SYLLABUS
POWER AND INFLUENCE ELECTIVE

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COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL
COURSE DESCRIPTION

Power is the ability to get people to do something they did not want to do and make them happy that they did it. Power and influence processes are pervasive and important in organizations, so leaders need to be able to understand power and to act on that knowledge. Organizations are fundamentally political entities, and power and influence are key mechanisms by which things get done. Therefore, this course has three objectives: 1) to increase students’ ability to diagnose and analyze power, understanding why some have more power than others and grasping the strategies and tactics by which power is employed; 2) to expose students to effective and appropriate methods of influence; 3) to explain how power and influence can be used to build cooperation and promote change in organizations.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

The course is divided into three sections. The first section is an introduction to the concept of power. Here we explore the circumstances under which power and influence will be more prominent as features of organizational life, learn how to identify the relevant political subdivisions in an organization and how to diagnose points of view on issues. The second section focuses on sources of power and why some people have more power than others. We will consider both personal attributes and structural position as sources of power. The third section considers the strategies and tactics by which power and influence are exercised in organizations, including issues of timing, the use of information and analysis, language, and the social psychology of interpersonal influence.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

You will be evaluated on three types of work: 1) your performance on a final paper (50% of the grade); 2) the quality of your contributions to class discussion of the course material (20% of the grade); and on 3) two self-reflective short memos (Memo A and Memo B, each is 15% of the grade). The final paper will give you the opportunity to review and consolidate your learning. This paper will largely consist of integrating Memos A and B, as well as material from the last part of the course.

CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

Class participation is an important part of the learning process in this course, so it is also an important part of your evaluation. A contribution to class discussion is a comment that: 1) offers a novel and relevant insight to the issue; 2) builds on the preceding discussion and moves the analysis forward to generate new insights; 3) if it includes a personal anecdote or experience, it does so in a way that helps to illuminate the ideas being discussed; and 4) uses logic, evidence, and creativity, and is more than merely an expression of an opinion or feeling.

Given that there are so few classes, I will not accept unexcused absences.

REFLECTIVE MEMOS AND SHORT ASSIGNMENTS

I will ask you to write to memos (memo A and Memo B). The two memos are for your own benefit. They are short written assignments, intended to help you learn from your current work experience, and to apply lessons from this class to your career.

FINAL PAPER
The final paper integrates the two memos and a discussion of your political tactics. It will be due Saturday April 22nd, by midnight.

**SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS**

Submit smaller assignments, Memos A and B, as well as the final paper via Canvas. It records the date and time of submissions. It is my policy to not accept late assignments. I make exceptions for tardy assignments if I am notified ahead of time and tardiness is due to circumstances outside of your control. I expect you to tell me when you will be able to turn in the assignment at your earliest opportunity, and to meet that revised deadline.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

- No Case Pack. All materials are posted on Canvas.

**STUDENT NORMS OF CLASSROOM CONDUCT**

I think that you will find me to be a generally easy going professor. However, I articulate some rules and expectations because I believe that if we all follow them, we will create a better learning environment for everyone. In this spirit, if there are norms of conduct that you think I should add or amend, please speak up.

**CLASS ATTENDANCE**

I expect you to attend every class, to arrive on time to class, and to be fully prepared to discuss the material listed in the syllabus in preparation for that class. I will not reprimand students directly for missing class, but I can’t reward you for class participation if you are not present either physically or mentally.

Attendance will be taken at every class. I understand that occasionally, because of factors outside of your control, you may be late to class, or you may have to miss a class entirely. If you know of these circumstances in advance, I expect you to notify me by email of your lateness or absence, as soon as you become aware of these circumstances. If you do not know of these circumstances in advance, I expect that you will explain to me by email, as soon as possible after class, why you were late or absent from my class.

**NAME PLATE**

Please display your name plate in every class, to help me and your classmates learn your name.

**ARRIVING LATE TO CLASS**

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Many students report being distracted by students trooping in late or disappearing and reappearing at random while class is in session. If you are late, or if you absolutely have to absent yourself during class, I would ask you to do so as quietly and discreetly as possible, to avoid distracting your classmates.

**ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT**

For every class, I expect you to turn off all laptops, cell phones, wireless connections, and any other electronic devices during class time.

**FEEDBACK**

I love teaching, especially when the class is going well. I am disappointed if there is a problem in the classroom – particularly one that I could remedy – but nobody has shared it with me. Please give me feedback before the end of the semester, whether positive or negative, on your learning experience in this class. If there is some aspect of the class that you do not appreciate (and which you think could be improved) or that you appreciate (and which you think there could be more of), please bring this issue to my attention as soon as possible, either by speaking with me directly or by relaying the issue through your class representative. I guarantee that you will find a sympathetic ear, that I will be very grateful to you for bringing the issue to my attention. I cannot guarantee that I will satisfy all of your suggestions, as I have learned that responding to certain suggestions to satisfy a few students can end up frustrating many more. I do guarantee, however, that I will make every effort to take your concern seriously, and to do whatever I can to address the issue.