

MGMT 4150 Power, Influence & Politics in Organizations

Fall 2026 Course Syllabus

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Office: BLB 185

Office hours: By appointment

MGMT 4150-502 is offered as an In Person Course running **from 08/17/2026 to 12/11/2026**

Prerequisites: MGMT 3820 or MGMT 3720 or MGMT 3860.

Course Description:

Power and politics are ever-present and necessary features of organizational life. Without them, much of what gets done in organizations could never be accomplished, and getting things done requires developing and exercising power and influence. Therefore, being able to understand power and politics, and to act on that knowledge is crucial for career success. In short, in today's world, not only are employees required to be competent technically, but also understand organizational politics along with power and influence to sustain a successful career over a lifetime. However, power can also be abused, and personal or political goals can overshadow organizational ones. This course provides a framework for intelligently analyzing the sources of power in organizations, and the circumstances that lead to its attainment and effective ethical use. The course covers the social science concepts useful for appreciating power and ways of analyzing power dynamics in organizations. The course structure encourages students to think about and build their own personal path to power, influence and political skill. "Power is the ability to get people to do something they did not want to do and make them happy that they did it." — Winston Churchill

Required Course Materials:

1. Organizational Power Politics: Tactic in Organizational Leadership by Gilbert Fairholm ISBN: 978-0 313-37976-5
2. Power: Why Some People Have It and Others Don't by Jeffrey Pfeffer ISBN-10: 9780061789083.
3. VLeader Business Simulation Software by SimuLearn inc. <http://www.simulearn.net/>. Please note: Detailed direction on how to purchase & register for this product will be available on Canvas (the cost is \$79.99).

Announcements / Communication:

The Announcements section provides official announcements by the instructor. Since Announcements is an "official section" within Canvas and part of the course, you are responsible for knowing the information there. As always, the instructor accepts and replies to regular (on and off-Canvas) e-mail (nicole.drader@unt.edu) on any course-related matter. I typically respond to all emails within 24 hours. Please note: emails to the class announcements and all notifications will be sent through Canvas. The default email address in the notification system is your UNT account. Please change your email address to ensure that you receive all class communications.

Course Objectives:

The main course objectives of MGMT 4150 are:

- Understand the nature and sources of power in organizations: power and political processes - where power comes from, the conditions under which it is used, strategies for power and influence. This is the paramount objective because core issues of power and political process are ambiguous and often do not have "right" answers. There are no set of "winning" formulas that will maximize your effectiveness, but there are tools and tactics for effectively and ethically attaining and using power.
- Increase your ability to diagnose, think through and apply central concepts of power and influence: social exchange perspectives on power, network structures and their consequences, the bases of interpersonal influence, and diagnostic tools and techniques to identify the "rules of the game." These concepts are the building blocks that can systematically be recognized to evaluate power and influence strategies.
- Develop confidence and increased skills in: dealing with power situations, managing conflict, and using political strategies in ethical and pragmatic ways to get things done in the workplace and organizations, especially recognizing ethical issues associated with the use of power. Additionally, students reflecting on their own views of power and influence, including what strategies and tactics they are comfortable with; and learning how they can exercise power effectively (or not) to accomplish managerial objectives and advance career; in part by developing their level of emotional intelligence, a key ability to navigate one's social dynamics within organizations.

In sum, the ultimate goals for this course are a) to have students see the world through different lens—to change what you notice and think about and how you apprehend the world around you; b) to give students tools to navigate through that world; and c) help students focus on building their own action plan and skills for attaining power and use influence. If learning is successful, students will be better able to achieve their objectives and should never have to leave an organization or a position involuntarily. "The key to successful leadership is influence, not authority." — Ken Blanchard

My Teaching Philosophy:

To accomplish our objectives, we need to be partners in the learning process. The very design of most classrooms subtly reminds people of settings such as theatres or auditoriums in which they are entertained while seeing some lecture or performance. One way of describing my job is that I am in the role of your "personal trainer/coach." 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, as well as how much effort you should to put into the class. In life and the classroom, we tend to get out what we put in! I will create a class format for our face to face lectures as engaging as possible, while the online Spring 2024 – MGMT 4150 – Kidwell – Blended 3 only lectures will give you time to read, process the material and apply your new found knowledge through a variety of assignments, which will be a reflection of your own motivation to learn!

Course Assignments and How They Are Evaluated:

The grade you earn in this course will be determined by your performance on the assignments described below. Grading of each component is subject to instructions, guidelines, and tips contained on Canvas and during Face-to Face lectures.

- Final grade ranges are: 90–100 = A; 80-89 = B; 70-79 = C; 60-69= D; 50-59=E; Below 50 = F. Do not expect a curve; but perfect attendance to ALL in-person lectures will earn you to round up your grade to the next integer, i.e.; 89 would be round up to 90; 79 to 80;; 69 to 70. (Please note, 88.9 would be round up to 89 and remain a B and so on, no double rounding!).
 - Incomplete grades can be exceptionally requested only with documented approved university prolonged absences and require you to complete 75% of the coursework.
 - I do not accept late work unless documented approved university absence. This means once a due date has passed, the assignment submission is closed on Canvas and cannot be re-opened. I do not accept emailed assignments, only what is submitted via Canvas is considered for grading. Please refer to the class schedule for all due dates as well as any announcement on Canvas. I will post grades/feedback on the Canvas as they become available, typically within 7 days of the deadline. Your final grade will be posted the following Monday from the last day of class by 1pm.
 - **IMPORTANT:** All assignments listed above will be submitted to TurnItIn, a plagiarism detection software checking for plagiarism against all material found online including Canvas, Blackboard and such university sites. You are responsible for the submission of a plagiarism free paper.
1. Exams (30 points/30% – 2 @ 15 points each: There will be a midterm exam and a final exam. Each exam will contain 50 questions worth 0.3 points each. The exam will be multiple choice and you may elect to take it in class during our scheduled class time or anytime the day of the scheduled exam from a location that is convenient for you. These are closed book and require Lockdown Browser.
 2. VLeader Business Simulation (20 points/20% – 4 @ points each): We will have 4 modules to complete using the simulation software you are required to purchase. This simulation will allow you to experience power, influence and politics in the workplace in a simulated environment, and give you a chance to apply what you are learning in this class! Details instructions will be given on Canvas and in class.
 3. Group Project 30 points/30%: We will have 4 modules to complete (5 pts each). You will be assigned to one of six teams and will compete amongst each other for limited resources. Details instructions will be given on Canvas and in class. There will also be a final group presentation worth 10 pts.
 4. Final Paper (10 points/10%): There is a final paper to submit on Canvas due the last day of class (in lieu of a final exam). The paper will focus on a personal reflection of your

