

Power and Influence

Course Overview

Fall Term 2018

Introduction

This is a course about understanding power and influence dynamics and learning to use them as effective tools for analyzing your surroundings and achieving your goals. It is a course about getting things done in the real world, where politics and personalities often seem to hinder rather than help you. Power and Influence is a course for those of you who want to make things happen, despite the obstacles that might stand in your way. This course is also intended to unearth your implicit theories and feelings about power and influence. These have a profound impact on how you perceive problems and opportunities, and subsequently, how you decide upon particular courses of action. To help you develop a realistic point of view, you will start from day one to become aware and to test your assumptions about power and influence.

Course Objectives

This course includes conceptual models, tactical approaches, self-assessment tools and simulation exercises to help you develop your own influence style and understand political dynamics as they unfold around you. By focusing on specific expressions of power and influence, this course provides you with the opportunity to observe effective and ineffective uses of power in different organizational contexts and career stages. It will also introduce difficult ethical questions associated with the use of power and influence. By design, this course will challenge you to define for yourself what will constitute the ethical exercise of power and influence in your life. The objectives of the course are to help you:

- 1. Develop a conceptual framework for understanding power and influence.** You should be able to define power and influence and begin to appreciate how essential they are for your own career. You will learn how to identify critical sources of political conflict, and how to use tools to assuage conflict or harness it to produce constructive outcomes.
- 2. Practice diagnostic skills** that will enable you to map out the political landscape, understand others' perspectives and power bases, and learn to predict and influence their actions.
- 3. Assess your own power bases and influence style** and consider strategies for expanding them.
- 4. Begin to build a repertoire of influence tactics** that will enable you to be effective in a variety of contexts and situations.
- 5. Develop your own strategy** for building and exercising power and influence ethically and responsibly.

Course Content

After introducing you to the volatile dynamics of power and influence at work, the course will help you develop a deeper understanding of political issues through three interrelated modules:

Power and influence in interpersonal relationships: How to influence others?

What is power? Where does it come from? In the first module, we begin to explore the nature of power and influence in interpersonal relationships. We will discuss personal, positional, and relational sources of power. In particular, we will analyze the importance of networks of relationships as sources of power. This module includes an exercise (Network Assessment Exercise) designed to help you assess your own network of relationships.

In this module, we will also consider how to leverage personal, positional, and relational power bases through influence tactics that fit individual and situational needs. We will learn how to understand our “influence targets,” so as to tailor our approach accordingly. What motivates people to respond to influence attempts? How can you cater your influence approach to the different needs and preferences of those around you? How can you recognize when your influence attempts are not working, and how do you change approaches when this happens?

We will explore these questions through a series of cases about people in very different situations with different opportunities and constraints on the influence tactics they can use. We will also use two exercises that will provide you feedback on your communication style and skills. The first is a coaching exercise that will enable you to get feedback on your communication style, the second is an exercise that will provide feedback on your storytelling abilities. These exercises are meant to help you better project both warmth and strength, effectively shape the content of your discourse, and address the particular challenges that you may face as a public communicator.

Power and Influence in organizations: How to navigate organizational politics?

This module addresses the question of how power and influence manifest in organizations. To be successful in getting things done in organizations, it is critical that you be able to comprehend the patterns of interdependence among organizational participants and to diagnose their relative power. Our focus will be on learning to read and diagnose the political landscape in organizations. How do power and influence dynamics work in organizations? What are the key sources of power in organizations? Why do we see political conflict in organizations? How can political conflict be handled to serve constructive ends? We will consider how to address these questions over the course of your career. We will map out typical political challenges at different career stages with an emphasis on early career issues. We will cover several topics including building credibility quickly, cultivating mentors and networks, and managing ethical dilemmas. We will consider strategies for acquiring power over time in an effective and ethical manner and explore common early career transitions with an eye towards crafting strategies for navigating inflection points successfully. In order to do so, we will use our selected case studies.

