries—to test whether or not the principles learned in the class are generalizable. You may wish to use the group project to build relationships in sectors or industries where you want to work, as well as to learn more about interesting people. Group projects are due at the beginning of class on April 30, 2013. LATE PROJECTS WILL NOT BE GRADED AND WILL EARN ZERO CREDIT.

*Class Participation (10%).* You will only get out of this course as much as you are willing to put into it. Your class participation grade will reflect class attendance and the quality of your involvement in the class's activities and discussions. Near-perfect, on-time attendance is expected.

You are expected to come to class prepared for discussion, by having read that day's required reading. You are also expected to speak during class and make a contribution to the discussion. Since I frequently cold call, please avoid embarrassment by telling me before class if you are not prepared. And if you are uncomfortable with class participation, please let me know at the beginning of term and I will work with you to help you overcome this barrier. Some of your class participation score will also come from your group's presentation of one of the assigned cases. Finally, at the end of some class sessions I will ask you to spend 3-5 minutes jotting down some "take-away" lessons from that day's session. You will hand these in on your way out of class. They will not be formally graded, but they will be an important check on your class attention, an opportunity for you to crystallize that day's information, and a feedback mechanism for me regarding your digestion of the course material.

*Midterm (20%).* The midterm will be on Thursday, February 28. It will contain a mix of multiple-choice and short essay questions.

*Final Exam (Paper) (20%).* The final exam will be in the form of a paper (10-15 pages) and will be due at the time of the final exam. The paper will consist of three parts. Part 1: Describe a skill or tactic that you frequently use to exert interpersonal influence or gain power relative to others. It should be something that you are already comfortable with and able to use effectively (this part should be no more than 1 page). Part 2: Select a skill or tactic that you rarely use and are uncomfortable with and use it to gain power or influence over others in a group, organization, or social setting. Describe your thoughts and feelings prior to, during, and after your attempt to use this new tactic. What did you learn? (this part should be no more than 1-2 pages). Part 3: Using the ideas and concepts from the class, write out a plan for yourself as to how you will use the material to build your own path to power. What are you going to do, specifically, for instance, as part of your job finding process? What are you going to do as you enter your new organization? What other things are you going to do to build influence, or, for that matter, not do? In other words, how do you plan to put the ideas and concepts to work for you in your own life? Which ideas or concepts are you deliberately choosing NOT to put into practice, and why? (the total paper – all three parts together – should be between 10-15 pages).

## **MARSHALL GUIDELINES**

### **Add/Drop Process**

In compliance with USC and Marshall's policies classes are open enrollment (R-clearance) through the first week of class. All classes are closed (switched to D-clearance) at the end of the first week. This policy minimizes the complexity of the registration process for students by standardizing across classes. I can drop you from my class if you don't attend the first two sessions. Please note: If you decide to drop, or if you choose not to attend the first two sessions and are dropped, you risk being not being able to add to another section this semester, since they might reach capacity. You can only add a class after the first week of classes if you receive approval from the instructor.

### **Retention of Graded Coursework**

Coursework will be returned or available for pickup by students (in the case of Final Projects). Returned paperwork, unclaimed by a student, will be discarded after 4 weeks and will therefore not be available should a grade appeal be pursued following receipt of his/her grade. It is students' responsibility to file and retain returned coursework.

## **Technology Policy**

Laptop, smartphone, and Internet usage is not permitted during class, as it would serve as a distraction. Use of personal communication devices, such as cell phones, is considered unprofessional and is also not permitted during class. ANY e-devices (cell phones, PDAs, I-Phones, Blackberries, other texting devices, laptops, I-pods) must be completely turned off during class time.

## **Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

## **Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A. <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/> Failure to adhere to the academic conduct standards set forth by these guidelines and our programs will not be tolerated by the USC Marshall community and can lead to dismissal.

