# POWER DIAGNOSTIC PROJECT

**Due by 7:00 P.M. Wednesday, May 1.**

One of the important ways in which people get into trouble in their careers is getting blindsided by organizational dynamics and from problems with personal relationships that they did not see coming. Therefore, one of the most important skills is the ability to be aware of and knowledgeable about the specific political dynamics occurring in your workplace environment.

**Introduction:**

This project asks you to use the course material to diagnose a situation which might affect you in the future. The assignment also asks that you develop your skills in asking for sensitive information—not just using data gathered by others (such as in a case) to diagnose political dynamics, but to build your skills at uncovering such data for yourself, something that will be important going forward.

## It is possible, although not required, to integrate this assignment with the “doing power” assignment. You might use the diagnosis from this exercise as you plan how to acquire power for the “doing power” project. Or, you could do the assignments on separate organizations—your choice.

**Project Overview:**

Consider an organization that is, or might be, important for you in the future—the place where you are going to work after graduation, a company or non-profit you are (or have) working, a club or voluntary association where you are developing your leadership skills, or, if your career plans remain unsettled, a workplace that you are contemplating joining. **Gather relevant information by interviewing at least 3 and no more than 7 people who have or potentially might have information relevant for addressing the questions below.**

**In no more than four pages,** using what you have learned from the class, provide a brief analysis in which you consider the following questions:

1. Who are the major power players in this setting (including you)?
2. What are the interests and hidden agendas of those players? What do they want to see happen?
3. What power resources or currencies does each possess? What are the alliances or coalitions among those players? Where are you in this dynamic?
4. What are your bases of power?
5. What might you do to build (or not) relationships with your boss and these power players?

7) What assumptions/mental models do you bring into the situation that may cause you problems?

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 semester, you will be able to do some great things and come up with some very helpful insights. If you begin in the last week or two before it is due, not so much.

# “DOING-POWER” PROJECT ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS

**Due by 7:00 P.M. Wednesday, May 1.**

If the material from this course is going to stay with you and be useful, it is important that you ***use*** it during our semester 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. 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 and push yourself to build power and use the ideas of the class as you are learning them.

**Introduction:**

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 this semester,** 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 semester, with new entries every time something important happens. **Note: this assignment is not about you 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.**

**Project Overview:**

1. Define Objectives: Clearly articulate the specific objective you aim to achieve. 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)?
2. Develop Strategies: Outline a set of things you are going to do to try and influence the situation
3. Execution and Evaluation: Describe your actions, what worked, what didn't, and why. Compare your experiences with literature and class discussions.
4. Personal Lessons: Reflect on your personal lessons in power derived from this experience. **Your write up should 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 semester. 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 semester 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 semester, you will be able to do some great 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.