



UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON**

C. T. BAUER COLLEGE of BUSINESS

MANA 7338: Power, Politics, and Culture in Organizations

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"Our nettlesome task is to discover how to organize our strength into compelling power."

(Martin Luther King, Jr.)

COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

In the workplace, the dynamics of power and influence surround us. They play a role - often a central role - in nearly all the aspects of organizational life, from individual career progress to broad organizational change. Accordingly, **our task in this course will be to develop the knowledge and skill that will enable you to manage power and influence successfully** in a variety of situations throughout your career.

In particular, we will focus on helping you to:

- a) Enhance your awareness of and insight into organization's culture
- b) Enhance your awareness of and insight into organizational politics
- c) Understand your personal tendencies for influencing others
- d) Explore how you might acquire power and exercise influence more effectively

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

There will be three components of your grade in this course: **class participation via the discussion forums, current issues papers and a final paper.**

Class Participation/Discussion Posts and Responses

Class participation in the discussion forums is key to success in this class. Much of the knowledge and skill you develop here will arise from participating in discussion and exercises with your fellow students— experiences that will enable you to thoughtfully and respectfully challenge assumptions, broaden perspectives, and reveal insights into the course content. Your class participation grade will be determined by the extent to which you engage in and support

these online interactions. **Each week there will be a posted discussion thread. You are required to post a response to the initial discussion thread by Wednesday at 11:59 pm each week.** This will give your classmates' time to both read and reflect upon your initial posts. **You are also required to respond in the same manner to at least two (2) classmates' post by Sunday at 11:59 pm each week.**

Class Discussions and Responses (750 points)

In the online class discussions, you will be evaluated on the extent to which your questions and comments build on the preceding discussion, and move it forward to generate new insights. Good questions are focused and specific, aimed at inviting the class to dig more deeply into an issue. Good comments go beyond simple statements of opinion, using logic and evidence to offer relevant, focused, and constructive thoughts for the class to consider. Because discussions in large groups can suffer from a lack of continuity, comments that respond to preceding comments are particularly welcome. Please also note that although spirited debate is encouraged, making comments in a way that disparages or belittles others is absolutely unacceptable.

Current Issues Papers (500 points)

In each of the five (5) sessions students are required to fully analyze a current event (from newspapers, magazines, academic journals, internet, etc.) related to the readings for that session. Each paper will take about 1-3 pages to describe and analyze the situation. Please make sure you include your source.

Final Paper (750 points)

Students in the past have regarded the final paper as one of the most important pieces of the learning process. Its purpose is to give you an opportunity to synthesize the lessons you would like to retain from the course, and apply them to a power and influence situation of particular interest to you.

To this end, your first task in the paper will be to analyze a present or anticipated situation in which you would like to more effectively acquire and/or utilize power. Be sure to clearly identify specific problems or challenges you'd like to address, and to use the most relevant conceptual knowledge from our course to analyze the power and influence dynamics that you will have to manage/navigate (e.g., consider the development of the power distribution, access to sources of power, challenges to acquiring sources of power, factors that call for particular influence tactics).

Using your analysis as a foundation, your remaining task in writing the final paper will be to propose a concrete and coherent action plan for improving your situation. Your goal here is to systematically think through the process of taking steps to improve your situation – to figure out how you can overcome challenges and take best advantage of available opportunities to

better achieve your goals. To help yourself develop the most rigorous and actionable plans, use your analytical insights to propose plans that are as specific as possible (e.g., think about the specific steps you will take, who [if anyone] you will work with to execute those steps, consider the timing of the moves you will make, etc.), and to support your arguments for what those plans should achieve.

The final paper is limited to 2500 words (not including appendices). It is often much harder to write a good 7-page paper than a 20-page paper, so remember that better reports will be deeper, more specific, and more prescriptive, reflecting more analytical and psychological insight. Also, you'll want to be careful about providing background information – in general, much less background is needed than people instinctively assume. As much as possible, you'll want to jump right into your analysis and action plan, so any background information that is not absolutely essential to understanding your argument should be left out, or put into an appendix.

Evaluation

Final papers will be evaluated in terms of their depth of analysis and development of action implications. Specifically, each paper will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Analysis (cogent arguments grounded in, and showing mastery of course concepts)
- Action (systematic, grounded recommendations for changing future behavior)
- Relevance (match between the situation analyzed and relevant course material)
- Clarity (clear, concise, and logical flow of argument and ideas)
- Creative Insight (creative, novel extension or application of course concepts)

Grading

Class Discussions and Responses	750 Points
Current Issues Papers	500 Points
Final Paper	750 Points
Total:	2000 Points

REQUIRED MATERIALS

We will be drawing on the following sources of required reading material for assignments and discussion in this course:

- Selected Individual Readings (posted on Blackboard)
- HBS Course Pack
- Books:
 - Jeffrey Pfeffer (2010). *Power: Why Some People Have It—and Others Don't*.
 - Robert Cialdini (2001/2009). *Influence: Science and Practice*. (5th Edition).

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Students with Disabilities:

The Center for Students with Disabilities provides a wide variety of academic support services to all currently enrolled UH students who have any type of mental or physical disability of either a temporary or permanent nature. These services include assistance with course accommodations, adaptive equipment, individualized exam administration, taped textbooks, wheelchair repair, library needs, registration, handicapped parking, accessible housing and transportation, as well as many other needs. If you feel that you may need assistance of this nature, you may wish to call the Center at 713-743-5400. In addition, you should let your professor know about any special needs as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty Policy:

The College of Business Administration is proud of the high quality of our students and our academic programs. We recognize the importance of academic honesty in maintaining our high standards. In the rare situation where there may be a breach of academic honesty, we would appreciate your assistance in bringing the situation to our attention. We will, of course, take appropriate preventative action in all cases. If you have questions about the Academic Honesty Policy, it is included in the [Student Handbook](#). The staff of the Dean of Students Office is also available to answer questions.

UH CAPS Statement

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (www.uh.edu/caps) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the “Let's Talk” program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus.

http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html