

**PSYCHOL 9650A– Advanced Topics in Psychology: Status and Power in Organizations**

Course Outline: Fall 2018

**COURSE INFORMATION**

Instructor: Dr. Alex Benson  
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Office Hours: By Appointment  
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Email: abenson3@uwo.ca  
Meetings: Wednesdays, 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM, SSC 8438/8440  
First Meeting: September 12, 2018

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course offers an overview of research on the function and structure of social hierarchies within organizations and groups. In this course, we will examine traditional and contemporary accounts on the nature of social rank, how power and status differences are established and regulated, and the consequences of social hierarchy for individuals and organizations. We will discuss a range of topics, including the bases of social hierarchy, the social neuroendocrinology of status and power, motives for status and power, and the consequences of social rank as well as differing hierarchical configurations in organizations. This is a seminar-style course that is organized around weekly readings of theoretical and/or empirical papers. Students are expected to attend and actively participate in the weekly discussions, submit weekly discussion questions, write two brief reflection papers, and prepare a final research proposal.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

The readings for this course consist primarily of journal articles and chapters. Most readings are easily available via the web. I will supply copies of the readings that are not easily available. Please see the “Dates, Topics, and Readings” below for the tentative list of weekly readings.

**METHODS OF EVALUATION**

1. *Class Participation (30%)* – This is a seminar style course that relies on students to actively participate in class discussions. To facilitate these discussions, students are expected to come to class prepared with comments and questions about the readings that caught their interest and be prepared to respond to other students’ comments and questions. Student participation should reflect deep and critical engagement with the weekly readings. Class participation will be evaluated on the basis of the quality of contributions to the discussions.
2. *Reflection Papers (10%)* – Students are required to submit two brief reflection papers based on the weekly readings. Each reflection paper should strive to either pose new questions or perspectives, critique an existing theory or empirical finding, draw connections between the readings, or propose alternative conditions under which a theory may or may not apply. Students will choose which of the two weeks they will write and submit a reflection paper, but the reflection paper must be written in relation to the current week’s assigned readings. Each reflection paper should be two pages (double-spaced; 12-point Times New Roman; 1 inch margins on all

sides; worth 5% each) and is to be submitted through OWL under “Assignments” by Tuesday at 7pm. Thought papers will be evaluated on the basis of insightfulness, prose quality, and an accurate understanding of the assigned readings.

3. *Weekly Discussion Questions (20%)* – Every week, students will be asked to submit two discussion questions to the discussion board located under “Forum” on OWL by Monday at 7pm. All students in the class will have access to the weekly submitted discussion questions. In addition, all students are responsible for reviewing the questions posted to OWL prior to Wednesday’s class to ensure that there is a collective understanding of the viewpoints and questions elicited by the readings. Excellent questions will demonstrate critical thought in relation to one or more of the assigned readings and should serve to stimulate a thoughtful and productive exchange of ideas.

4. *Student-led Discussion (20%)* – You and a partner will be responsible for leading and guiding the class discussion on the weekly readings on two separate occasions during the semester. Discussion leaders may start off the discussion period by very briefly summarizing the key points of the readings. To assist with this, it will be helpful to prepare PowerPoint slides to convey key points or highlight specific questions in relation to the assigned readings. Students are also welcome to incorporate additional research to offer complementary or distinct perspectives. The majority of class time should be spent exchanging ideas about the week’s material. All students are expected to read the assigned articles, submit questions based on the readings beforehand, and actively engage in the discussion (see above). Though we may not have time to cover every specific question, it is the responsibility of the discussion leaders to pace the discussion and ensure a range of ideas, topics, and perspectives are covered during the class. We will develop a schedule for the student-led discussions during the organizational meeting on September 12, 2018.

*Research proposal (20%)* – The final paper will involve formulating a novel research idea and proposing a study to address it. The research question may be related to your main area of interest, but it must be sufficiently distinct from your thesis or dissertation topic. The final paper should (a) provide a brief literature review to establish the background and rationale for the proposed study, (b) outline the hypothesis (or hypotheses), (c) specify a method for examining the proposed research question, and (d) discuss implications and plausible alternative accounts of what the research may yield. The final paper should be 12-20 pages long, not including references (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman; 1 inch margins on all sides; written in accordance with APA guidelines) and is due December 15<sup>th</sup> by midnight. There will be a 10% per day penalty for late submission of research proposal papers unless an extension is arranged with me beforehand.

### **Statement on Academic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

## DATES, TOPICS, AND READINGS

\*\*\*Note that readings are subject to change. If necessary, a revised reading list will be provided no later than the previous week's class.

Week 1 (September 12): Introduction and Organizational meeting

No assigned readings.

Week 2 (September 19): The bases of social hierarchy

Anderson, C., Hildreth, J. A. D., & Howland, L. (2015). Is the desire for status a fundamental human motive? A review of the empirical literature. *Psychological Bulletin*, *141*, 574-601. doi: 10.1037/a0038781

Magee, J. C., & Galinsky, A. D. (2008). Social Hierarchy: The self-reinforcing nature of power and status. *Academy of Management Annals*, *2*, 351-398. doi: 10.5465/19416520802211628

Week 3 (September 26): Attaining social rank

Bai, F. (2017). Beyond dominance and competence: A moral virtue theory of status attainment. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *21*, 203-227.

