

OB377: THE PATHS TO POWER

This class proceeds from the fundamental empirical premise that insufficient sensitivity to, and skill in, coping with power dynamics have cost Stanford GSB graduates (both MBA and MSx/Sloan) and many other talented people **promotion opportunities** and even their **jobs**, including in their own start-ups. My objective for this class is simple: make sure this does **NOT** happen to you—that you never have to leave a position involuntarily.

The course and the readings seek to ensure that you will learn the empirically-validated social science concepts useful for understanding power and analyzing power dynamics in organizations. The course and its project and the various self-reflective assignments require you to think about and develop your own personal path to power. This is a class not just about paths to power in general but **your** path to power. Many GSB classes are focused (appropriately) on building successful and effective organizations. This class is focused on building your **personal** power base and influence. The two constructs of organizational performance/effectiveness and personal power and effectiveness are **NOT** the same thing, nor are they often even highly correlated.

Achieving this shared objective of having you learn principles of power and then turn that knowledge into action, thereby overcoming the knowing-doing gap, requires your active involvement and collaboration. Given the size of the waiting list for the class, I hope those people who choose to enroll are committed to doing the work that will permit them to get the most out of the course.

Paths to Power has a relatively large number of self-reflective written exercises, front-loaded to the start of the quarter. These assignments are designed to get you in the habit of thinking about, and implementing, the material you will be learning in your lives, **during the quarter**. The assignments ask you to use the ideas from the class to develop action plans—and hopefully actually act on them—that can materially build your influence and advance your career during our ten weeks together. At a minimum, you will leave the course with a set of road maps to help you construct your future. We assign the exercises to develop the **habit** of self-reflection and turning knowledge into action. We **front-load** the assignments to build that habit early and also to leave you time later in the quarter for your doing power project.

A USER'S MANUAL FOR THIS CLASS

This Class Is Not For Everyone. People have different interests, tastes, and preferences. To benefit from the class and the material you **MUST BE WILLING TO ACCEPT AND WORK WITH THE MATERIAL**.

This is an elective! If you aren't interested in the subject matter or have some fundamental objections to any aspects of the class, including the instructor, the focus on applied social *science*, or a *pragmatic*, rather than *idealistic*, orientation toward organizational behavior and leadership, don't take it!

One frequent question is whether just reading the texts and other material is sufficient and what the value-add is from taking the class. That depends, of course, on what you *do* during the quarter. The readings in the syllabus and the texts provide much of the social science research, ideas, and examples that will enable you to cognitively *understand* power. I certainly recommend the book and the other readings for everyone. It is vitally important for leaders to understand the social science of power. The course experience, including the various self-reflective exercises, individual doing-power project, your interactions with the course facilitators/coaches, and your interactions with the various class visitors are intended to build your insight and skills in actually *doing* power and to help you overcome any personal inhibitions or self-handicapping that are getting in your way.

The Material is “Different”

One comment I often hear is that the material, perspectives, and ideas covered in this course differ from what you may have encountered in other classes. I would hope so, as what would be the point of telling you what you already think you know and have learned in the many other classes on leadership?

Everything we cover in this class, and I mean every idea, no matter how different it may at first appear, has ample, sometimes vast, social science evidence to support it. Some of that evidence is in the text, some we will cover in class, and some ideas I encourage you to explore on your own using www.scholar.google.com and searching on terms or phrases that cover the concepts we discuss. While some ideas may at first seem counterintuitive (for instance, that nice people, particularly men, suffer (in terms of earning less) from being too nice), there is both evidence and logic to support all that we cover.

“Leadership BS”

Because much of the material in the readings and the class seemingly contradicts other perspectives and conventional wisdom, I decided to take the leadership industry head on. The result is *Leadership BS: Fixing Workplaces and Careers One Truth at a Time* (HarperBusiness, 2015). I encourage you to read that book, which is *a prequel* to texts for this class. It includes, among other topics, the evidence on modesty v. self-promotion (surprisingly, narcissism is frequently positively associated with numerous indicators of career success), the pervasiveness (and effectiveness) of lying (sometimes called “strategic misrepresentation”), and why being an “authentic leader” is almost certainly neither possible nor desirable. The book is useful reading to help resolve discrepancies between what you may have heard elsewhere and the material we will be covering.

Objectives

The objectives of this course are a) to have you *see* the world differently—to change what you notice and think about and how you apprehend the world around you—and b) to also change what you *do* as you navigate through that world. If the class is successful, you will be better able to achieve your objectives, and you will have the influence necessary to change lives, change organizations, and change the world.

My Teaching Philosophy and Approach

To accomplish our objectives, we need to be partners in the learning process. One way of understanding my job is that I am in the role of your “personal trainer.” I will do my best to make available to you the tools that I hope will motivate and encourage you to learn the material and put it into practice. But learning is *your* responsibility. Moreover, it is *your* responsibility to decide what is important for you to learn and retain, and how best to do that. Research strongly suggests that the act of taking notes and reflecting on what you are learning and plan to do with that learning significantly helps with the absorption and retention of material.

“Role Models.”

Not everyone we encounter in Paths to Power is someone you are going to like or want to emulate. This is a class about how to get things done, how to build and wield influence, and the multiple ways to accomplish these objectives. As former U.S. President Richard Nixon (quoting Bismarck) once wrote, “Those who love laws and sausages should not watch either being made.” The question is not whether you do or don’t like some of the people we will encounter, but what you can *learn* from them and their experiences.

One of my implicit (now, much more explicit) objectives during the quarter is to get you to become *much* less *judgmental*, particularly about who you like or don’t like or who you approve or don’t approve of. To paraphrase Caesar’s ex-CEO and former Harvard Business School professor Gary Loveman, there comes a time in your career where you can no longer “afford” to like or not like work colleagues—critical relationships simply have to work, regardless of your personal feelings. The judgments you should make are whether someone is on your critical path, whether they can be helpful or harmful to your job and your career, whether you can learn anything from them, and most importantly, how to get them on your side. **If someone is critical to your success and you have decided you don’t “like” or “approve” of them, you will have (unnecessarily) created an obstacle to building the sort of relationship with an individual that you need.**

Confidentiality

One of the ways I am able to get some amazingly interesting visitors to tell you the truth about sensitive situations and their careers is by promising them that you will abide by the rule that what is said in Paths to Power is treated as confidential. Should I find that

you have tweeted or in any way posted on social media anything that our visitors have said without their explicit permission, the U you will receive in the class will be the least of your troubles. If you think you cannot abide by this rule, please do not take the class. Although confidentiality has always been a norm, it is particularly important this year given our session with people from the world of politics.

COURSE LOGISTICS

Coaching and Feedback:

Every member of the class will be assigned to one of six coaches/course facilitators (CF's). They are: Lauren Capitani, Jonathan Daves, Inbal Demri, Raquel Gonzalez-Dalmau, Phillip Mohabir, and Michael Wenderoth. Each facilitator is an experienced executive with substantial coaching expertise. Each facilitator has taken a version of this class, knows the course material, the professor, and the text very well, and has worked with me in delivering a very successful online version of this class in the LEAD program and also with prior on-campus iterations. Most importantly, each CF has the knowledge, skills, and interest in providing feedback on your self-reflective exercises, coaching you on your doing power project, and helping you not only master but also implement the class material in your lives.

We have instituted this arrangement, with the generous support of Paul Oyer and the Deans' Office, to provide each of you with much *more feedback and substantially more individual attention* to ensure that you will master the ideas and skills of the class and put them into practice and to have a coach to whom you are accountable (as well, of course, as me) for your learning and development. The goal is to increase your active engagement with the subject matter in a way that builds your skill and knowledge..

