

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

Course Outline: Fall 2020

COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Alex Benson
Office: SSC 8408/Zoom
Office Hours: By Appointment
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Email: abenson3@uwo.ca
Meetings: Thursdays, 1:00pm – 4:00 PM, Zoom
First Meeting: September 10, 2020

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 and individual differences related to 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 via OWL. Please see the “Dates, Topics, and Readings” below for the tentative list of weekly readings.

Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the system requirements for Zoom. Information about the system requirements are available at the following link: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>

METHODS OF EVALUATION

1. *Class Participation (25%)* – 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 Thursday at 12pm. Thought papers will be evaluated on the basis of insightfulness, prose quality, and an accurate understanding of the assigned readings. Excellent papers will offer creative insights and/or critiques that go beyond issues already addressed within a particular reading.

3. *Weekly Discussion Questions and Responses (25%)* – Every week, each student will be asked to submit two discussion questions to the discussion board located under “Forum” on OWL by Monday at 7:00pm. All students in the class will have access to the weekly submitted discussion questions. In addition, each student must respond to two of their classmates’ questions by providing a response on the “Forum” on OWL by Tuesday at 7:00pm. **This means each student will post four items on the OWL Forum each week (i.e., two questions and two responses to another person’s question).** Regardless of which specific questions you respond to virtually, all students are responsible for reviewing the questions posted to OWL prior to Thursday’s class to ensure that there is a collective understanding of the viewpoints and questions elicited by the readings. Excellent questions and responses 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. Please do not post more than two questions or provide more than two responses in a given week.

4. *Student-led Discussion (10%)* – 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 10, 2020.**

5. *Research proposal and presentation (20% written component + 10% verbal component)* – The final research proposal will involve formulating a novel research idea and proposing a study to address it. The research question may relate 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 to examine the proposed research question, and (d) discuss implications and plausible alternative accounts of what the research may yield. The final paper should be 10-20 pages in length (**a maximum of 5000 words**), not including references (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman; 1 inch margins on all sides; written in accordance with APA 7

guidelines) and is due December 14th by 11:59pm. There will be a 10% per day penalty for late submission of research proposal papers unless an extension is arranged with me beforehand.

During the classes of November 26th and December 3rd, you will also present your proposal to the class and receive comments that may help you with the final version of your proposal. Your presentation is expected to be 15 minutes long and should provide the class with a detailed understanding of your proposed study. There will be 5-10 minutes allotted for discussion following each presentation.

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

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 10): Introduction and Organizational meeting

No assigned readings. We will cover class expectations and schedule student-led discussions and proposal presentations.

Week 2 (September 17): An introduction to social hierarchy

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

Bunderson, J. S., Van Der Vegt, G. S., Cantimur, Y., & Rink, F. (2016). Different views of hierarchy and why they matter: Hierarchy as inequality or as cascading influence. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59, 1265-1289. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2014.0601>

Week 3 (September 24): Personal implications of status and power

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

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

Week 4 (October 1): Social rank acquisition

- Bai, F. (2017). Beyond dominance and competence: A moral virtue theory of status attainment. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 21, 203-227. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868316649297>
- 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. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030398>

Week 5 (October 8): Individual differences related to status and power

- Benson, A. J., & Giacomin, M. (2020). How self-esteem and narcissism differentially relate to high and (un) stable feelings of status and inclusion. *Journal of Personality*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12565>
- Suessenbach, F., Loughnan, S., Schönbrodt, F. D., & Moore, A. B. (2019). The dominance, prestige, and leadership account of social power motives. *European Journal of Personality*, 33, 7-33. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.2184>

Week 6 (October 15): The distinct effects of power and status

- 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 8 (October 22): Consequences of social rank

- Yu, S., & Kilduff, G. J. (2020). Knowing where others stand: Accuracy and performance effects of individuals' perceived status hierarchies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 119, 159.
- Anicich, E. M., & Hirsh, J. B. (2017). The psychology of middle power: Vertical code-switching, role conflict, and behavioral inhibition. *Academy of Management Review*, 42, 659-682. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2016.0002>

Week 9 (October 29): Status and power dynamics

- 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. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.0756>
- Bendersky, C., & Pai, J. (2018). Status dynamics. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 5, 183-199. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032117-104602>

November 1-8 is Reading week: There will be no class meeting nor any assigned readings.

Week 10 (November 12): Team consequences of social hierarchy

Greer, L. L., de Jong, B. A., Schouten, M. E., & Dannals, J. E. (2018). Why and when hierarchy impacts team effectiveness: A meta-analytic integration. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 103*, 591-613.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000291>

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 11 (November 19): Leader-follower dynamics

Case, C. R., & Maner, J. K. (2014). Divide and conquer: When and why leaders undermine the cohesive fabric of their group. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 107*(6), 1033-1050.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038201>

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

Week 12 (November 26): Research presentations

Presenters to be determined

Week 13 (December 3): Research presentations

Presenters to be determined

ONLINE ETIQUETTE

The majority of this course involves online interactions. To ensure the best experience for both you and your classmates, please honour the following rules of etiquette:

- please “arrive” to class on time. We will start promptly every Thursday at 1:00pm.
- please use your computer and/or laptop if possible (as opposed to a cell phone or tablet)
- please ensure that you are in a private location to protect the confidentiality of discussions in the event that a class discussion deals with sensitive or personal material
- to minimize background noise, kindly mute your microphone for the entire class until you are invited to speak, unless directed otherwise
- unless invited by your instructor, do not share your screen in the meeting

The course instructor will act as moderator for the class and will deal with any questions from participants. To participate please consider the following:

- If you wish to speak, use the “raise hand” function and wait for the instructor or discussion leader to acknowledge you before beginning your comment or question.
- Please remember to unmute your microphone and turn on your video camera before speaking.

General considerations of “netiquette”:

- Keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course.
- Be courteous toward the instructor, your colleagues, and authors whose work you are discussing.
- Be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter in the class and in your readings. The exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment.
- Be professional and scholarly in all online postings. Use proper grammar and spelling. Cite the ideas of others appropriately.

Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of Zoom-bombing a class or of other serious online offenses may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.