

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
School of Labor and Employment Relations

LER 569

Power & Influence in Human Resource Management

Instructor: Richard Benton
Office: LER 209
Office Hours: By appointment
E-mail: rabenton@illinois.edu

Class time: Wednesdays 11am-1:50am on Zoom (See Compass for links)
Course Website: On Compass

Course Overview:

Power and politics are necessary features of organizational life. This course provides a framework for analyzing the sources of power and influence in organizations and the circumstances that lead to its attainment and effective use. In this course, we use a broad concept of power and influence that encompasses formal as well as informal, cultural, and symbolic aspects, which should be particularly important in managing human resources. With appropriate understanding of relevant theories and principles, our focus will be on the application of the concepts and tools to real-world situations. The analysis of cases will be central to our class discussions.

Reading List

Required Texts:

Cialdini, Robert B. 2009. *Influence: Science and Practice*, 5th edition. Pearson: Boston.

Pfeffer, Jeffrey. 2010. *Power: Why Some People Have It—and Others Don't*. HarperCollins: New York.

Required Cases: **available online at <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/790210>**

Evaluation, Assignments, and Course Policies:

Evaluation:

Case memos (60%)

Reflection Paper (20%)

Final Exam (20%)

Case Memos:

You are required to submit a **2-page**, double-spaced memo at each class that has a case reading assignment. You are required to submit all six case response memos. Use 12-point font size, with at least 1 inch margins all around. Do not add a cover page. You will submit the case memos via the online submission system on the course compass page. Memos are due prior to the start of class. Submission by email is not allowed except for unexpected, extraordinary circumstances. In your memo you should answer the assigned questions, in detail, that are listed below in the course schedule.

Reflection Paper:

You are to write a paper that describes and analyzes a compelling example of the use of power and influence principles we discuss in this course. This example can be based on either your own personal experiences, incidents you have witnessed, or events that have happened to people you know very well. Regardless of the source, the events you choose must be based on fact and first-hand knowledge. Describe the event, and drawing on concepts covered in the course, explain and interpret how power and influence were involved. Discuss whether the event was avoidable or should have been handled differently. The paper will be no longer than **4 pages**, double-spaced, with 12-point font size and at least 1 inch margins all around. Do not add a cover page. More detailed guidelines will be announced later. The paper is due on **March 10**. It will be worth 20 percent of the total grade.

Final Exam:

There will be one final exam worth 20 percent of the total grade. The final covers all material from class and will be essay format. The final will be administered on the course compass webpage.

Academic Integrity:

The academic standards of the University protect the quality of education and research at this institute. These standards of conduct are detailed in the Code on Campus Affairs.

As a student, you should avoid obtaining (1) answers for any assigned work or examination from any unauthorized source; (2) working with another person or persons on any assignment or examination when not specifically permitted by the instructor; and (3) observing the work of other students during any examination. You should also avoid providing answers for any assigned work or examination when not specifically authorized to do so, as well as informing any person or persons of the contents of any examination prior to the time the examination is given.

The Code of Campus Affairs also discusses plagiarism. A student should neither fail to credit sources used in a work product in any attempt to pass off the work as one's own, nor attempt to receive credit for work performed by another, including papers obtained in whole or in part from individuals or other sources. Any problems of academic integrity on an individual assignment will result in a student receiving a failing grade for the whole course. Conduct yourself in such a manner, at all times, to avoid any suspicion of wrongdoing. Avoid helping anyone else break the rules. Enrollment in this course indicates you have read and accepted the terms of this course outline.

Course Schedule

Week 1:

[January 27]

Topics:

Introduction. Formal Authority and Beyond

Required Reading:

Pfeffer, "Introduction"

Pfeffer, Chapter 1 "It Takes More Than Performance"

Cialdini, Chapter 1 "Weapons of Influence"

Week 2:

[February 3]

Topics:

Principles of Influence: Reciprocation and Commitment

Required Reading:

Cialdini, Chapter 2 "Reciprocation"

Cialdini, Chapter 3 "Commitment and Consistency"

Case Study:

Case: "The Roller Coaster Ride: The Resignation of a Star." Harvard Business School case #9-405-031.

