

**MOR 567: INTERPERSONAL INFLUENCE AND POWER**  
**Fall 2019, TUE, 12:30-3:30PM / JKP 112**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Interpersonal Influence and Power is an elective course designed to help you acquire the knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary to make a lasting impact in the world. Courses on power are among the most sought-after electives in top business schools due to the simple fact that power dynamics are pervasive in organizations and those wishing to achieve personal goals and/or champion new ideas must be savvy about how power and influence work. The purpose of this course is to prepare you for your unique path to power. You will learn how to recognize and deal effectively with the dynamics you will encounter throughout your career as well as think deeply about, and identify, the unique approach to power and influence that is the strongest fit for you.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

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

- Global Objective
  - Gain knowledge, skills, and strategies related to power and influence that will help you become 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 changes people over time. You will learn the benefits as well as the costs and pitfalls associated with the pursuit of power, and incorporate this knowledge into your personal plan.

## COURSE MATERIALS

### Required Materials

- *Power: Why Some People Have It – And Others Don't*, Jeffrey Pfeffer, HarperCollins 2010 (may be purchased online or from the USC bookstore)
- Course Reader (purchase from the USC bookstore)

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

*If you have any questions or need assistance with the Blackboard Course Pages, please contact the Marshall HelpDesk at 213-740-3000 or HelpDesk@marshall.usc.edu.*

## GRADING

Grading will consist of the following:

<u>Components</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>% of Grade</u>
<b>SELF-REFLECTIVE ASSIGNMENTS (4)</b>	100	25.0%
<b>GROUP PROJECT (paper + presentation)</b>	80	20.0%
<b>INFLUENCE EXERCISES (2)</b>	70	17.5%
<b>CLASS PARTICIPATION (attendance + participation)</b>	50	12.5%
<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	<u>100</u>	<u>25%</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	400	100.0%

## HOMEWORK

*Self-Reflective Assignments (25%).* Individual, self-reflective writing assignments will be assigned 4 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 on time and have put in adequate effort and reflection, you will receive full credit. Late papers (including those turned in after the start of class) will not be accepted. If you must miss class, submit your assignment to me via email before it is due. The schedule (and descriptions) of the assignments is listed in this syllabus.

*Influence Exercises (17.5%).* 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. In each case, you will be asked to a) apply a concept or tool from the class (more detail will be provided in class) and b) write a brief (1-2 pages, single-spaced) account of your experience and what you learned from it. Deadlines for the assignments are indicated on the class calendar. Assignments will include 1) an interview with a high-status person; 2) a peer coaching exercise.

## TEAM PROJECT

*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 3. Late projects will not be graded and will earn zero credit. \*Note: you may also wish to use your group as a study team throughout the semester, meeting to discuss case readings, compare notes, study for the final, etc.

## EXAM

*Final (25%).* The final exam will contain a mix of multiple-choice and short essay questions. In order to be prepared, 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 again and again throughout your career.

## CLASS PARTICIPATION

*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 the reason you must miss. Otherwise, you are expected to come to each class prepared for discussion, 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.

Class Participation—Behavioral Anchor Rating Scale:

### Excellent Performance

- Initiates information relative to topics discussed
- Accurately exhibits knowledge of assignment content
- Clarifies points that others may not understand

- Shares personal experiences or opinions related to topic
- Offers relevant / succinct input to class
- Actively participates in class exercises
- Demonstrates ability to apply, analyze, evaluate & synthesize course material.
- Demonstrates willingness to attempt to answer unpopular questions
- Builds on other students' contributions

#### Average Performance

- Participates in group discussions when asked
- Demonstrates knowledge of course material
- Offers clear, concise, “good” information on class assignments
- Offers input, but tends to reiterate the intuitive
- Attends class regularly

#### Unacceptable Performance

- Fails to participate even when directly asked
- Gives no input to discussions
- Does not demonstrate knowledge of the readings
- Shows up to class: does nothing
- Distracts group / class
- Irrelevant discussion

### THE IMPORTANCE OF COURSE EVALUATIONS

*The student course evaluations are invaluable to me in getting feedback on how to improve the course. This course has been continuously improved over the years based on feedback from students and instructor observations and I thank you in advance for your help in making the class even better in the future.*

### **STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. Students are expected to submit original work. They have an obligation both to protect their own work from misuse and to avoid using another's work as their own. All students are expected to understand and abide by the principles of academic honesty outlined in the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00) of SCampus ([www.usc.edu/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) or <http://scampus.usc.edu>). The recommended sanctions for academic integrity violations can be found in Appendix A of the Student Conduct Code.