We will also discuss the challenges of change implementation in organizations. To implement planned organizational changes, you will need to overcome the potential resistance of other organizational members and persuade them to adopt new practices. Organizational change implementation is thus an exercise that requires the effective use of power and influence. How can you be an effective change agent in your organization? What are the factors that are likely to affect

your success? We will address these questions through case discussions and through a simulation (Change-Pro) that will give the opportunity to practice change leadership in a team.

Finally, we will discuss the challenges and opportunities of co-leadership in organizations. Under what conditions can co-leadership be effective? What are the challenges associated with co-leadership? What are the potential benefits of co-leadership?

Power and Influence in society: The challenges of transforming your environment

In this final module, we will look at power within the context of society. We will think about the challenges of influencing your broader environment. Who are the powerful in society and how did they obtain their power? Can individuals affect the distribution of power within a larger system? How can power be used to produce great benefit or harm? Can the use of power be both self-enhancing and self-destructive? Why do even the most powerful fall? To address these questions, we will use cases that are meant to make you think about how to possibly influence your broader environment. We will also use a simulation (Star Power) in order to help us think about the challenges of changing existing power hierarchies in society. Reflecting on these issues is crucial for anyone who wants to make a difference in the world.

Course Pedagogy

The course relies on a mix of traditional case studies, biographical case studies of historical figures, exercises/simulations, films, and class visits by influential people. The exposure to the development and use of power in many different social settings and at various points in history allows a comprehensive analysis of power in action. Self-assessment tools are included throughout the course to help you assess your own bases of power and influence style. A number of readings, both required and recommended, supplement the case material.

Course Requirements

Grades will be based on two components (each accounting for 50% of the final grade):

1. Class participation: (50%)--including class attendance, contribution to class discussions and completion of the different exercises and simulations
2. Final paper assignment: (50%)

Below is a more detailed presentation of these different exercises, simulations and assignments. (Please note that some exercises and simulations may be added to this list over the course of the semester).

Network Assessment Exercise

The Network Assessment Exercise is designed to help you identify patterns in your networks of relationships.

Influence Style Questionnaire

The Influence Style Questionnaire (ISQ) is designed to allow others to provide you feedback on your influence style. This information can help you identify more and less productive patterns in how you influence others.

Public Communication Coaching Sessions

These coaching exercises are meant to help you better project both warmth and strength and address the particular challenges that you may face as a public communicator.

Change-Pro Simulation

This simulation gives you the opportunity to practice change leadership in teams.

StarPower Simulation

The StarPower Simulation is an in-class face-to-face exercise designed to help you experience how people react to shifts in power over time.

Final Paper Assignment

The course ends with your final paper in which you apply the lessons of the course to your own situation. The final paper should be thought of as the last and the most important case study in the course. The final paper is designed to help you improve your power and influence skills in your own career. You have two options:

Option 1

You can analyze a political situation you experienced at work before you came to HBS or during the summer. Ideally, choose a situation in which you felt politically blind-sided, or felt that you came out in a disadvantaged position. Alternatively, you may simply analyze the politics of your last job. In addition, instead of focusing on your last job, you may also use experience you may have gained in another organizational setting, such as a political or volunteer organization, as the focus of your paper.

In addition to describing the facts of the situation, effective papers will address most, if not all, of the questions below:

1. What is your assessment of the power and influence dynamics in the situation? (Account for these dynamics in the job as well as organization and industry/sector within which you were evolving, if appropriate)
2. How well did you “read” and respond to the political dynamics in the situation?
3. What, if any, relevant insights do you derive from the results of the exercises in which you engaged throughout the term regarding how effective or ineffective you were in the situation/position you are analyzing?
4. In what ways could you have acted differently to exercise power and influence more effectively in your situation?
5. What moral and ethical challenges did the situation present and how were they met?

6. What important lessons about how you respond to situations of power and influence do you take away that might be helpful in the future?

Option 2

If you have a job by the time you begin writing this paper or are choosing among alternatives, the final paper will give you an opportunity to apply the concepts and lessons of the course to your new position. In addition, instead of a new job, you may also use a new (or future) position in another organizational setting, such as a political or volunteer organization, as the focus of your paper.