experience in the class. Detailed instructions will be posted on Canvas as well as grading criteria. The Canvas submission will be closed after the due date.

5. Research Credit and Academic Integrity Quiz (10 points/10%): You will be required to pass an academic integrity quiz the first week of class that is worth 5% of your grade. You will also be required to complete a research experience assignment worth 5% of your grade. Details are available on Canvas.

Total available points*: 100

Attendance policy: Participation is key to your success in this course. After four absences, I reserve the right to lower your grade. Note, however, that the simulation and group project modules are performed in class. If you miss these, you risk losing those points as well.

Technical Support: If you experience any technical issues with Canvas please contact the UNT IT Student Help Desk by phone at 940-565-2324 or via email: helpdesk@unt.edu.

Academic Integrity: UNT's Academic Integrity Policy will be used in the event of academic dishonesty. See this policy at <http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm>. Use a spell checker and keep grammatical errors to a minimum. Plagiarism is not tolerated. Per University guidelines your written work will be submitted to www.turnitin.com or a similar electronic detection method for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. Individuals that plagiarize will be given a zero on the assignment, with possible referral to the college as outlined in the student handbook.

Ryan College of Business - Statement on Academic Honesty

The G. Brint Ryan College of Business takes academic honesty seriously. Ethics and integrity are important business values, essential to building trust and adhering to both professional and legal standards. Academic dishonesty destroys trust, damages the reputation and the value of the degree and is unacceptable.

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions from admonition (a warning) to expulsion from the University.

Some of the most common examples of academic integrity violations include plagiarism or cheating, such as unauthorized assistance on examinations, homework, research papers or case analyses. Your work must be entirely your own. When working on assignments, you should not discuss your work with others unless approved by the course instructor. Group assignments should only be discussed with members assigned to your group, and all group members may be held accountable in some way for known academic integrity violations in a group assignment.

Another example of academic dishonesty relates to improper attribution. When preparing your assignments, you must cite all outside sources in the manner requested by your instructor. Copying or using material from any source prepared by or previously submitted by others, at UNT or other

institutions, or downloaded from the Internet, is plagiarism. Unless directed otherwise in an assignment, large scale “cutting and pasting” from other sources, even if properly footnoted, is not appropriate. You should synthesize this material in your own words and provide a footnote.

Your instructor will specify what materials, if any, may be used on the tests and exams. Using materials other than those permitted, talking with other individuals during the exam, individuals exchanging information about an exam when one has taken the exam and the other has not, or copying or using material from another individual’s exam is academic dishonesty and will result in a meeting to discuss academic integrity violations and potentially issue sanctions mentioned above, and may result in ineligibility for academic scholarships. The use of online assistance, such as sites commonly used for finding homework solutions, group chat, cell phones, smart watches, and similar tools during exams is not allowed for any reason unless specifically permitted. No portion of an exam may be copied or photographed without permission.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the University's status as an institution of higher education. A student is responsible for responding to a request to discuss suspected academic dishonesty when issued by an instructor or other University official. If a student fails to respond after a proper attempt at notification has been made, the University may take appropriate academic actions in the absence of the student’s participation.

Students with Disabilities: The College of Business Administration complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodation for qualified students with disabilities. If you have an established disability as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act, are registered with the UNT Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA), and would like to request accommodation, please contact the instructor of this course as soon as possible to arrange accommodation, preferably by email (virginie.kidwell@unt.edu). Instructor office hours, locations, phone numbers, etc., are listed in this Course Syllabus. University Policy requires that students notify their instructor(s) within the first week of class that an accommodation will be needed.

Important Notice for F-1 Students: There is no required on-campus experiential component for this course. To comply with immigration regulations, however, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his/her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, he/she should contact the UNT International Students and Scholar Services Office (940-565-2195 or email: internationaladvising@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one week deadline.

College Emergency Evacuation Procedures: Severe Weather In the event of severe weather, all building occupants should immediately seek shelter in the designated shelter-in-place area in the building. If unable to safely move to the designated shelter-in place area, seek shelter in a windowless interior room or hallway on the lowest floor of the building. All building occupants should take shelter in rooms 055, 077, 090, and the restrooms on the basement level. In rooms 170, 155, and the restrooms on the first floor. **Bomb Threat/Fire** In the event of a bomb threat or fire in the building, all building occupants should immediately evacuate the building using the nearest exit. Once outside, proceed to the designated assembly area. If unable to safely move to the designated assembly area, contact one or more members of your department or unit to let them know you are safe and inform them of your whereabouts. Persons with mobility impairments who are unable to

safely exit the building should move to a designated area of refuge and await assistance from emergency responders. All building occupants should immediately evacuate the building and proceed to the south side of Crumley Hall in the grassy area, west of parking lot 24.