Feedback

Your CF will provide you individualized feedback on *all* of your self-reflective assignments (**assuming you turn them in on time**) as well as on your proposed doing power project check-in assignment.

I am the only person who will see (and grade) your doing power project (unless you decide to voluntarily share them with your CF). Confidentiality of your written assignments is guaranteed.

Individual One-on-One Executive Coaching Sessions

Every member of the class is *eligible* to sign up for as many as **two 40-minute** personal coaching sessions with your CF. Each of these individuals has worked with company founders, corporate executives, and non-profit leaders, and has personal experience with learning **AND USING** the course concepts and working with others on how to do so, also.

I URGE YOU TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS RESOURCE, AND TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, TO DO SO EARLY IN THE QUARTER SO YOU CAN USE THE IDEAS AND PERSPECTIVES GENERATED AS YOU GO THROUGH THE QUARTER, particularly on your projects. Availing yourself of these resources is completely optional.

Sessions are student-initiated and can cover topics such as: the dilemmas you may experience from the course material, the behavioral implications of decisions to put the course material into practice, and/or helping you commit to choices to behave differently. Some examples of what past students have covered include: doing a stakeholder influence (power) map to assess potential members of a start-up team and the power dynamics in the team, building a larger and more effective network, creating a stronger personal brand both internally and externally, and preparing to re-enter a former employer with greater personal and positional power. **Coaching sessions will be more effective when you come prepared with something reasonably specific that you want to discuss!**

Our course facilitators live literally all over the world and have been carefully selected because they are unbelievably talented AND committed to your learning and development. You can interact with them in your coaching sessions by telephone, Skype, Zoom, or any other platform you both mutually agree upon.

Peer Coaching in Class

We will also use peer coaching in class. We will often use your self-reflective exercises as a starting point to have a conversation with your colleagues to provide each other coaching and feedback on your action plans and self-reflections. We have found over the years that people are often willing to be more candid and open about their strengths and weaknesses, development plans, and experiences in a smaller setting.

Grading:

Grades will be based on three components: 1) Class participation (25%), 2) your final individual (doing-power) project (35%), and 3) your individual self-reflective/action planning assignments (40%).

Please turn the assignments in on time according to the deadline in the course outline (all assignments are due on or before the start of class). All assignments should be turned in using Canvas.

Attendance: It is my expectation that you will attend *all* of the class sessions. Given the design of the class, in which you will be providing a lot of peer feedback to your classmates, being “present” to share your own ideas and challenges and providing coaching/advice to others is very important for your learning success and the success of your classmates. We will take attendance and request that you leave your camera on if you are attending remotely for some reason. Please let us know if you are unable to

attend a session and why. Consistent with the recommendations of the Academic Norms Committee, it is my expectation that you will arrive to class on time. If you are having some emergency that precludes you from arriving on time, please let me and my course assistant know.

Individual “Doing-Power” Project: The “doing power” project seeks to have you put the ideas of the course into practice during the quarter ***while the course is going on and you can access resources to help you in your implementation.*** Past projects have entailed everything from obtaining investors who are willing to retain the class member as CEO of their start-up to building a reputation as one of the top 100 technologists and entrepreneurs in a country. The assignment is described at the end of the course outline. **Individual projects are due by 12 P.M. (noon, mid-day) on Thursday, March 14, 2024, the last day of the course. LATE PROJECTS WILL NOT BE GRADED AND WILL EARN ZERO CREDIT.**

As noted in the instructions, ALL assignments must be submitted through Canvas.

Self-Reflective Assignments. The ***eight*** individual self-reflective assignments (and one doing power check-in with your coach) are specified throughout the course outline in detail. **You are responsible for seeing when they are due and doing them!** You will note that these assignments tend to come disproportionately toward the start of the quarter. I do this for several reasons. First, the material that comes later in the quarter—topics such as losing power, the price of power, coming into an organization from outside in a senior position, transitioning into the world of politics—is not as likely to tap into your experiences or your immediate issues and action needs. Second, doing this writing and self-reflection early in the quarter will give you more to work with as you interact with your coaches and more to discuss with your classmates. It will also get you into the habit of thinking about how the class material pertains to—and might be helpful—for you.

These assignments are particularly important, as they will form the foundation for much of what will occur during the class sessions. If you do them assiduously, the exercises/reflections/action planning will provide you, by the end of the course, with many specific, implementable ideas.

Administrivia:

My Office: Knight Management Center Faculty Office Building, E-235.

Phone: (650) 723-2915

E-Mail: pfef@stanford.edu

Course assistant: Zixin (Lambert) Li (lizixin@stanford.edu) is a fifth-year organizational behavior doctoral student with a substantive interest in the material covered in the course. You should consider Lambert as another resource available for your learning and development.

I do *all* of the grading of the doing power project, and am the only human being who will read it. Lambert's job is to handle the various logistics.

Faculty Assistant: Christian Sandra Garcia; Phone: (650) 725-4877; Office: Knight-Management Center Faculty Office Building, E-324; email: cgarcia@stanford.edu.

Office Hours: By appointment made **directly with me**. I hope we can do whatever is possible to build a more personal relationship during the quarter. This includes phone calls, Zoom meetings, or meals together (I live in Hillsborough so Burlingame or San Mateo are preferred venues).

Required Materials:

Seven Rules of Power, Dallas: BenBella Books, 2022.

Power: Why Some People Have It—and Others Don't, New York: HarperBusiness, 2010. Because of copyright restrictions, which are very restrictive, we are not permitted to copy (for a fee) the few chapters we use from this book (we use these chapters because the material is not covered in the newer book on power) in the class.

Course reader, available online. The reading materials have been carefully curated to increase your conceptual understanding of power and influence processes as they occur in organizations.

Optional/Additional Materials

I post on LinkedIn, often about topics relevant to the class.

Last fall I launched a podcast, Pfeffer on Power (<https://pfefferonpower.com> or on Spotify, Apple, and virtually every other podcast platform). The episodes are often interviews of people who will be visiting the class and/or former class members, describing how they have used the material in their lives and careers. I have also appeared on a number of other podcasts talking about the book, including This Week in Startups with Jason Calacanis and Forward, with 2020 Democratic presidential candidate Andrew Yang.

COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS

I. THE PATHS TO POWER: FINDING YOUR WAY AND PREPARING YOURSELF

This first part of the course asks you to set some personal development objectives for yourself, in the context of thinking about the individual qualities that have been and will

be important as you build influence and in what ways you have, possibly inadvertently, gotten in your own way. The materials ask you to think about, and possibly change, habits of thought that might inhibit your being even more powerful than you are. And it introduces you to why I teach the material I do.

January 11. Session 1. Introduction: What Is Power and Why Is It Important?

Reading: Jeffrey Pfeffer, “The Dark Triad May Be Not So Dark: Exploring Why ‘Toxic’ Leaders are so Common—With Some implications for Scholarship and Education,” *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 41 (7), 2021, 540-551.

(This recently published paper reviews some relevant literature on the relationship between what are sometimes considered “dark” traits such as narcissism and Machiavellianism and leader emergence. It also provides an overview of my perspective on why I teach what I do in this class).