Question: What should Stephen Conner do next? What should Peter Thompson do next?

Develop an action plan for each. Be as specific as possible using concrete information found in the case.

Week 3:

[February 10]

Topics:

Principles of Influence: Social Proof

Required Reading:

Cialdini, Chapter 4 "Social Proof"

Listen to the Hidden Brain podcast "Snooki and the Handbag"

Case Study:

Case: "Henry Tam and the MGI Team." Harvard Business School case #9-404-068.

Question 1. What were the root cause of the MGI team's process problems? Avoid simply summarizing the facts in the case. Instead, provide a cause-and-effect analysis based on sound logic.

Question 2. At the end of the case, what actions could Henry have taken to increase the team's effectiveness? Be as specific as possible using concrete information found in the case.

Week 4:

[February 17]

NO CLASS

Week 5:

[February 24]

Topics:

Principles of Influence: Liking

Required Reading:

Cialdini, Chapter 5 “Liking”

Case Study:

Case: “Thomas Green: Power, Office Politics, and a Career in Crisis.” Harvard Business School case #2095.

Question 1. What are the possible underlying agendas of (a) Davis and (b) McDonald?

Question 2. What actions, if any, would you take if you were Thomas Green? Be as specific as possible using concrete information found in the case.

Week 6:

[March 3]

Topics:

Sources of Power: Positions & Resources

Required Reading:

Pfeffer, Chapter 3 “Choosing Where to Start”

Pfeffer, Chapter 5 “Making Something out of Nothing: Creating Resources”

Case Study 1:

Case: “Zia Yusuf at SAP: Having Impact.” Stanford Graduate School of Business case OB-73. **[HBS website]**

Question 1. How was Yusuf able to overcome any career stigma or setback from his first position in a unit, SAPMarkets, that was a failure?

Question 2. What qualities have helped Yusuf be so successful at SAP? Do you think these personal qualities would be as helpful anywhere, or are there particular features of the SAP environment and culture that make them particularly relevant?

Week 7: Reflection essay Due

[March 10]

Topics:

Sources of Power: Reputation

Required Reading:

Pfeffer, Chapter 8 “Building Reputation: Perception Is Reality”

Pfeffer, Chapter 10 “The Price of Power”

Case Study:

Case: “All Is Fair in Love and Twitter,” *New York Times*, October 13, 2013. **[Compass, not on HBS]**

Question 1. How and why was Dorsey forced out in 2008?

Question 2. How was Dorsey able to return to Twitter in 2011 and wrest control of the company from Williams, a co-founder and CEO?

Week 8: Final Exam (on compass)

[March 17]

Topics:

Power and Sexual Harassment

Required Readings:

McLaughlin, Uggen, and Blackstone. 2012. "Sexual Harassment, Workplace Authority, and the Paradox of Power," *American Sociological Review*. **[On Compass]**

Quinn. 2002. "Sexual Harassment and Masculinity: The Power and Meaning of 'Girl Watching,'" *Gender and Society*. **[On Compass]**

Dobbin and Kalev. 2017. "Training Programs and Reporting Systems Won't End Sexual Harassment. Promoting More Women Will," *Harvard Business Review*. **[On Compass]**

Case Study:

Case: "How a Culture of harassment Persisted on Ford's Factory Floors," *New York Times*, December 19, 2017. **[Compass, not on HBS]**

Question 1. Compare and Contrast how 1) McLaughlin, Uggen, and Blackstone, 2) Quinn, and 3) Dobbin and Kalev would explain the rise and persistence of sexual harassment at Ford's Chicago plants. Based on what they have written, what features of the case would each of these scholars emphasize? Draw on specific concepts of ideas from the articles.

Question 2. What role does power play in the case? Be sure to use power as a "relational/dependency" concept as we have in the class.