Using Power and Influence in Organizations
Mid-Semester Module Proposal
Spring 2015

Instructor
Rodney Lacey
Assistant Professor in Practice of Organizations and Management
rlacey2@emory.edu
GBS Room 550

Module Learning Objectives

The overall learning objective for this module is to improve students’ ability to get things done in organizations because political processes are critical to accomplishing nearly every major goal in an organization. Specific objectives include:

1) Understand mechanisms of accumulating power and using influence in organizations
   a. Dispel common myths about how to obtain power and influence
   b. Identify the political levers for getting things done in organizations

2) Increase personal motivation to develop and use power and influence
   a. Understand why political behavior is necessary to getting things done in organizations
   b. Make explicit any biases that create a reluctance to use power and influence
   c. Confront ethical concerns about means and ends in organizational politics

3) Develop strategies for using power and influence that fit with one’s social and cultural characteristics
   a. Understand why and how socio-cultural differences create different perceptions and acceptance of power and influence in followers, colleagues, and superiors
   b. Develop behaviors that aid in overcoming any obstacles created by socio-cultural differences

4) Practice effective behaviors for using power and influence in:
   a. Processes of interpersonal interaction
   b. Group processes such as decision-making
   c. Preparation prior to interactions
   d. Managing perceptions of others
   e. Managing upwards as well as downwards

Major Topics and Issues

1) Material and social foundations of power across the organization
a. Patrimonial politics of the firm
b. Resource dependency
c. Formal positions and hierarchy
d. Social capital and cooperation

2) Cultural foundation of power
   a. Constitutive role of beliefs, perceptions, and ideology in all power
   b. Influence processes and tactics
      i. Decision making process
      ii. Information architectures and categories
   c. Biases, stereotypes, and prototypes in the perception and acceptance of power

3) Social processes of taking power and gaining influence in groups even without holding a designated leader position

4) Cognitive effects of power on the human brain and how it changes as a person acquires power

5) Ethical problems in organizations of inequality and the inconsistency in means and ends

6) Acting with power
   a. Strategies to build social capital
   b. Managing perceptions of others through verbal and non-verbal tactics
   c. Developing specific behaviors to overcome obstacles from personal characteristics

Format and Preliminary Schedule

The course will have intensive interaction inside the classroom, with significant reading and writing outside of the classroom.

1) Prior to class do the readings.

2) Start each class with a quiz on readings. Discussion of correct answers will be the spark for any lecture on the readings as the instructor answers questions and clarifies issues, and facilitates students asking questions.

3) Most class time is spent on exercises and group assignments. A major goal of this class is to give practice in behavior. The students will have a chance to strategize with the concepts being learned as well as actually do things such as try to influence others, build social capital, etc.

4) Two outside class writing assignments as a chance to consolidate learning (see details below).
Classroom size, Enrollment cap and Scheduling

Due to the use of many in-class interactive exercises in this class and the large reading list, there are several requirements for teaching:

- Enrollment cap of 35 students so students can do exercises in interaction with instructor
- Use of a large (60+ seat) classroom to students can spread out during exercises.
- Schedule on any dates (the instructor is not teaching any other courses in Spring 2015)
- Ideally, 4 days of 4 hours each, or 3 days of 5 hours each (as was done in 2014)
- One or two non-teaching days separating the teaching days to give students time to read, reflect, and absorb the material.

These requirements were all shown to be quite important in the prior delivery of this course.

Student Requirements

Student will be graded on the standard GBS grading system for elective courses with the following assignments for the students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Description and Purpose</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>Daily quizzes about the readings will allow students to evaluate how well they understood the material and engage with instructor in clarification and application.</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Everyone who remains engaged in all the in-class activities and doesn't check email will receive a high participation grade. Students who cannot make class sessions, receive a zero for participation, so if they cannot attend the entire class, they should not take the class.</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual power analysis (3-5 pg)</td>
<td>Analysis of individual advantages and disadvantages in using power and influence. Students will get feedback from other students in class on the paper and then use that to refine it.</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual power plan (3-5 pg)</td>
<td>Three or more specific actions students will take in their next job to develop and use power and influence. This paper will be due at the end of spring break, or later if the grading window is kept open.</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 100%

Prerequisites

None. There is no core organizational behavior class for the full-time MBA students.
Qualifications of the Instructor

1) Extensive experience in teaching this topic
   a. Taught this mid-semester module in 2014.
   b. Previously taught a full course (3 credit hours) in a compressed time frame (1 week) on the topic of power and politics.
   c. Taught many times the subjects of power and politics course in core organizational behavior and strategy classes, management of innovation classes, and management of technology classes.

2) Experience in using in-class exercises in compressed format courses
   a. Immersive repetition is a far better way to change behavioral patterns in students that require actual performance (e.g., learning a foreign language, influence tactics, etc.).
   b. Instructor has extensive experience with compressed format classes, having taught courses with periods as short as a few days, a week, and in executive programs with intensive teaching in weekend settings.
   c. Instructor already has developed and used many behavioral exercises in power and influence, plus is familiar with many others that have been done by close colleagues.

3) Instructor is familiar with much of the research -- even in such a broad area -- because of several long term research projects related to sociology of organizations and power
   a. Dissertation on the dynamics of deal making in the film industry which focused on locations of power and influence outside the usual boundaries of the firm.
   b. Research on explanations for industrial accidents and their relationship to the power structure of the industry.
   c. Research on how occupational groups gain power by becoming categorized as “professionals” by the wider public as a way to gain greater control and authority over their work.

4) Dr. Melissa Williams (Assistant Professor in Management and Organizations) is an expert in psychological processes of power and influence in the department and has been a very helpful colleague to the instructor.