Introduction and Course Objective

Power, Politics, and Influence is an elective course designed to help you become knowledgeable about power as well as develop the skills and strategies necessary to make a significant impact throughout your life and career. Courses on power are among the most sought-after electives in leading universities due to the fact that power is a reality in organizational life and because those wishing to achieve significant goals or champion new ideas must attend to power dynamics in order to succeed. The focus of this course is to help you get a 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 is 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 commitment and engagement, both inside and outside of class. It requires an open mind and a willingness to explore concepts that are often new and uncomfortable. 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 help you to become highly effective and impactful in your career of choice.

- **Detailed Objectives**
  - Learn to 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.
  - Learn to 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 change people. After the course, you will know the benefits as well as the costs and pitfalls associated with the pursuit 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.

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

Grading Summary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SELF-REFLECTIVE ASSIGNMENTS (5)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROUP PROJECT (paper + presentation)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFLUENCE EXERCISES (2)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLASS PARTICIPATION</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXAMS Midterm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>100.0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING DETAIL

Self-Reflective Assignments (20%). 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. Previous experience suggests that, if taken seriously, these self-reflective assignments are among the most useful aspects of the course. The assignments are due (hard copies, not emailed) at the start of the class for which they are assigned. As long as you complete the assignment and turn it in on time, you will receive full credit. Late papers will not be accepted. If for some reason you must miss class, you must submit your assignment electronically before it is due. The schedule (and descriptions) of the assignments is listed in this syllabus. You are required to do all 5 of these assignments. Thus, each assignment is worth 4% of your grade.

Group Project (20%). The group project is described in an addendum at the end of the syllabus. The goal of the project is to have you explore the ideas of the course in a real-world setting. Learning by doing and through intensive involvement results in greater mastery and retention of the material than more passive forms of learning. 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 December 4, 2015. Late projects will not be graded and will earn zero credit.

Influence Exercises (15%). To fully benefit from the content in this course, you must be willing to apply it. Toward this end, you will be required to complete two influence exercises throughout the semester. One involves choosing a concept or tactic learned in the class and applying it toward a goal. Another involves conducting a 1-1 meeting with a person in a field of interest to you. In each case, you will be asked to write brief (e.g., 1 page, single-spaced) account of your experience and what you learned from it. Deadlines for the assignments are indicated on the class calendar.
Class Participation (12.5%). You will only get out of this course as much as you put into it. Your class participation grade will reflect both class attendance and the quality of your involvement in the class’s activities and discussions. Near-perfect, on-time attendance is expected. If you must miss a class session during the semester, please inform me ahead of time and explain why you must miss. Otherwise, you are expected to come to each class prepared for discussion—i.e., having completed that day’s required reading and prepared insightful comments you plan to make in class. Since I frequently cold call, please avoid embarrassment by telling me before class if you are not prepared. 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 (15%) and Final (17.5%). The midterm and final exams will contain a mix of multiple-choice and short essay questions. The best way to study for the exams is to do all the assigned readings on time and keep notes on the readings and class discussions. The goal is for you to create a valuable set of notes you can return to time and again throughout your career.

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 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.

Technology Policy

Laptop, smartphone, and Internet usage is not permitted during class, as such activities serve as a distraction from the course content. Use of personal communication devices, such as cell phones, is considered unprofessional and is not permitted during class. ALL e-devices (cell phones, PDAs, I-Phones, Blackberries, other texting devices, laptops, I-pods) must be completely turned off during class time. Please let me know ahead of time if this will be a problem for you.

Retention of Graded Coursework

Coursework will be returned or available for pickup by students (in the case of Final Projects) upon request. 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.

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 Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity http://equity.usc.edu or to the Department of Public Safety http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage http://sarc.usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs www.usc.edu/disability provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information http://emergency.usc.edu will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

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 12th 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 12th 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fri 8/28</td>
<td>Introduction to the course</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fri 9/4</td>
<td>The power of mission</td>
<td>A1</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Fri 9/11</td>
<td>Managing the self</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fri 9/18</td>
<td>Meet in the ELC (JKP 301)</td>
<td>A2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fri 9/25</td>
<td>See the situation</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Fri 10/2</td>
<td>Building your network</td>
<td>A3</td>
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<td>Turn in group project topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fri 10/9</td>
<td>Meet in the ELC (JKP 301)</td>
<td>Influence exercise # 1</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Fri 10/16</td>
<td>Influence and persuasion</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Fri 10/23</td>
<td>MIDTERM</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Fri 10/30</td>
<td>Acting with power</td>
<td>A4</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Fri 11/6</td>
<td>Building power by standing out</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Fri 11/13</td>
<td>Establish your reputation</td>
<td>A5</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Fri 11/20</td>
<td>Make it Stick; how power is lost (and kept)</td>
<td>Influence exercise # 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Fri 11/27</td>
<td>THANKSGIVING BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Fri 12/4</td>
<td>Course overview; group presentations</td>
<td>Group project due</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Wed 12/9</td>
<td>FINAL – Wed 12/9, 11:00am, location TBA</td>
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</tbody>
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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.

FRIDAY, AUG 28:

Introduction to the course

Assigned readings:
- Course syllabus
- Case: Keith Ferrazzi
- Pfeffer, Introduction and Ch. 1

FRIDAY, SEPT 4:

The power of mission

Assigned readings:

First Individual Assignment:

1. Finding your mission is an important practice that can help lead to power and influence. Likewise, lacking a clear understanding of your mission can hinder your path to power. Please reflect on what you want to achieve in life and then write a 1-page essay that describes your current mission. Instead of focusing on abstract goals, such as “happiness” or “success” please provide answers to questions such as the following: What is the one thing you’d most like to achieve during your lifetime? What is a system or societal/political/social reality you’d like to change? What do you want the public to remember you for when you’re gone? For you, personally, what are the markers of a “life well lived?”