7 Rules of Power, Opening, “Why This Book, Now?”, and Introduction, “Power, Getting Things Done, and Career Success.”

We will be joined in class by a former student who has given a lot of thought to how to get the most out of the course and specifically how it altered her career trajectory. I wanted you, early on, to be able to hear from a recent past student to provide some advice and reflection on how to make the most of the next 10 weeks. She will also address the sometimes-expressed comment that the material and ideas we cover are inconsistent with the power dynamics of an increasingly diverse, connected world.

FIRST SELF-REFLECTIVE ASSIGNMENT (in two parts): Please write a short (a couple of pages or so) essay on these two topics:

1) “Why I’m taking this class.” One way of thinking about this task is to consider the following: It is the end of the quarter and you have achieved your goals for taking the course. What are you celebrating? What have you accomplished? What does success, in the context of your taking this class, look like? Be as specific as possible. Research shows that specific, stretch goals are much more effective in generating goal-achieving behavior and accomplishing those objectives.

2) Coming into the class, what are your thoughts and feelings about terms such as “power,” “organizational politics,” “influence,” “persuasion,” and so forth? How have those thoughts and feelings affected your behaviors—what you are willing to do, what strategies/tactics you have shied away from using, what sorts of work (and other) environments you have embraced or avoided? What are the consequences of these choices—both positive and negative—for your path to power?

January 17. Session 2. The Personal Qualities that Bring Power

Power skills, like most skills and behaviors, are learned/acquired. In our second session, we want to consider what personal qualities seem to produce power—and more

importantly, how those qualities might be produced through various activities and experiences. I also want you to read at least one piece that suggests that a commonly-advocated leadership quality, authenticity, may be neither particularly useful in professional life nor even achievable. I ask you to self-diagnose (and/or get others to help you) which of those qualities you have, and therefore, what personal development “plan” you want to make for yourself to guide your activities during our quarter together, and for that matter, throughout your career.

Readings: Jeffrey Pfeffer, *Power: Why Some People Have It—and Others Don’t*, Ch. 2, “The Personal Qualities that Bring Influence”

Adam Grant, “Unless You’re Oprah, ‘Be Yourself’ Is Terrible Advice,” *The New York Times*, June 4, 2016. (Grant is a famous Wharton Academic who has written several best-selling books.)

We will be joined in class by Michael Gruen, who I met through a former student in this class, Logan Randolph. Gruen was a guest on the Pfeffer on Power Podcast. The transcript from that session is available on Canvas, or you could listen to the episode. Below are two articles that describe Gruen, his background, and persona:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/tomward/2021/02/13/michael-gruen-knows-everybody/?sh=69cb05b6f6a3>

<https://hollywoodmask.com/p/josh-richards-michael-gruen.html>

SECOND SELF-REFLECTIVE ASSIGNMENT. Although we often talk about personal qualities and attributes as if these were somehow inherent, these dimensions of people are not fixed. Things like energy, the ability to tolerate conflict, the empathic understanding of others/ability to see other’s perspectives, and so forth can be developed with practice and effort.

Write a short (1-2 page) essay in which you briefly address the following developmental questions. Based on the readings, including the text, *Power*, and specifically Chapter 2, “The Personal Qualities that Bring Influence,” 1) how do you rank yourself on each of the 7 qualities (from 1=very low to 7=very high)?; you might consider having others with whom you have worked and know you well rank you on the same attributes; based on your assessment of your strengths and weaknesses, 2) What personal qualities do you want to work on developing/expanding/improving during the next ten weeks? 3) As specifically as possible, describe what you are going to do to develop those qualities, with whose assistance, and what actions you are going to take.

January 18. Session 3. Breaking Some Rules: Asking for Things and Not Obsessing About Being Liked

The Stanford culture, and certainly the GSB culture, at least on the surface, is one of being polite, nice, and not being too pushy, competitive (at least with your classmates), self-promoting, or aggressive. Much research and many case examples should throw these ideas into question as being useful for obtaining influence or career success.

Gerben A. Van Kleef, Astrid C. Homan, Catrin Finkenauer, Seval Gundemir, and Eftychia Stamkou, "Breaking the Rules to Rise to Power: How Norm Violators Gain Power in the Eyes of Others," *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 2 (2011), 500-507.

Malcolm Gladwell, "How David Beats Goliath: When Underdogs Break the Rules," *New Yorker*, May 11, 2009,
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/05/11/how-david-beats-goliath>
(This is one of the most interesting and important readings of the quarter, as it provides examples of why and how rule-breaking often produces success. PLEASE READ!).

7 Rules of Power, "Rule 1, Get Out of Your Own Way," and "Rule 2: Break the Rules."

Case: Keith Ferrazzi

Keith Ferrazzi is a graduate of Harvard Business School who, particularly just after graduation, enjoyed a meteoric career trajectory. The case explores his first 10 or so years after business school, before he opened his own marketing and organizational consulting firm, Ferrazzi Greenlight (that employs MBA graduates).

1. Describe Keith Ferrazzi, in terms of a) the personal qualities that distinguish him, and b) the strategies and behaviors he has used to build a successful career.
2. *Why* do you think these qualities and strategies and behaviors have been helpful for Ferrazzi? Or if you think he has succeeded *in spite of* some of what he has done, provide an argument as to what about his activities have been detrimental to his success.
3. What "rules" or "precepts of leadership" does Ferrazzi seemingly violate? With what effect?
4. Keith is, by his own admission, a consummate networker and someone who is ambitious, who wants to make a big difference and have a big impact on the world. Why hasn't this ambition and networking activity (which is often quite visible to others—for example, at one event in San Francisco, an assistant with a clearly visible list on a clipboard "escorted" Keith around the room as he chatted up the people on the list he had pre-selected as being important) created more problems for Ferrazzi?
5. Could you do what Ferrazzi does? Why or why not? *Should* you do more of what Ferrazzi does? Why or why not?

6. If you encountered someone like Ferrazzi as an organizational peer, what would your reaction be? What would you do? Would this be helpful? Why or why not?
7. Do you like Keith Ferrazzi? Is this a relevant question?
8. What lessons are there for you in the Keith Ferrazzi case? What might you think about doing more of, less of, or doing differently?

During class, we will see a video of Ferrazzi when he visited an earlier iteration of this class. We will hear from Christina Troitino, a recent graduate (2020) on her ability to be, to use her term, “shameless” and an example or two of her rule-breaking behavior, used to great effect. Troitino, like most people was not born “shameless” but rather cultivated that aspect of her persona. One of the things she will help us with is how she developed her “shamelessness.” And we will hear from Arielle Ziv, who while at the GSB, as part of her path to power project, started an award given at the Women in Management (WIM) banquet—without asking permission from the GSB administration and, as you learn, the award itself and its recipient provoked some controversy.

THIRD SELF-REFLECTIVE ASSIGNMENT: Early during the quarter, it is important to accomplish one of the most important objectives of the course: helping you get yourself out of your own way on your path to power. Write a short, but thoughtful, 1-2 page essay reflecting on the following questions:

1. How do you describe yourself to yourself and to others? What adjectives do you use? What traits and identifiers do you associate with yourself? Which of these adjectives are positively associated with status and power? Which are not? What do you need to do, in how you think about yourself and how you present yourself to the world, to project a more powerful image?
2. How frequently do you begin interactions, particularly with more powerful others, with some form of apology for interrupting, or by asking permission to offer your views and insights? How often do you begin an interaction with a form of self-deprecation, as in “I don’t know if this will be useful....” or “I am not sure about this...” or similar types of language? Why do you do this? What would it take for you to stop?
3. One way in which we get in our own way is being too obsessively concerned with whether or not other people like us. How worried are you about being liked? Why? Think of an instance (or instances) in the past where your desire to be liked has interfered with your ability to be effective/influential. Based on what you’ve learned in the course so far, what will you do in the coming weeks to let go of at least some of the goal of being liked?
4. In what ways do you, or have you, constrained what you are willing to do in order to advance your interests and career, particularly when you compare yourself to others similarly situated? What have you been unwilling to do in order to get ahead? Why? Based on what you have learned so far in this course, what will you

do in the coming weeks to expand the range of behaviors/strategies you are willing to use?