## **Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity**

In case of emergency, and travel to campus is difficult, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. Instructors should be prepared to assign students a "Plan B" project that can be completed at a distance. For additional information about maintaining your classes in an emergency please access: <http://cst.usc.edu/services/emergencyprep.html>

## **Incomplete Grades**

In incomplete (IN) grade may be assigned due to an "emergency" that occurs after the 12<sup>th</sup> week of classes. An "emergency" is defined as a serious documented illness, or an unforeseen situation that is beyond the student's control, that prevents a student from completing the semester. Prior to the 12<sup>th</sup> week, the student still has the option of dropping the class. Arrangements for completing an IN course should be initiated by the student, and negotiated with the instructor. Class work to complete the course should be completed within one calendar year from the date the IN was assigned. The IN mark will be converted to an F grade should the course not be completed.

## COURSE READINGS/CLASS SESSIONS

<b>Week</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
<b>1</b>	Tues 1/15 Thurs 1/17	Introduction to the course NO CLASS	-- --
<b>2</b>	Tues 1/22 Thurs 1/24	Beyond merit: The necessity of power Meet in the ELC in Bridge Hall (BRI)	-- --
<b>3</b>	Tues 1/29 Thurs 1/31	Finding your mission: What do you want to achieve? The “growth mindset”	A1 Topic for group project
<b>4</b>	Tues 2/5 Thurs 2/7	Personal attributes that lead to power Meet in the ELC in Bridge Hall (BRI)	A2 --
<b>5</b>	Tues 2/12 Thurs 2/14	The Melian Dialogue Seeing the situation: The world as it is vs. should be	-- --
<b>6</b>	Tues 2/19 Thurs 2/21	The psychology of persuasion Acting with power	-- --
<b>7</b>	Tues 2/26 Thurs 2/28	Creating power through shared identity MIDTERM	-- --
<b>8</b>	Tues 3/5 Thurs 3/7	Establishing the right reputation Guest speaker	-- --
<b>9</b>	Tues 3/12 Thurs 3/14	Networking your way to power Getting things done through others	A3 --
<b>10</b>	Tues 3/19 Thurs 3/21	SPRING BREAK SPRING BREAK	-- --
<b>11</b>	Tues 3/26 Thurs 3/28	Building power by standing out Meet in the ELC in Bridge Hall (BRI)	A4 --
<b>12</b>	Tues 4/2 Thurs 4/4	Seize the day: Creating power where there is none Power through conflict: Coming out ahead	-- --
<b>13</b>	Tues 4/9 Thurs 4/11	Rebounding from setbacks Meet in the ELC in Bridge Hall (BRI)	-- --
<b>14</b>	Tues 4/16 Thurs 4/18	How and why power is lost (and kept) The social and relational costs of power	-- --
<b>15</b>	Tues 4/23 Thurs 4/25	The pitfalls of power What have we learned: Bringing it all together	-- A5
<b>16</b>	Tues 4/30 Thurs 5/2	Presentations Presentations, Wrap-up	Group projects due 4/30 Final projects due at time of scheduled final exam

## DETAILED SESSION INFORMATION

**Reminders:** Jeffrey Pfeffer's "Power: Why Some People Have it – And Others Don't" is a required text. Other reading assignments will be included in the course reader, which is also required, or a link will be provided in the syllabus and on Blackboard. Adequate preparation for class includes reading all assigned readings before that session's class meeting.

### WEEK #1:

#### **Tues Jan 15: Introduction to the Course**

##### Assigned readings:

- Course syllabus
- Pfeffer, Introduction: "Be prepared for power"

#### **Thurs Jan 17: NO CLASS**

### WEEK #2:

#### **Tues Jan 22: Beyond merit: The necessity of power**

##### Assigned readings:

- Pfeffer, Ch. 1: "It takes more than performance"
- Case: Keith Ferrazzi

#### **Thurs Jan 24: Exerting power and influence (group exercise)**

##### Assigned readings:

- Pfeffer, Ch. 3: "Choosing where to start"

### WEEK #3:

#### **Tues Jan 29: Finding your mission: What do you want to achieve?**

##### Assigned readings:

- Case: John W. Dean, III, *Blind ambition: The White House years*. New York, Simon and Schuster, 1979, Ch. 1, "Reaching for the top, touching bottom."