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

FRIDAY, SEPT 11:

Managing the self

Assigned readings:
- Tony Schwartz and Catherine McCarthy, “Manage Your Energy, Not Your Time”
- Nuria Chinchilla: The power to change workplaces.
- Carol Dweck on mindset: [http://chronicle.com/article/Carol-Dwecks-Attitude/65405/](http://chronicle.com/article/Carol-Dwecks-Attitude/65405/) *Note: use this link to access the article.*
FRIDAY, SEPT 18:

*Meet in the ELC in JKP (JKP 301)

Assigned readings:
- Pfeffer, Ch. 2-4

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

1. Write a 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 assignment to turn in at the beginning of class.

FRIDAY, SEPT 25:

See the situation

Assigned readings:
- “The Melian Dialogue”, from Thucydides’ History of the Peloponnesian War.
  *NOTE: READ THE MELIAN DIALOGUE TWICE IN PREPARATION FOR CLASS
- Dr. Laura Esserman, Victoria Chang and Jeffrey Pfeffer, Stanford Graduate School of Business, 2003.

FRIDAY, OCT 2:

Building your network

Assigned readings:

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 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?

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 assignment to turn in at the beginning of class.

FRIDAY, OCT 9:

* Meet in the ELC in JKP (JKP 301)

Assigned readings:
- Pfeffer, Ch. 5-6

Influence Exercise #1 (relational meeting)

1. Prepare a brief (1 page, single-spaced) report of your relational meeting. Describe the meeting and then summarize: (1) what you learned about the person, (2) what you did well, (3) what you would do differently if you could do it over, and (4) what benefits, if any, might emerge from the relationship.

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

FRIDAY, OCT 16:

Influence and persuasion

Assigned readings:

FRIDAY, OCT 23:

MIDTERM

FRIDAY, OCT 30:

Acting with power

Assigned readings:
- Pfeffer, Ch. 7-8

Fourth Individual Assignment:

1. 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 assignment to turn in at the beginning of class.
FRIDAY, NOV 6:

Building power by standing out

Assigned readings:
• Pfeffer, Ch. 9-11

FRIDAY, NOV 13:

Establish your reputation

Assigned readings:
• Grahame Dowling, “Communicating Corporate Reputation Through Stories.”

Fifth Individual Assignment:

Write an obituary as a true account of your life to date. When you finish, look over your obituary and ask yourself the following questions:

1. If I died today, would I die happy? Am I satisfied with the direction in which my life is headed?
2. Am I happy with the impact I’ve had in the world and the legacy that I’m creating?
3. What’s missing from my life? What do I need to do in order for my obituary to be “complete”?

Next, write a fantasy, or aspirational, obituary in which you write down all of the things you wish you had done with your life. Reflect on what this means for you going forward.

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

FRIDAY, NOV 20:

Make it stick; how power is lost (and kept)

Assigned readings:
• Case: Leslie Brinkman at Versutia Capital.
• Jeffrey Sonnenfeld: The fall from grace, Victoria Chang, Kimberly Elsbach, and Jeffrey Pfeffer, Stanford OB-34A, 2002.

Influence Exercise #2 (influence attempt)

1. Prepare a brief (1 page, single-spaced) report of your use of influence. Describe the context and then summarize: (1) the goal you sought to achieve, (2) what influence tactic you chose to use, (3) what results you achieved, and (4) what lessons you learned from the experience.

* Bring a hard copy of the assignment to turn in at the beginning of class.
FRIDAY, NOV 27:

THANKSGIVING BREAK

FRIDAY, DEC 4:

Course overview; group presentations

Assigned readings:
• Pfleger, Ch. 11-13

Group projects due at beginning of class

WED, DEC 9:

Final exam, Wed., 12/9, 11:00am, location TBA
GROUP PROJECT ASSIGNMENT AND INSTRUCTIONS

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

2) No later than October 2, please let me know who your group has chosen as its focus for the project. Do so by emailing me with the person’s name and why he/she would be a good person to study on or before October 2.

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” should be someone who is either a) relatively early in his or her career and is “similar” in some respects to who you are or who you desire to become, or b) someone who has already reached achieved a great deal of power as a means to achieve his/her mission. Ideally, the person will be someone that you can interview and, even better, perhaps get some insights from talking to her or his colleagues and others. Past graduates from USC who are doing well or, alternatively, who have had problems because of political issues, would be ideal as the focus of your analysis (please, no USC profs). 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 one or all of the organizing themes of the course as a guide. You could consider rating the person’s strengths and weaknesses in each dimension (e.g., mission, manage the self, see the situation, etc.). You might want to articulate how this person overcame opposition and resistance. You could analyze how the individual prepared himself or herself for the path to power. You could illustrate how the person lost power, or, alternatively, what he/she did to hold onto power against significant opposition and challenges. You could analyze how some 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 cover the material (using exhibits as needed). 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 Friday, December 4, 2015.

4) You must be prepared to present your findings to the class in a 10-12 minute presentation (feel free to be creative in how you choose to present) on Friday, December 4, 2015. Names will be drawn out of a hat that day to determine the order of the presentations.

TO MAKE THE ASSIGNMENT MORE INTERESTING, USEFUL, AND SUCCESSFUL:

a) 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) Include sources. 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.