In doing this assignment, particularly in assessing how you self-describe and any patterns of speech or behavior that reduce your power, it can be very useful to obtain information from others who have seen you interact in professional situations. They can confirm, or alter, your perceptions of your responses to these questions.

II. CREATING YOUR PATH TO POWER

The second section of the course covers a number of specific strategies and tactics people can use to build a power base. It represents the core of the material that explains *how* to become more influential.

January 22. Session 4. Finding the Right Place

Reading: Jeffrey Pfeffer, *Power*, Ch. 3, “Choosing Where to Start”

Case: Sadiq Gillani’s Airline Career Takes Off: Strategy in Action

Within 12 years of graduating from Harvard Business School, Sadiq Gillani had achieved quite a bit. He had achieved partner status in a boutique airline consulting firm, become head of strategy for Lufthansa Group (and youngest senior vice president ever at that company), run network planning for Eurowings (a low cost subsidiary of Lufthansa), taught a class on the travel industry at Stanford’s GSB, been chosen as Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum, and been recognized by the *Financial Times* and *Forbes*. In short, he had made (and continues to make) a series of career (and other) moves that exemplify the principles of this class. A recent bio (<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/people/sadiq-gillani>) provides a brief overview of where he is today, as he has put together what he refers to as a portfolio career.

1. What principles do Gillani’s job choices seem to illustrate/exemplify?
2. What trade-offs and choices has Gillani apparently been willing to make to enhance his career trajectory?
3. What about Gillani’s first job at Lufthansa made it such an attractive, and at the same time, risky move?
4. How and in what ways has Gillani’s positions been good places to “start?”
5. What qualities/attributes does Gillani seem to exemplify?
6. What lessons are there for you from Sadiq Gillani’s career as you think about your next move(s) post-Stanford?

Gillani has a well-watched YouTube video on how to fast track one's career by being a disciplined opportunist (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=570XZJpi4dc>). This is optional but many people have found it to be quite useful.

January 25, Session 5. Getting Others on Your Side

Reading: Jerry M. Burger, Nicole Messian, Shebani Patel, Alicia Del Prado, and Carmen Anderson, "What a Coincidence! The Effects of Incidental Similarity on Compliance," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30 (2004), 35-43.

Benedict Carey, "You Remind Me of Me," *The New York Times*, February 12, 2008.

Case: Lucinda Stewart: Creating Allies & Supporters

Lucinda Stewart, although not having the strongest quantitative background or interests, succeeded in the world of venture capital and private equity (and investment banking beforehand), mostly because she has an uncanny ability to get people to know and connect with her and, more importantly, to support her. She has succeeded in environments in which she was gender-untypical (at the time she was in them), so obtaining allies was possibly an even more difficult task. The question: how did Stewart do it and what are the implications for you in how you might obtain backers?

1. What qualities, and more importantly, behaviors, does Stewart have and engage in that creates allies and supporters?
2. How intentional/strategic do you think Stewart has been throughout her life?
3. How has Lucinda Stewart turned what might be a disadvantage—being a woman in industries that were (and are) enormously male-dominated—into an advantage?

Lucinda Stewart will join us for the class session.

January 29, Session 6. Creating a Reputation and a Brand and Gaining Visibility

Reading: *7 Rules of Power*, "Rule 4: Build a Powerful Brand."

Case: Tristan Walker and Walker and Company Brands (OB-#93).

Tristan Walker graduated from the GSB in 2010. Even before graduation and subsequently, he built a powerful network and, even more importantly, an enormous amount of external visibility in various media and a unique, well-defined personal brand (I recommend you do a Google search and read some of the enormous amount of publicity he has generated). Walker used his connections and his reputation to launch Walker and Company Brands, now a part of Procter and Gamble. Walker is basically an introvert. Notwithstanding that, he has done an extraordinary job of being visible and out there in numerous ways. The importance of building a reputation to take advantage of

the dynamics of the self-fulfilling prophecy and confirmation bias is a recurring theme in the class. This case should give you some ideas about how to build your own brand—your assignment for today.

As you think about Tristan Walker and his trajectory, consider the following questions:

1. In what ways did Tristan Walker leverage his time at Stanford?
2. How did Walker, while at Stanford and immediately after, go about building visibility with and connections to the media?
3. What qualities/attributes and strategies did Walker employ—that we have discussed during this course?
4. What lessons are there for you in the Tristan Walker case? And more importantly, how, specifically, are you going to put these lessons into practice during your remaining time at the GSB?

FOURTH SELF-REFLECTIVE ASSIGNMENT: When I interviewed Jeff Jordan, former CEO of Open Table and now a partner at Andreessen Horowitz, Jordan said this [about deciding which entrepreneurs to back]. “One of the things we value really highly is a founder-product fit where you look at the founder and you say, ‘You know, this could be the only person in the world who’s had the life experiences to work this idea.’”

What is true for entrepreneurs is true in general—you are more likely to acquire power and success if you build a powerful personal brand where your narrative makes you a compelling choice for an organizational position or financial backing. That task (brand building) has two subtasks. 1) Figuring out the one or two sentence (3 at the most) elevator pitch for who you are and why you are singularly qualified/suited to be pursuing whatever specific job/objective you are pursuing—how the various elements of your life and background fit together; and 2) disseminating that messaging as much as possible.

Write a short (1-2) page essay in which you: 1. Create a short description of how you want to be known—your brand. It needs to combine some (although not all) elements of your life and goals into a coherent narrative (that can include some exaggeration and leave some things out). 2. Next, think of what you are going to do to make your story—your brand—“go viral.” Think of as many approaches as possible. Also, think of ways of fitting/building congruence between the story you are telling and the media/outlets in which you seek to tell it.

During class, some of you will have the opportunity to share your submissions (or summaries thereof) with Tristan Walker and another person who did a great job building her brand, Laura Chau, and get their feedback.

February 1. Session 7. Building Efficient and Effective Social Networks

Readings: *7 Rules of Power*, “Rule 5: Network Relentlessly”

Jennifer Miller, “Want to Meet Influential New Yorkers? Invite Them To Dinner,” *New York Times*, October 9, 2013.

Jon Levy, “Behavioral Scientist Jon Levy Says Personal Connection Is the Key to Success,” *Oprah Daily*, October 21, 2021.

<https://www.oprahdaily.com/entertainment/books/a37003421/jon-levy-book-youre-invited/>

1. What “value” does Jonathan Levy provide to his dinner party attendees?
2. Why do people, even relatively high status people, come to his dinner parties?
3. **How** are Levy’s activities helping his career? **How much** are they helping?
4. Why don’t more people do some version of what Levy is doing?
5. What lessons are there for you from the articles about Jonathan Levy?