##### First Individual Assignment:

1. As noted earlier in the class, finding your mission is an important practice that can help lead to power and influence. On the other hand, lacking a clear understanding of what your mission is can hinder your path to power. Please reflect on the things that are most important to you in life and then write a 1-page essay that describes what your current mission is. As you write, answer questions such as the following: What do you want from your life? What thing or things do you most value? What is the one thing you'd most like to achieve during your lifetime? How do you want other people to experience you? How do you want people to remember you when you're gone?

\* Bring a hard copy of the essay to turn in at the beginning of class.

## **Thurs Jan 31: The “growth mindset”**

### Assigned readings:

- Article in the Chronicle of Higher Education: *Carol Dweck’s attitude: It’s not about how smart you are.* <http://chronicle.com/article/Carol-Dwecks-Attitude/65405/> \*Note: use this link to access the article.

## **WEEK #4:**

### **Tues Feb 5: Personal attributes that lead to power**

#### Assigned readings:

- Pfeffer, Ch. 2: “The personal qualities that bring influence”
- Seth Godin, *The Linchpin: Are you Indispensable?*, New York: Portfolio Trade, 2010. Ch. 1, “The New World of Work”, pp.7-27.

#### Second Individual Assignment (complete Part 1 of the assignment *before* you do the reading):

1. Write a brief, one page essay about those aspects of your personality, skills and abilities, and “character” that you believe are and have been most important in helping you get ahead in life (both in the past and in the future). In other words, describe the personal attributes or qualities you possess that you believe will make you more effective in obtaining your goals.
2. After completing the essay, read Ch. 2 from Pfeffer’s *Power*. Make a list of the dimensions he highlighted in the chapter and rate yourself on those dimensions on a 1-5 scale, where 1 means you possess little of the attribute and 5 means you possess a lot of it.

\* Bring a hard copy of the essay to turn in at the beginning of class. Come to class prepared to discuss what you, personally, might do to develop more power and influence in the future.

### **Thurs Feb 7: Meet in the ELC in Bridge Hall (BRI)**

## **WEEK #5:**

### **Tues Feb 12: The Melian Dialogue**

#### Assigned readings:

- “The Melian Dialogue”, from Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book 5 (422-415 BC). \*Note: read this twice.

### **Thurs Feb 14: Seeing the situation: The world as it is vs. should be**

#### Assigned readings:

- John Herman Randall, Jr. (1938). On the importance of being unprincipled.

## **WEEK #6:**

### **Tues Feb 19: The psychology of persuasion**

#### Assigned readings:

- Robert B. Cialdini, “Harnessing the Science of Persuasion,” *Harvard Business Review*,

(October, 2001).

### **Thurs Feb 21: Acting with power**

#### Assigned readings:

- Pfeffer, Ch. 7: "Acting and speaking with power"
- Joel Brinkley, "Birth of a Scandal and Mysteries of its Parentage," *New York Times*, December 25, 1991, A11.
- "Oliver North, Businessman? Many Bosses Say That He's Their Kind of Employee," *Wall Street Journal*, July 14, 1987, p. 35.

### **WEEK #7:**

### **Tues Feb 26: Creating power through shared identity**

#### Assigned readings:

- Jerry M. Burger, Nicole Messian, Shebani Patel, Alicia Del Prado, and Carmen Anderson, "What a Coincidence! The Effects of Incidental similarity on Compliance," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30 (2004), 35-43.
- Case: James Richardson, Willie Brown: A Biography, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, Ch. 19, "The Play for Power," and Ch. 20, "Drawing Lines," the portion from pp. 275-284.

### **Thurs Feb 28: MIDTERM**

### **WEEK #8:**

### **Tues March 5: Establishing the right reputation**

#### Assigned readings:

- Pfeffer, Ch. 8: "Building a reputation: Perception is reality"
- Salley B. Smith, *In all his glory: The life of William S. Paley*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990, "The prince," Chapters 10 and 13.