Cheng, J. T., Tracy, J. L., Foulsham, T., Kingstone, A., & Henrich, J. (2013). Two ways to the top: Evidence that dominance and prestige are distinct yet viable avenues to social rank and influence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *104*, 103-125. doi: 10.1037/a0030398

Week 4 (October 3): Physiological perspectives on social hierarchy

Hamilton, L. D., Carré, J. M., Mehta, P. H., Olmstead, N., & Whitaker, J. D. (2015). Social neuroendocrinology of status: A review and future directions. *Adaptive Human Behavior and Physiology*, *1*, 202-230. doi: 10.1007/s40750-015-0025-5

Sherman, G. D., Lerner, J. S., Josephs, R. A., Renshon, J., & Gross, J. J. (2016). The interaction of testosterone and cortisol is associated with attained status in male executives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *110*, 921-929. doi: 10.1037/pspp0000063

Note: October 10 is Reading week: There will be no class meeting.

Week 5 (October 17): Individual differences related to status and power

Mahadevan, N., Gregg, A. P., & Sedikides, C. (2018). Is self-regard a sociometer or a hierometer? Self-esteem tracks status and inclusion, narcissism tracks status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

Neel, R., Kenrick, D. T., White, A. E., & Neuberg, S. L. (2016). Individual differences in fundamental social motives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *110*, 887-907.

Week 6 (November 24): Personal consequences of social rank

- Anderson, C., Kraus, M. W., Galinsky, A. D., & Keltner, D. (2012). The local-ladder effect: Social status and subjective well-being. *Psychological Science, 23*, 764-771. doi: 10.1177/0956797611434537
- Friesen, J. P., Kay, A. C., Eibach, R. P., & Galinsky, A. D. (2014). Seeking structure in social organization: Compensatory control and the psychological advantages of hierarchy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 106*, 590-609. doi: 10.1037/a0035620
- Sapolsky, R. M. (2005). The influence of social hierarchy on primate health. *Science, 308*, 648-652. doi: 10.1126/science.1106477

Week 7 (October 31): The distinct effects of power and status

- Guinote, A. (2017). How power affects people: activating, wanting, and goal seeking. *Annual Review of Psychology, 68*, 353-381. doi: 10.1146/annurev-psych-010416-044153
- Mattan, B. D., Kubota, J. T., & Cloutier, J. (2017). How social status shapes person perception and evaluation: A social neuroscience perspective. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 12*, 468-507. doi: 10.1177/1745691616677828

Week 8 (November 7): The distinct effects of power and status (II)

- Anicich, E. M., Fast, N. J., Halevy, N., & Galinsky, A. D. (2015). When the bases of social hierarchy collide: Power without status drives interpersonal conflict. *Organization Science, 27*, 123-140. doi: 10.1287/orsc.2015.1019
- Fast, N. J., Halevy, N., & Galinsky, A. D. (2012). The destructive nature of power without status. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 48*, 391-394. doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2011.07.013

Week 9 (November 14): Interpersonal consequences of social rank

- Arnett, R. D., & Sidanius, J. (2018). Sacrificing status for social harmony: Concealing relatively high status identities from one's peers. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 147*, 108-126. doi: 10.1016/j.obhdp.2018.05.009
- Kilduff, G. J., Willer, R., & Anderson, C. (2016). Hierarchy and its discontents: Status disagreement leads to withdrawal of contribution and lower group performance. *Organization Science, 27*, 373-390. doi: 10.1287/orsc.2016.1058

Week 10 (November 21): Configurations of status and power

- Aime, F., Humphrey, S., DeRue, D. S., & Paul, J. B. (2014). The riddle of heterarchy: Power transitions in cross-functional teams. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57, 327-352. doi: 10.5465/amj.2011.0756
- Halevy, N., Y. Chou, E., & D. Galinsky, A. (2011). A functional model of hierarchy: Why, how, and when vertical differentiation enhances group performance. *Organizational Psychology Review*, 1, 32-52. doi: 10.1177/2041386610380991

Week 11 (November 28): Collective consequences of social hierarchy

- Akinola, M., Page-Gould, E., Mehta, P. H., & Liu, Z. (2018). Hormone-diversity fit: Collective testosterone moderates the effect of diversity on group performance. *Psychological Science*, 29, 859-867. doi: 10.1177/0956797617744282
- Bendersky, C., & Hays, N. A. (2012). Status conflict in groups. *Organization Science*, 23, 323-340. doi: 10.1287/orsc.1110.0734

Week 12 (December 5): Leader-follower dynamics

- Kakkar, H., & Sivanathan, N. (2017). When the appeal of a dominant leader is greater than a prestige leader. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 114, 6734-6739. doi:10.1073/pnas.1617711114
- Oc, B., & Bashshur, M. R. (2013). Followership, leadership and social influence. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 24, 919-934. doi: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2013.10.006
- Price, M. E., & Van Vugt, M. (2014). The evolution of leader-follower reciprocity: The theory of service-for-prestige. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 8, 363. 10.3389/fnhum.2014.00363