Case: Ross Walker

Ross Walker is a 2005 graduate from the Stanford Graduate School of Business who obtained an alumni position on the Stanford University Board of Trustees (he was the youngest person to ever serve on the Stanford trustees and, given changes in the rules about eligibility, is likely to retain that distinction). Walker has established himself with a good position, excellent network, and a stellar reputation in the real estate and hospitality industry. He currently has his own, very successful (in terms of both investment returns and fundraising) real estate investment firm, Hawkins Way Capital. He is far from flashy or pushy. He shares some similarities but also has some important differences from Keith Ferrazzi. The case provides us the opportunity to consider some of the issues and principles in not only building networks, but in getting what you want for yourself.

1. Describe Ross Walker. What personal qualities does he have that have contributed to his success.
2. One concern with networking is that takes too much time and encroaches on people’s personal lives. How has Walker handled this trade-off?
3. How has Walker balanced the activity of meeting new people and maintaining relationships with the technical aspects of his work in the real estate and hospitality industry?
4. In what ways is Walker different from Keith Ferrazzi? In what ways is he similar?
5. What about Ross Walker’s path could you emulate? What do you think you couldn’t do? Why?

6. In what ways is Walker's strategy consistent with the principles of Chapter 6? Do you see any inconsistencies or discrepancies?

We are fortunate to have both Ross Walker and Jon Levy joining us for the session. They will provide feedback to some people on the assignment described below.

FIFTH SELF-REFLECTIVE ASSIGNMENT. It is useful to think about how we spend our time, with whom, and how our contacts and networks are, or are not, consistent with the social relations we might need to build our power base. It is even more useful to begin to do what you need to do to create the social networks and relationships that will make you even more successful and influential. Write a short (2-3 page essay) in which you briefly address the following questions:

1. How much time do you spend with people that you already know well? How much time do you spend meeting new people and being in novel situations—in other words, making “weak” rather than strong ties? What might you do to expand your number of weak ties and diversify your social network?
2. Given your career objectives, list some (at least 10, preferably more) specific people and/or companies and roles within them that you would benefit from knowing that are:
 - 1) in the company you are going to work for (if you know that)
 - 2) in the industry in which you plan to begin your career
 - 3) in the geography (country, state, and city/area) where you contemplate living

For each individual, and the list should include at least 10-20 individuals, by when, and how, are you going to actually meet them?

3. If effective networking is based on the principle of generosity (what you are providing the other), in each instance, for each individual that you want to meet, what can you provide the individual you want to connect with? Do not underestimate the importance of being able to provide information, the ability to feel useful and helpful, the ability to give back, the importance of social similarity, and the idea that by helping you the person might enhance their own feelings of self-worth.
4. What can you do to make yourself more central in networks that are professionally important to you?
5. What can you do to put yourself in more of brokerage roles where you can connect groups or individuals that might benefit from being connected?

February 5. Session 8. Acquiring and Creating Resources

Reading: *Power*, Ch. 5, “Making Something Out of Nothing: Creating Resources.”

Case: Jason Calacanis: A Case Study in Creating Resources

Jason Calacanis exemplifies many if not most of the principles of power from this class. He rose from a financially-stressed background to become a central player in the startup ecosystem, where today he has a position that gives him access to an enormous funnel of investment opportunities. Interestingly, he began his rise to power by publishing a “magazine” and being a journalist. In some sense, with his newsletters and blogging and podcasts, he still is. As you read the case and think about the principles it illustrates, consider the following questions:

1. How did Calacanis create resources that were of value to powerful players in the startup and venture capital world?
2. What behavioral science principles did Calacanis employ, and does he still use to build power in the worlds of investing, entrepreneurship, and startups?
3. Is there anything Calacanis has done or is currently doing that you see yourself as unwilling or unable to do? Why?
4. What lessons are there from the case that you can apply, either now or on graduation?

SIXTH SELF-REFLECTIVE ASSIGNMENT: You will be “at” Stanford (part of the MBA or MsX program) for just a few more months. As the Calacanis case nicely illustrates, you don’t even need to have the world’s most prestigious pedigree to create a powerful ecosystem for yourself. Write a short (one or one and half) page essay in which you reflect on the following:

1. **What can I do to leverage my association with Stanford, the GSB, and for that matter any other affiliations I have during my remaining time here to build a more powerful foundation for my next move(s)?**
2. **What resources, of any kind, might I create in the next few weeks or months that would help me on my path to power? Resources that are useful, preferably scarce, and most importantly, that I have some control over? How am I going to do this? Groups? Awards? Events?**

REQUIRED: SUBMIT A ONE PARAGRAPH DESCRIPTION OF WHAT YOUR “DOING POWER” PROJECT WILL BE. WHAT IS YOUR FOCUS/TOPIC? WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO (OR ARE DOING) TO INCREASE YOUR POWER *DURING* THE QUARTER?

February 8, Session 9. Acting with Power.

In many situations, how much power you actually have is ambiguous and uncertain. Therefore, how you conduct yourself, what emotions you display, how you come across all affect how much power you have and will be granted by others. Moreover, research shows that your “power pose” affects your physiological and psychological responses as well as how others respond to you. Leadership is about “acting with power.” Andy Grove of Intel, in a session with Clayton Christensen from Harvard Business School, said this about managing oneself and one’s emotional displays:

“I think it is very important for you to do two things: act on your temporary conviction as if it was a real conviction; and when you realize that you are wrong, correct course very quickly...And try not to get too depressed in the part of the journey, because there’s a professional responsibility. If you are depressed, you can’t motivate your staff to extraordinary measures. So you have to keep your own spirits up even though you well understand that you don’t know what you’re doing.”

This class session will involve a tutorial on “acting with power,” presented by **Bill English**, co-founder and artistic director of the **San Francisco Playhouse**, and **Susi Damilano**, the other co-founder of the SF Playhouse and winner of numerous Bay Area Theatre Critic’s awards for her acting. In 11 years, Damilano won the Bay Area Theater Critics Circle award for best actress *five* times. The syllabus includes their biographies as well as an article about Damilano and an article about the SF Playhouse.

The idea of “acting,” displaying emotions or ideas that you may not be feeling, seems contradictory to the idea of being “authentic,” a concept I have come to loathe. The readings suggest how and why successful leaders are invariably great actors, the importance of body language in conveying power, and the usefulness of being able to display emotions strategically.

Readings:

Harriet Rubin, “Shall I Compare Thee to an Andy Grove,” *Strategy + Business*, Issue 49, Winter, 2007, pp. 26-31.

Larissa Z. Tiedens, “Anger and Advancement Versus Sadness and Subjugation: The Effect of Negative Emotion Expressions on Social Status Conferral,” *J. of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80 (2001), 86-94. (As you read this paper, you may want to consider the Brett Kavanaugh hearings—I received numerous emails from former students who remembered this reading).

Dana R. Carney, “The Nonverbal Expression of Power, Status, and Dominance,” *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 33 (2020), 256-264.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2019.12.004>

Dana R. Carney, “Ten Things Every Manager Should Know About Nonverbal Behavior,” *California Management Review*, 63 (2021), 5-22.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0008125620982663> (A short, concise, easy to read overview of how to read and how to display nonverbal cues).

Karen D'Souza, "Megawatt Director/Actress Susi Damilano Powers One of San Francisco's Hottest Small Theaters," *San Jose Mercury News*, September 24, 2011.

Chloe Veltman, "A Small, Young Theater Company Aims High," *The New York Times*, November 25, 2010.

February 12, Session 10. Speaking with Power

In advance of this class session, please watch the public testimony of Tony Hayward, at the time the CEO of BP, testifying about the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, and Lloyd Blankfein, CEO of Goldman Sachs, testifying about Goldman's actions during the financial crisis and specifically allegations that it traded against its customers. Watch both of the people first *without sound*, then with sound. Consider the advantages of showing up as forceful or remorseful. The videos (including versions without sound) will be available on the course website.