### **Thurs March 7: Guest speaker**

#### Assigned readings:

- Article by Tara Sophia Mohr at Wise Living: *Ten rules for brilliant women*.  
<http://www.taramohr.com/10rules/> \*Note: use this link to access the article. (Also, although written with women in mind, the article is equally relevant to men).

### **WEEK #9:**

### **Tues Mar 12: Networking your way to power**

#### Assigned readings:

- Ross Walker's Path to Power, Jeffrey Pfeffer, Stanford OB-79, 2011.
- Malcolm Gladwell, "Six Degrees of Lois Weisberg," *The New Yorker*, January 11, 1999.

#### Third Individual Assignment:

It is useful to think about how we spend our time, with whom, and how our contacts and



networks are, or are not, consistent with where we might need to build our power base. Write a one- or two-page essay in which you consider the following questions:

1. With whom (other than family or significant others) do you spend the most time? Why?
2. Given your career ambitions and what you want to accomplish in your life, who (not necessarily by name, but by position or location in the social space) are the most important individuals for you to build relationships with?
3. What is the structure of your network? Do you occupy many “brokerage” positions? If so, which ones, and how have you come to occupy them? Do you have lots of “weak ties” or connections to people who can provide you nonredundant information? Are you central in any networks? Which ones?
4. Considering your answers to the above questions, what might you do differently if you wanted to increase your influence and build more efficient and effective social networks?

\* Bring a hard copy of the essay to turn in at the beginning of class.

#### **Thurs Mar 14: Getting things done through others**

##### Assigned readings:

- Case: Nuria Chinchilla: The power to change workplaces

#### **WEEK #10:**

##### **SPRING BREAK**

#### **WEEK #11:**

#### **Tuesday Mar 26: Building power by standing out**

##### Assigned readings:

- Pfeffer, Ch. 4: “Getting in: Standing out and breaking some rules”
- Case: Walter Isaacson, *Kissinger: A biography*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992, Ch. 4, “Harvard: The ambitious student, 1947-1955”

##### Fourth Individual Assignment:

1. Based on the sessions so far and your own assessment of your strengths, weaknesses, and most importantly, areas where you would like to develop your skills, please prepare a one-page “development plan” that specifies what, specifically, you plan to do—both now and in the future—to develop skills and competencies in power and influence that you want to build. Please bring two written copies—one to turn in and one to use in a peer coaching exercise.

\* Bring a hard copy of the essay to turn in at the beginning of class.

#### **Thurs Mar 28: Meet in the ELC in Bridge Hall (BRI)**

##### Assigned readings:

- Pfeffer, Ch. 12 “Power dynamics: Good for organizations, good for you?”

## **WEEK #12:**

### **Tues April 2: Seize the day: Creating power where there is none**

#### Assigned readings:

- Pfeffer, Ch. 5 “Making something out of nothing: Creating resources”

### **Thurs April 4: Power through conflict: Coming out ahead**

#### Assigned readings:

- Pfeffer, Ch. 9: “Overcoming opposition and setbacks

## **WEEK #13:**

### **Tues April 9: Rebounding from setbacks**

#### Assigned readings:

- Jeffrey A. Sonnenfeld and Andrew J. Ward, “Firing back: How great leaders rebound after career disasters,” *Harvard Business Review*, January, 2007.
- Jeffrey Sonnenfeld: The fall from grace, Victoria Chang, Kimberly Elsbach, and Jeffrey Pfeffer, Stanford OB-34A, 2002.

### **Thurs April 11: Meet in the ELC in JKP 301**

No assigned readings

## **WEEK #14:**

### **Tues April 16: How and why power is lost (and kept)**

#### Assigned readings:

- Pfeffer, Ch. 11: “How – and why – power is lost
- Arshad Mohammed, “Valenti’s Credits Keep on Rolling,” *The Washington Post*, Feb 3, 2006.