#### **Students with Disabilities:**

USC is committed to making reasonable accommodations to assist individuals with disabilities in reaching their academic potential. If you have a disability which may impact your performance, attendance, or grades in this course and require accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Disability Services and Programs ([www.usc.edu/disability](http://www.usc.edu/disability)). DSP provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. 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 your TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS (Grace Ford Salvatori Hall) 120 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776. Email: [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu).

### **Support Systems:**

*Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

<https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255*

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

*Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

*Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance – (213) 740-5086*

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

*Student Support & Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

*Diversity at USC – <https://diversity.usc.edu/>*

Tab for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students

<b>COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS</b>
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<b>Week</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
1	Tue 8/27	Power model; Keith Ferrazzi case	--
2	Tue 9/3	Find your purpose	<b>RA1</b>
3	Tue 9/10	Manage the self	<b>RA2</b>
4	Tue 9/17	See the situation	--
5	Tue 9/24	Build your network: Part 1	--
6	Tue 10/1	ELC activity	<b>RA3</b> Group project topic due
7	Tue 10/8	Build your network: Part 2	--
8	Tue 10/15	Asserting influence: Techniques and tactics	--
9	Tue 10/22	ELC activity	<b>Influence exercise #1</b>
10	Tue 10/29	Asserting influence: Acting with power	--
11	Tue 11/5	ELC activity	--
12	Tue 11/12	Make it stick: Garnering resources and leading change	<b>RA4</b>
13	Tue 11/19	Make it stick: How power is lost (and kept)	<b>Influence exercise #2</b>
14	Tue 11/26	THANKSGIVING BREAK	--
15	Tue 12/3	Course overview; group presentations	Group project due
16	Tue 12/17	FINAL – Wed, 12/17 from 11AM - 1PM	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.**

### TUE, AUG 27:

#### **Power Model**

##### Assigned readings:

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

### TUE, SEPT 3:

#### **Find Your Purpose**

##### 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."
- Clayton Christensen, "How Will You Measure Your Life," *Harvard Business Review*.

##### Reflection Assignment 1:

- Identifying and pursuing a sense of purpose in your personal and professional life facilitates power and influence. Moreover, it guides how you gain and use power, keeping you on track to achieve the type of impact you'd like to make in the world. In contrast, lacking a clear understanding of your purpose can hinder your career as well as lead you down a path you never intended to travel. Reflect on your goals, values, and ambitions and write a 1-page reflection that describes your purpose. Do not list abstract goals, such as "find happiness" or "become successful." Everyone wants those things. Instead, identify the unique values and achievements that would allow you to truly feel fulfilled and satisfied. Similarly, avoid simply identifying roles you could fill, such as "CEO" or "Consultant." Instead, provide answers to the following: Who do you want to be? What do you want to do/achieve with the role/s you fill throughout your career; why are these values and goals important to you?

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

### TUE, SEPT 10:

#### **Manage the Self**

##### Assigned readings:

- Case: Tristan Walker: The Extroverted Introvert
- Tony Schwartz and Catherine McCarthy, "Manage Your Energy, Not Your Time"
- Pfeffer, Ch. 2

Reflection Assignment 2 (complete Part 1 of the assignment *before* you do the reading):

- Part 1: Reflect on the success you've had so far in your life. Then, write a one page essay about the particular aspects of your personality, skills and abilities, and "character" that you believe have been central in helping you get ahead in life. In other words, describe the personal attributes, qualities, and abilities you possess that you believe have made (and will make) you effective in obtaining your goals.
- Part 2: After completing the essay for Part 1, read Ch. 2 from Pfeffer's *Power*. Below your essay, in the same document, 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). Include these ratings with Part 1 when turning in the assignment.

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

**TUE, SEPT 17:**

**See the Situation**

Assigned readings:

- Case: Carla Ann Harris at Morgan Stanley
- Pfeffer, Ch. 2-4

**TUE, SEPT 24:**

**Build Your Network: Part 1**

Assigned readings:

- Case: Built on Grit: h.wood and John Terzian

**TUE, OCT 1:**

**\*ELC activity**

\*Turn in group project topic by or before this date.

Assigned readings:

- Pfeffer, Ch. 5

Reflection Assignment 3:

- 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:
  - With whom do you spend the most time? Why?
  - 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?
  - What is the structure of your network? Do you have lots of "weak ties" or connections to



people who can provide you novel information? Are you central in any networks?  
-What are the barriers that prevent you from building the network you need?  
-Considering your answers to the above questions, what might you do differently if you wanted to increase your influence and build a more effective network?