Reading: *7 Rules of Power*, "Rule 3: Appear Powerful"

SEVENTH ASSIGNMENT: Your task is to, using the lessons from the prior Acting with Power session and the materials for today, develop a better version of a short (60-120 second) opening statement as if you were Tony Hayward, CEO of BP (you do not need to try and imitate a British accent). Whose support do you need, and how are you going to get it—quickly? How are you going to convince the people whose support you need that you are the individual best capable of stewarding BP through the crisis? As an aside, the current CEO of BP, Bernard Looney, was an MsX (Sloan) student in this class.

Please submit your videos to your course facilitators and be ready to share them, and the lessons you learned creating them, during the class. You are, of course, certainly welcome to do "drafts" and get comments/feedback from your classmates but the final version is due at the start of class.

February 15 Session 11. Using the Lessons of Power in Your Life and Career: Alumni Panel.

We are just past the half-way point in the course. If you are going to make a significant power play (as suggested for your Individual Project) or, for that matter, if you are going to become more comfortable with and use the material in the future, you need to be at ease with power and also develop some specific guidance on how to use it. The purpose of this session is to provide you the opportunity to ask questions of a panel of people each of whom has, in his or her own way, experienced setbacks or challenges of varying kinds, learned the power material, and incorporated it, in varying ways, into their strategies and actions for their careers.

The panel has been chosen because they are similar to you, albeit some years farther along—and because they are a) willing to be completely candid in answering questions that you may be wrestling with about how they used the course material in their careers, and b) they are on excellent career trajectories..

Your “assignment” is to come to class prepared to ask questions about how to use the course material in your life, and how these individuals have used concepts from the class to build their power. What do you want to know from them about how to actually implement the material we have been studying?

Nothing that is substantive is off the table, and certainly no question should be considered politically incorrect. Consider this an opportunity to access the experience and expertise of some amazing people who have given a lot of thought about how to be more powerful and are here to tell you how they did it.

III. COPING WITH CONFLICT, OPPOSITION, AND SETBACKS

Regardless of the wonderfulness of your objectives or your motives and talents, people invariably encounter opposition and setbacks in their career. This third section of the course has sessions on coping with conflict and opposition and building resilience, as well as a panel to talk about overcoming stereotypes and prejudice—in this instance, against women, but the principles apply quite generally to underrepresented groups.

February 21, Session 12. Dealing with Conflict and Opposition

Reading: *Power*, Ch. 9, “Overcoming Opposition and Setbacks.”

Jeffrey Sonnenfeld and Andrew J. Ward, “Firing Back: How Great Leaders Rebound After Career Disasters,” *Harvard Business Review*, January, 2007.

Ann Friedman, “Martha Stewart’s Best Lesson: Don’t Give a Damn,” *New York Magazine*, March 14, 2013.

Case: Gary Loveman and Harrah’s Entertainment (Case #OB-45)

William D. Cohan, “Losing Las Vegas,” *Fortune*, June 15, 2015.

Kate O’Keefe, “Caesars CEO Loveman Leaves Divided Legacy,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 29, 2015.

The case provides a nice overview of Loveman’s career and the opposition he confronted as he left his position as a professor at HBS to become COO (and then CEO) of Harrah’s Entertainment (now called Caesar’s).

1. How did Loveman attract support inside the company for his very non-traditional appointment?
2. How did he cope with opposition?

During class, we will have the opportunity to interact with Gary Loveman, who after he left Caesars, became a president of a large division of Aetna, the health insurer recently acquired by CVS and now teaches occasionally at HBS. Loveman is today leading a startup in the health care space called Well. The Wikipedia entry on Loveman (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gary_Loveman) provides an excellent and brief overview of his career.

Loveman is one of the most thoughtful and insightful individuals I know on the topics of “likeability,” using analytics in management, coming in and building a power base as an outsider, managing relationships with important stakeholders, and most recently, coping with the intellectual and emotional challenges that arise from the substantial financial problems of the company he was running. Always insightful, I eagerly await his thoughts on how he has learned to deal with difficult people (e.g., some private equity people) and conflict.

EIGHTH SELF-REFLECTIVE ASSIGNMENT. This section of the course is about overcoming obstacles and coping with setbacks. It is important to integrate this learning into your own life and experience. Write a brief, one to 1 ½ page essay in which you:

1. Describe an organizational situation in which you faced substantial difficulty (for example, you were fired (not laid off, fired), you were demoted, you failed to get a job or a promotion you wanted and thought you deserved, you were embarrassed or lost face because of some situation, etc.).
2. What did you do that contributed to the problems you experienced? To what extent were the obstacles and difficulties the result of chance events over which you had no control?
3. Most importantly, based on the course material, what would you do differently if you encountered the same situation today? In other words, what is the learning or what are the ideas that have emerged in the class that you would use to help you in similar situations?

February 22. Session 13. Surmounting Prejudice and Stereotypes: Women & Power

One of the questions that frequently arises is whether the tactics and approaches that work for men are equally effective for women, under the assumption that women can face backlash when they demonstrate ambition and/or power-seeking behaviors. Throughout this class we have seen (and will see) numerous female protagonists and I would ask you to reflect on the extent to which they used strategies that were similar or distinctly different from their male counterparts. But it is also useful to review the extensive and growing literature on achieving equity in the workplace.

I have assigned two readings for this class session. The first is premised on the idea that many of you are going to be in senior leadership roles, if you aren't already. It provides a research- and theory-based account for why attempts to solve the problem of discrimination against women and blacks in the workplace have almost without exception failed. As someone (me) who co-authored a book on evidence-based management, it is important to understand why many of the most popular interventions to make things better actually made things worse, so you don't make the same mistakes.

The second reading is by one of the leading writers on women in the workplace, and addresses the issue of Asian-Americans at work and barriers to their career advancement using ideas similar to those that apply to women (and others).

Reading: Frank Dobbin & Alexandra Kalev, "The Civil Rights Revolution at Work: What Went Wrong," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 47 (2021), 281-303.

Sylvia Ann Hewlett, "Asians in America: What's Holding Back the 'Model Minority?'" <http://www.forbes.com/sites/sylviaannhewlett/2011/07/28/Asians-in-america-whats-holding-back-the-model-minority/>

During the class, a panel of four women will speak about their perspectives on women and power and lead a discussion with the class about what men and women might do to ensure greater success for women. The panelists have been chosen for their insight and candor on these important issues.

IV. WHAT HAPPENS ONCE YOU HAVE POWER

The penultimate part of the course permits us to consider the price of attaining powerful positions, how and why people lose power, and what it means and why people move on to alternative careers, in this case, in politics.

February 26, Session 14. Moving On To Different Things: Becoming Involved in Politics

Once people are successful in one domain, they often become interested in other spheres. For instance, former Microsoft CEO (and Stanford MBA) Steve Ballmer now owns a professional sports team, the Los Angeles Clippers, of the National Basketball Association. Bart Giamatti transitioned from being president of Yale University to Commissioner of Major League baseball. Gary Loveman went from being a Harvard professor to a corporate executive and now to a founder of a healthcare-related start-up.