Papers dealing with your next organizational experience should address the questions below:

1. What is your assessment of the power dynamics in the job, organization and industry/sector you are entering?
2. Given your mix of personal goals and influence skills, what do you hope to accomplish through the job you will be taking?
3. What are the sources of power and influence skills necessary for you to accomplish your goals and be effective in your chosen position? Do your current sources of power and your dominant influence skills match these requirements? The results of exercises in which you engaged throughout the term can provide data for this analysis.
4. What is your plan for developing your sources of power, influence skills, and relationships necessary to be effective: (1) before actually taking the job, (2) during your first months on the job, and (3) over the longer term of your career?
5. How will you stay vigilant to the kinds of ethical dilemmas that are likely to occur in your new job?

Please note:

In both options, you may organize your paper in any way you wish. Each of the questions need not be covered in the same depth. You may choose the areas that you want to focus and develop in greater or lesser detail. Analysis will be valued over simple exposition. Do not feel you have to apply every concept introduced in the course. Use those most helpful to your analysis. Your grade will reflect the breadth and depth of your analysis and the creative insight you apply.

Assignment Checklist

In addition to reading all assigned materials and preparing the assignment questions for class you will be required to complete the following assignments. They will be factored into your class participation grade (worth 50%). Please plan to complete assignments by the date and time that they are due. If you foresee having an issue with any of the deadlines, please email Shelby at saustinmanning@hbs.edu.

Assignment	Description	Due Date
KNP/Greg Stone/ Cecile Falcon Meeting Sign-ups	Sign up for a meeting with a KNP consultant and with Greg Stone or Cecile Falcon using the excel spreadsheet shared with you in Canvas.	Due Sunday, September 9th at 5:00 PM
Network Assessment Survey	This exercise is designed to help you identify patterns in your approach to developing networks of relationships.	Due Tuesday, September 11th at 5:00pm.
KNP/Greg Stone/ Cecile Falcon Video	Record a video clip of yourself talking for a few minutes (in a standing position) and email to your partner AND send to Shelby, via secure file transfer. You will then receive 40 minutes of evaluation and coaching with your partner to optimize personal strengths and address particular challenges as a public communicator with an emphasis on body language. For more information see "KNP, Greg Stone and Cecile Falcon Coaching Exercise 2018".	Due September 11th at 5:00 PM
KNP/Greg Stone/ Cecile Falcon Reflection Assignment	<p>After your coaching sessions, submit answers to the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What did you learn from the feedback that you got from KNP, Greg Stone and your coaching partner? 2. How did this feedback differ across KNP, Greg Stone, and your partner? How do you reconcile the feedback that you got from each of them? 3. Describe the action steps you will take to integrate this feedback going forward. 4. What did you learn about your own effectiveness as a coach and provider of feedback? 	Due September 30th at 5:00 PM
ISQ	The Influence Style Questionnaire (ISQ) is designed to allow others to provide you feedback on your influence style.	Due October 1st at 5:00 PM

	This information can help you identify more and less productive patterns in how you influence others	
Change-Pro Simulation Pre-Assignment	<p>1. Read the ChangePro Manual, posted on Canvas.</p> <p>2. Take some time on your own to think about your strategy. Use the "ChangePro Simulation Strategy Assignment" posted on Canvas.</p> <p>3. You are highly encouraged to schedule a 30-45 minute meeting with your assigned team before class on Thursday, October 25th at 11:40 AM to discuss your strategy for completing the simulation. Teams will be assigned and posted on Canvas, at the start of that week.</p>	October 25 th at 11:40 AM
Star Power Reflection Assignment	<p>After you have completed the simulation, please address the following questions:</p> <p>1. Reflect on your experience in the Star Power simulation.</p> <p>2. What is your assessment of the inter-group dynamics in this simulation? What explains them?</p> <p>3. What was it like to be a member of the group you found yourself assigned to? What feelings did you experience and what was their source? How effective did you think you were at dealing with the challenges your group faced? How did you feel about your group's performance? Have you ever been in a similar situation in real life?</p> <p>4. What lessons or issues does this simulation highlight?</p> <p>5. Write a response to questions 2 and 4.</p>	November 4 th at 5:00 PM
Final Paper	See description above	Due December 12 th at 1:00 PM