### **Thurs April 18: The social and relational costs of power**

#### Assigned readings:

- Pfeffer, Ch. 10: “The price of power”

## **WEEK #15:**

### **Tues April 23: The pitfalls of power**

#### Assigned readings:

- Fast, N. J., & Chen, S. (2009). When the boss feels inadequate: Power, incompetence, and aggression. *Psychological Science*, 20, 1406-1413.
- Fast, N. J., Sivanathan, N., Mayer, N. D., & Galinsky, A. D. (2012). Power and overconfident decision-making. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*.

**Thurs April 25: What have we learned: Bringing it all together**

Assigned readings:

- Pfeffer, Ch. 13: “It’s easier than you think”

Fifth Individual Assignment:

Write a one-page essay addressing the following:

1. Identify the primary objective/legacy you most want to achieve in your career. In other words, what is the single most important impact you’d like to make?
2. Describe the ways in which developing power is a necessary part of achieving this goal (or why it is *not* necessary, if you feel it is not).
3. Next, describe the possible ways that power might hinder you from achieving this goal?
4. What will you do to protect yourself from these potential pitfalls?

**WEEK #16:**

**Tues April 30: Presentations**

**Thurs May 2: Presentations, Wrap-Up**

**\*Final projects due at time of scheduled final exam**

## GROUP PROJECT ASSIGNMENT AND INSTRUCTIONS

**1) You will be assigned to a group consisting of five people.**

**2) No later than the sixth session, January 31, please let me know what your group has chosen as its focus for the project. Do so by bringing a paper to class on or before Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>.**

Your assignment is to do “field research” on how individuals obtain and exercise influence, as a way of seeing how the material from the class is, or could be, put into use. Power becomes more visible and is exercised more clearly where there is opposition, where something needs to get done and resistance must be overcome. Think carefully about that in choosing the focus for your project.

Your “subject” of the analysis should be someone who is a) relatively early in his or her career and b) is “similar” in some respects to who you are or who you desire to become. Ideally, the person would be someone that you can interview and, even better, perhaps get some insights from talking to her or his colleagues and others. Recent graduates from USC, people who are about 2-10 years out of school, and who are doing well or, alternatively, have had problems because of political issues, would be ideal as the focus of your analysis. If you have questions about whether or not a specific individual would be appropriate, please feel free to ask me after class or via email.

In thinking about how to write the analysis and do the project, you can (but you don’t have to) use the organizing themes of the course as a guide. For instance, you could study how some person or group overcame opposition and resistance. You could analyze how some individual prepared him- or herself for the path to power. You could illustrate how some person or group lost power, or, alternatively, what someone did to hold onto power against significant opposition and challenges. You could analyze how some group or individual established a domain, by acquiring resources, attracting allies, and so forth.

Length is *not* the defining characteristic of a good analysis. Try to concisely (using exhibits as needed) cover the material. Use analysis and insight, rather than lots of words, to convey what you have learned and discovered.

**3) Final written projects are due at the beginning of class on Tuesday, April 30, 2013.**

**4) You must be prepared to present your findings to the class in a 10-15 minute presentation (feel free to be creative in how you choose to present) on April 30, 2013. Names will be drawn out of a hat that day to determine the order of the presentations, so it is critical to be ready that day.**

SOME GUIDELINES/HINTS TO MAKE THE ASSIGNMENT MORE INTERESTING, USEFUL, AND SUCCESSFUL:

- a) Try to use as many sources of information as possible—archives, interviews, public sources (if available). In other words, to the extent possible, triangulate to get the most valid information possible. In particular, the subject of your paper is likely to provide information that is at least unintentionally (and possibly intentionally) biased and self-serving.
- b) Please proofread your paper to eliminate typographical errors.
- c) Don’t just list some references at the back of the paper, or nowhere. If you have relied on sources, particularly published sources, and particularly if there is a direct quote, please provide a complete footnote as to the source.