Some Stanford GSB alums have become actively engaged in the world of politics, both elective and appointive, at very senior levels. Politics offers an important platform for people to change lives, organizations, and the world. Individuals who have engaged in politics can offer us a perspective on what's different—and similar—between power and politics in the world of private enterprise and the world of electoral politics. They can

also speak to *why* they have done what they did in terms of making this move, how it fits in their life trajectory, and their learnings from their political experiences. Particularly at a moment when everything seems to be all politics, all the time, and politics and business, particularly technology businesses, seem to be increasingly interdependent, our panelists have much to offer and to think about. I personally believe that Stanford GSB graduates have the ability to make a profound difference in the world through their incredible skills and energy, and that politics is *one* such avenue through which people can have impact. I am more than thrilled that we have been able to attract such interesting people to be with us (virtually).

The people who will be joining us have biographies that are part of the course website. **To remind you of something I emphasized at the beginning of the course, anything and everything they say should be treated as confidential and NOT posted on social media!**

February 29. Session 15. The Price of Power.

Reading: *Power*, Ch. 10, "The Price of Power."

Dr. Rudolph Crew has done heroic work in American education. He led the New York City school system, which had a budget of more than \$13 billion, more than 100,000 teachers, and served a million children at the time he held his leadership position under Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. He subsequently was named the best school superintendent in America while in charge of the Miami-Dade County school district and its \$4.5 billion budget—and was fired six months later. He was the first Chief Education Officer for the state of Oregon. Crew is personally close to a large number of prominent and powerful people including Richard Parsons, the former chairman of Time Warner and the Clintons (had Hillary Clinton won the presidency, he was on a very short list to be Secretary of Education). He has wielded enormous power, not just in education but in government and the nonprofit world. The readings for this class are selected newspaper articles that describe his career, including the scrutiny, criticism, and even death threats and epithets he has received. During class, Dr. Crew will be with us to discuss his views on being "in the arena," what is required, the price it extracts, and why he continues to give so much of himself.

Background Readings:

Jacques Steinberg, "Schools Chancellor Reflects on the Job, and the Rift That Helped End It," *New York Times*, January 6, 2000, p. A20.

Matthew Pinzur, "School Chief Wins Support With Words and Actions," *Miami Herald*, October 10, 2004.

"Crew's Blues," *Administrator Magazine*, November-December, 2008.

"Mimi-Dade's School Superintendent Receives Death Threats,"
<http://www.wsvn.com/news/articles/local/MI57639>, August 8, 2007.

Nancy McCarthy, "Crew's Debut Speech Demands Change," *The Daily Astorian*, June 25, 2012.

"CUNY Board Appoints Rudolph Crew President of Medgar Evans College,"
CUNY Newswire, June 24, 2013.

Hannah Hoffman, "Kitzhaber Knew Risks with Rudy Crew Hire," *Statesman Journal*, July 31, 2013.

March 4. Session 16. How (and Why) Power is Lost and Kept

Reading: *Power*, Ch. 11, "How—and Why—Power is Lost."

Case: Connie Bruck, "The Personal Touch," *The New Yorker*, August 13, 2001.

Arshad Mohammed, "Valenti's Credits Keep on Rolling," *The Washington Post*, February 3, 2006.

Noam Wasserman, "The Founders Dilemma," *Harvard Business Review*, 2008. <https://hbr.org/2008/02/the-founders-dilemma>

Jack Valenti, in theory, existed in a very tenuous position. He served always at the pleasure of the motion picture studio heads, serious egomaniacs. Nonetheless, Valenti was able to maintain his position as head of the MPAA for almost four decades. How was he able to do this? (It is possibly instructive to note that his first successor, former Kansas Congressman and Secretary of Agriculture under President Clinton, Dan Glickman, held the job for only one, five-year term). We want to consider how his strategies/tactics might apply more broadly.

During class, two former students will be with us. Yohei Iwasaki did a very successful doing power project that increased the value of his start-up by 4x and convinced the VC investors to keep him as CEO. By the fall of the year of his graduation, he was being deposed by his alumni mentor who had joined his start-up as COO. His story including the warning signs and his lessons learned, are important. On Canvas, you can find a brief outline description of what occurred and his observations.

Our second guest is Tony Levitan, a co-founder of Egreetings Network in 1993 as he graduated the GSB. The company IPO'd in 1999 and achieved a peak market capitalization of \$650 million. Notwithstanding the company's success and Levitan's considerable leadership skills (among other things he is a long-time facilitator in Interpersonal Dynamics), he was forced out of the company. He subsequently co-founded two other companies and served as the Chief People Officer at two others. Currently, Levitan is active in Leaders in Tech and runs a consulting/coaching company

called In Whack. In addition to his own experience, he has a wealth of wisdom from observing founders and leaders in the Silicon Valley ecosystem.

The session and readings ask us to think about: 1) how to build resilience and persistence (a topic we covered in the Esserman case), 2) what is required to hold onto power, 3) how and why power is lost, 4) what people are, or are not, willing to do to hold onto power, and 5) how to navigate one's career

V. SUMMING UP

Our last three sessions permit us to see what we have learned and what has changed, or not, during our time together. At the very beginning of the course, I asked you to think about what “success” from taking this course would entail, and what personal development goals you wanted to set for yourself. We want to revisit these reflections to consider your learnings during the class.

March 7. Session 17. Creating A Path to Power

When Dr. Laura Esserman took my class on power as part of her MBA program, she claimed this was the only course for which she did all the readings. BUT as she told me, she saw power being used mostly for malign purposes by people such as Robert Moses, the master builder of much of New York's public works. “You need to do a case on someone using power for good,” she said. And so I did—on her. That case and its discussion in class prompted Esserman to change her approach and her trajectory in ways that made her much more effective. As we approach the end of this class, her case and story gives us an opportunity to consider how to use the material from the course not only “for good” but how to incorporate its lessons to become more effective.. Esserman now teaches a version of this class at the UCSF School of Medicine to some select people.

The case describes the efforts of an earlier version of Esserman to change a number of aspects of medicine and the treatment of breast cancer at the University of California, San Francisco. The assigned articles describe some of what has occurred in the ensuing years, as Dr. Esserman has become more willing to employ and more skilled at using the material you are learning in the class. She has accomplished an enormous amount and has achieved a great deal of visibility and power.

In 2016, Laura Esserman received the Arbuckle Award, the highest honor given to alumni of the GSB, and was named by *Time* magazine as one of the 100 most influential people in the world. She is one of only four women to have won the Arbuckle Award since the award began in 1968 (and in the decade she won it, the other two women were Penny Pritzker & Laurene Powell Jobs).

Although the particular situation is health care, the task that Dr. Esserman confronts is similar to many situations where there is dispersed power, conflicting objectives, and entrenched interests in a setting populated by highly educated professionals.

Case: Laura Esserman (A)

<https://profiles.ucsf.edu/laura.esserman> (read all of the bio)

Katie Hafner, “A Breast Cancer Surgeon Who Keeps Challenging the Status Quo,” *The New York Times*, September 29, 2015.

Lisa Cisneros, “American Cancer Society to Honor Breast Cancer Specialist Laura Esserman,” March 18, 2013. <https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2013/03/13683/american-cancer-society-honor-breast-cancer-specialist-laura-esserman>.

Deborah Franklin, “Esserman: On the Front Lines Fighting Breast Cancer,” <http://www.gsb.stanford.edu/news/bmag/sbsm1005/feature-esserman.html>.