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

## **TUE, OCT 8:**

### **Build Your Network: Part 2**

#### Assigned readings:

- Case: Ross Walker's Path to Power
- Pfeffer, Ch. 6

## **TUE, OCT 15:**

### **Asserting Influence: Techniques and Tactics**

#### Assigned readings:

- Case: Iggy's Bread of the World
- Robert B. Cialdini, "Harnessing the Science of Persuasion," *HBR*, (October, 2001).

## **TUE, OCT 22:**

### **\*ELC activity**

#### Influence Exercise #1 (interview)

- Identify a high-profile individual who has achieved success in a particular domain. This might be a younger person (e.g., from the Forbes 30-under-30 list) or a more established leader or executive. Look for someone who has unique knowledge and expertise that could help you become more successful as well. Reach out to the person and set up an interview (in-person is best, but skype or phone is acceptable if the person is from out-of-town). From the interview construct a brief (1-2 pages, single-spaced) report of the key lessons that the person shared with you. Describe the lessons and provide examples from the person's own experience that illustrates the lesson/s. Finish by articulating how you and others in the class might use what you learned as a way to become more influential.

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

## **TUE, OCT 29:**

### **Asserting Influence: Acting With Power**

#### Assigned readings:

- Case: Rebecca S. Halstead - Steadfast Leadership
- Pfeffer, Ch. 7-8

## **TUE, NOV 5:**

### **\*ELC activity**

#### Assigned readings:

- Pfeffer, Ch. 9-10

## **TUE, NOV 12:**

### **Make it Stick: Garnering Resources and Leading Change**

#### Assigned readings:

- Case: Dr. Laura Esserman

#### Reflection Assignment 4:

- Write an “aspirational obituary” in which you write down all the things you hope you will have achieved and done with your life once all is said and done. It can be in bullet point form if you prefer. When you finish, look over what you have written and then write answers to the following questions:
  - Given what I wrote, am I on the right track? Am I satisfied with the direction in which my career and life is currently headed?
  - Am I happy with the impact (both magnitude and quality) I’ve had in the world?
  - Am I creating a legacy I’m happy with?
  - What’s missing from my life, if anything? What might I need to do in order to achieve my aspirational obituary?
- Next, 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.

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

## **TUE, NOV 19:**

### **Make it Stick: How Power is Lost (and Kept)**

#### Assigned readings:

- Case: Jeffrey Sonnenfeld - The fall from grace

#### Influence Exercise #2 (coaching exercise)

- The purpose of this exercise is to learn through teaching. Set up a meeting (1-hour or longer) to interview another student in the MBA program who has not taken (and is not currently taking) MOR 567. The student can be any year in the program, but the earlier the better, so that he/she can take advantage of your advice. Develop a set of questions that you plan to ask and write them down ahead of time. Then, in the meeting, ask the questions and take notes so that you have a record of the person’s answers. You should try to come to an understanding of the person’s 1) personal and professional history, 2) clarity or lack of clarity about purpose, 3) strategies, skills, abilities, and connections that could lead to power, and 4) strengths and weaknesses. After the meeting, create a summary of the person’s opportunities

and challenges and, using content from the class, make a set of suggestions that the person can consider. Give the student a copy for his/her benefit. Bring your questions/notes and suggestions in a hard copy to turn in at the beginning of class.

**TUE, NOV 26:**

**NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**TUE, DEC 3:**

**Course Overview and Group Presentations**

Assigned readings:

- Pfeffer, Ch. 11-13

Group projects due at beginning of class

**TUE, DEC 17:**

**Final exam, Wed., 12/17, 11AM - 1PM in JKP 112**

## GROUP PROJECT ASSIGNMENT AND INSTRUCTIONS

**1) You will form a group consisting of either 5 or 6 people.**

**2) No later than Oct. 1, 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 Oct 1.**

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 perhaps 5-10 years down the road from where you're at, or b) someone who has already reached achieved a great deal of power as a means to achieve his/her purpose. Ideally, the person will be someone that you can interview in person and, even better, perhaps also gather some insights from talking to her or his colleagues and others. Past graduates from USC who are doing exceptionally 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 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., purpose, 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 to convey what you have learned and discovered.

**3) Final written projects are due at the beginning of class on December 3.**

**4) You must be prepared to present your findings to the class in a 10-minute presentation on Dec 3. Be creative in how you choose to present the lessons you learned (multimedia, short video clips, reenactments, etc.).**

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

- a) **Use as many sources of information as possible—archives, interviews with the individual and others, 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 when possible. If you have relied on sources, particularly published sources, and particularly if there is a direct quote, please provide a footnote indicating the source.**