1. What are Laura Esserman’s strengths?
2. What are some of her weaknesses, or difficulties?
3. What about the situation makes changing things difficult? What about the situation makes it political?
4. What do you think Esserman has done well so far in her efforts? What do you think she has done less well?
5. What should she do now? Be specific, so someone could actually implement your suggestions. Provide a rationale for why you think the suggestion will work and how it will help her accomplish her objectives?
6. Why would you have placed a bet (in terms of hiring or supporting her) on someone like Esserman? Why might you have not?
7. What lessons do you draw from this case for your own efforts to get things done in organizations?

March 11. Session 18. Leading with Power: The Dynamics of Taking Charge

Reading: *7 Rules of Power*, “Rule 6: Use Your Power.”

Case: Amir Dan Rubin: Success from the Beginning

If I were giving a final, this case would be something I might use as it permits us to pull together/integrate much if not all of the material from the course. I usually teach this case during the second-to-last session. This year it is our final class so that we can have the protagonist with us for both sessions.

As Harvard Business School professor Rakesh Khurana documented in his book, *Searching for a Corporate Savior* (Princeton University Press, 2004), companies more frequently hire senior executives, including CEOs, from outside the company today than in the past. But these outside hires often end badly for both the individual and the

company. One reason is that the outsiders do not have enough firm- and industry-specific knowledge to do a good job. But another problem is that outsiders often face resentment and resistance from insiders—executives already in the company—who believe they are more qualified for the job the outsider now fills and who sometimes see the outsider as an interloper and as someone “different” from them and their colleagues.

Many GSB graduates will at some point in their careers move to a new company and/or a new industry, sometimes at very senior levels (for example, from a position in a management consulting firm to a senior operating or strategic role inside an organization). Some GSB graduates will move to companies that are not filled with other MBAs and/or where inside succession is more the norm. Success in these new roles depends on being able to get company insiders to respect and accept you. Simply put, you aren’t a leader if others don’t agree that you are and willingly follow you. Hence, the relevance of this case for your subsequent careers in which you will need to turn skeptics and possible rivals into at least grudging allies, and also possibly make important changes in strategic direction to enhance the organization’s performance.

1. What qualities and attributes does Rubin have that have made him a success?
2. How, and why, did he get the job at Stanford?
3. What did Rubin do to help overcome the resentment that might accompany his arrival as CEO?
4. Why was SMC, at the time of the case, a good fit for Rubin’s skills and capabilities? Were there ways in which it wasn’t a good fit?
5. What did Rubin do to make himself successful at SMC?
6. What lessons are there in this case for you as you think about starting your job after you complete business school?

March 14. Session 19. What Have We Learned, and What Will You Do With What You Have Learned?

Reading: *7 Rules of Power*, “Coda”

During this class session in the last week of the quarter, I ask you to reflect on how your thinking about power has changed during the quarter, what you have learned, what you have done and are going to do differently, and possibly most importantly, how you will build on and maintain your learning and development momentum from this quarter.

1. How have your ideas and feelings about power changed during the course of our quarter together?
2. What did you do during the past ten weeks to implement some of the concepts and ideas you were learning? How did it work—not only in terms of its effectiveness, but in its effect on your own thinking and feelings?
3. In the beginning of the quarter, you set some goals around why you were taking this class and about the qualities/characteristics you were hoping to further develop during

the quarter. How well did you achieve those objectives? What worked and what didn't?

4. Going forward, what are you going to do even slightly differently as a result of having taken this class? Why?
5. What plans, activities, and ideas do you have about how you are going to maintain the learning and the momentum from the class after you leave the GSB?

We will be joined for the class by a person mentioned in an early assigned reading. She will talk about how to take the learnings from this class into the future and how to use them in building your path to power. For background, please read:

<https://mmt.org/about/team/rukaiyah-adams>

<https://www.institutionalinvestor.com/article/blzx6np7h0428v/What-Rukaiyah-Adams-Wants-to-Achieve-in-Her-Next-Job>

INDIVIDUAL “DOING-POWER” PROJECT ASSIGNMENT **INSTRUCTIONS**

Due by 12 P.M. (noon, mid-day) Thursday, March 14, 2023.

If the material from Paths to Power is going to stay with you and be useful, it is imperative that you *use* it during our quarter together. The individual doing power project, therefore, asks you to take the material and put it into practice. Learning by doing is one of the best ways to master both subject matter and skills. And while you are still a student at Stanford, you have the potential to learn by trying things out in setting where if you fail or suffer setbacks, the consequences are much, much less severe than they will be later on. Also, trying out behaviors that you have not done before or that you think you won't enjoy permits you to test your assumptions. This individual project asks you to get a little outside of your comfort zone (which is why we have coaching resources available) and push yourself to build power and use the ideas of the class as you are learning them.

In an organization where you currently work or are volunteering—such an organization could be a nonprofit, a for-profit company, a student government organization, a social club or religious organization, a start-up team, or any other formal or informal organization in which you are currently involved—or in an organization that you are planning to join upon graduation, **during the Winter quarter**, try to exercise influence over some specific issue, using the concepts from the course. Write up your experience and what you learned. You should keep notes throughout the quarter, with new entries every time something important happens. **NOTE: FINDING A JOB IS *NOT* THE SAME THING AS USING INFLUENCE ON OTHERS INSIDE AN ORGANIZATION. NOR IS THIS ASSIGNMENT ABOUT YOUR DOING SOME SELF—REFLECTIONS ON WHAT YOU LEARNED FROM THE CLASS. THE PROJECT REQUIRES THAT YOU ATTEMPT SOME INFLUENCE EFFORT IN A CONTEXT IN WHICH YOU CONFRONT OPPOSITION OR RESISTANCE TO YOU OR YOUR IDEAS.**

In order to do this assignment, you will need to: a) begin with some specific objective. What are you trying to change? What are you trying to accomplish? Such an objective could involve either changing a policy or practice in the organization or advancing your position to one of more power, or both; consider how you might know if you have successfully achieved your objective--how are you going to assess your progress (as objectively as possible)? b) outline a set of things you are going to do to try and influence the situation; c) describe what you did, what worked, and what didn't, and why. Compare this to what was in the literature and what we have discussed in class (i.e., integrate what you learned through your experience with what you learned conceptually); d) What were your personal lessons in power from this experience. **YOUR WRITE UP COULD FOLLOW THIS FORMAT AS JUST DESCRIBED.**

This exercise is distinct from although congruent with the self-reflective exercises you will do over the course of the quarter. Those exercises ask you to focus on past experiences and what you might do differently, or to assess yourself and design a personal development plan. This final individual project asks you to actually *do* something *during our quarter together*--not just think or write about it.

EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT THERE IS A REASONABLY HIGH CORRELATION BETWEEN WHEN YOU START ON THIS PROJECT AND a) YOUR GRADE AND b) HOW MUCH YOU GET OUT OF IT. IF YOU BEGIN EARLY IN THE QUARTER, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DO SOME AMAZING THINGS AND REALLY BUILD YOUR POWER SKILLS. IF YOU BEGIN IN THE LAST WEEK OR TWO BEFORE THIS ASSIGNMENT IS DUE, YOU WILL GET MUCH, MUCH LESS BENEFIT FROM IT.

There is no page limit. I will read as much as you submit. Typical papers in the past have been 6-7 pages long.

Submitting Your Project:

SUBMIT YOUR PROJECT BY THE DEADLINE (LATE PROJECTS EARN NO CREDIT AND ARE NOT GRADED), USING THE CANVAS SYSTEM.

PLEASE BE SURE TO PUT YOUR NAME ON YOUR PAPER!

ALSO, PLEASE PROOFREAD YOUR WORK FOR TYPOGRAPHICAL AND GRAMMATICAL ERRORS