

**CAPSTONE: CAP-GP 3401-001**

**Fall 2023 – Spring 2024**

**Instructor Information**

* Elizabeth Angeles
* [ea1599@nyu.edu](mailto:ea1599@nyu.edu)
* Office hours scheduled upon request

## Course Information

* Class Meeting Times: Mondays, 6:45 PM - 8:25 PM
* Classroom: 40 W 4th St (Tisch Hall) Room LC1 Loc: Washington Square

*Please note we will occasionally meet via Zoom, as noted in the Syllabus or per class announcements.*

## Course Description

Capstone is learning in action. Part of Wagner’s core curriculum, it provides students with both a critical learning experience and an opportunity to perform a public service. Over the course of an academic year, students work in teams to address challenges, solve problems and identify opportunities for a client organization. Students will design the approach, conduct the data collection and analysis, and present findings, both orally and in writing, to the client.

In architecture, the capstone is the crowning piece of an arch, the center stone that holds the arch together, giving it shape and strength. Wagner’s Capstone program plays a similar role, by building on students’ previous coursework and expertise, while also enhancing student learning on policy and management issues, key process skills and research skills. Capstone requires students to interweave their learning in all these areas, and to do so in real time, in an unpredictable, complex, real world environment. Although divided into teams, the class will work as a learning community dedicated to the success of all the projects.

## Course Learning Objectives

1. Content

Students should demonstrate the ability to:

* understand the policy and/or management context for their project;
* be familiar with relevant specialized vocabularies;
* draw on critical research related to their content area;
* connect their project with previous coursework in their broader program and specialization.

1. Process

Overall, students should demonstrate a capacity for flexibility and resilience, as shown by adapting to changing and complex circumstances, balancing competing demands, accepting uncertainty and ambiguity, and knowing when to consult with their Capstone instructor.

* 1. Project Management

Students should demonstrate the ability to:

* + frame and refine the problem presented by the client;
  + develop a contract with the client including scope, timeline and deliverables;
  + develop an internal project workplan;
  + meet deadlines and monitor their progress against the contract and workplan;
  + revise contract and workplan as necessary.
  1. Client Management

Students should demonstrate the ability to:

* + negotiate a contract with their client;
  + develop and sustain a relationship with their client;
  + maintain regular and productive communication with the client;
  + solicit and integrate feedback from the client on design and deliverables;
  + submit deliverables on time.
  1. Team Management

Students should demonstrate the ability to:

* + diagnose and attend to interpersonal dynamics;
  + define roles and useful division of labor;
  + manage assignments and accountability;
  + advocate points of view and negotiate differences of opinion;
  + solicit and offer feedback;
  + appreciate and learn from cultural and other differences.

1. Research

Students should demonstrate the ability to:

* identify and synthesize existing research relevant to the project
* identify and implement appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative data gathering methods;
* identify and implement appropriate data analysis procedures;
* determine findings;
* develop useful recommendations and/or tools and resources based on findings.

1. Communication

Students should demonstrate the ability to:

* synthesize and summarize large amounts of data and information;
* prepare clear and well-argued written deliverables tailored to the client’s needs;
* prepare clear and well-argued verbal presentations tailored to the client’s needs.

## Learning Assessment Table

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| **Course Learning Objective** | **Corresponding Assignment** |
| Understand the policy and/or management context for their project | Interim and final products |
| Be familiar with relevant specialized vocabularies | Interim and final products |
| Draw on critical research related to their content area | Interim and final products |
| Frame and refine the problem presented by the client | Signed contract with client |
| Develop a contract with the client including scope, timeline and deliverables | Signed contract with client |
| Develop an internal project workplan | Team workplan |
| Meet deadlines and monitor their progress against the contract and workplan | Signed contract and team workplan |
| Advocate points of view and negotiate differences of opinion | Self and team peer evaluations |
| Appreciate and learn from cultural and other differences | Self and team peer evaluations |
| Identify and synthesize existing research relevant to the project | Interim and final products |
| Identify and implement appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative data gathering methods | Interim and final products |

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| Identify and implement appropriate data analysis procedures | Interim and final products |
| Determine findings | Interim and final products |
| Develop useful recommendations and/or tools and resources based on findings | Interim and final products |
| Synthesize and summarize large amounts of data and information | Interim and final products |
| Prepare clear and well-argued written deliverables tailored to the client’s needs | Interim and final products |
| Prepare clear and well-argued verbal presentations tailored to the client’s needs | Interim and final presentations |

**Course Requirements**

You will have access to the project proposals via our class Brightspace website. Each prospective client will join one of our first class sessions for 10-15 minutes to share more about the proposal and answer any questions you may have.

Once you are familiar with the projects, you will fill out a form which gives me your project rankings and other information. I will take your preferences into account along with the needs of the project, students’ previous coursework, work and life experience, student schedules, team size, and the balance of skills among the team. Ultimately, it’s my job to create teams that can do the work for the client. Teams are comprised of 3-5 students.

The class will involve presentations from the instructor, possible guest speakers, class discussion and team meetings. You should expect to work approximately 5-10 hours a week, including class time, team meetings and project work. Course requirements include:

* enrollment in both semesters;
* attendance and participation in class activities and team meetings;
* completion of assignments on time;
* participation in project work;
* participation in meetings with clients;
* participation in preparation and presentation of findings.

Though Capstone classes are in-person, your team and client meetings do not have to be. Teams can work this out with each other and their client. (We do encourage the first and last meetings with the client to be in person if at all possible.)

## Capstone Expenses:

Each capstone team is entitled to reimbursement of up to $500 of Capstone related expenses, such as photocopying, supplies, etc. None of these funds can be spent hiring others to do work that you are expected to do, like writers, editors, graphic designers, etc. The forms and procedures needed to claim reimbursement for these expenses and a detailed explanation of

eligible expenses are found in the Capstone Student Guide, available on the Brightspace course website.

## Evaluation and Grading

Students will receive 1.5 credits for the fall semester and 1.5 for the spring semester. You will be graded at the end of each semester. The grade at the end of the first semester will reflect your work, participation and learning to date. I will assign final grades at the end of the second semester. Your final grade will override your fall grade (that is, your fall grade will be changed to reflect your final grade.)

Grades will be allotted to individuals, not to the team as a whole. That is, team members may receive different grades if I feel that is warranted. I will make this judgment based both on my assessment of students’ contribution and learning and on the assessments you give each other as part of the evaluation process at the end of the first and second semesters. If the client’s evaluation of your work is available, I will also take that into account.

Students will be graded on both the products they deliver to their clients and evidence of progressive learning throughout the course, based on the Learning Objectives. 60% **is based on work products** such as interim and final deliverables as well as other assignments 40% **is based on evidence of the individual student’s learning** during the course through participation in the team’s work and class activities, their ability to act on peer and faculty feedback; individual and team preparation for and performance at client meetings; and

end-of-semester faculty, peer and self-evaluations. The self and peer evaluations are required.

## Required Readings and Other Resources

* **Block, Peter. 2011. Flawless Consulting, 3rd edition. Pfeiffer.** This is available [online](https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/lib/nyulibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=661497) (and downloadable) through NYU’s Bobst Library.
* Additional readings will be available on the Brightspace website for this course.

## Course Milestones

The course has a series of milestones – both activities and products -- that guide and track your work over the course of the year. I’ve suggested time frames in parentheses, though actual timing may vary depending on the specific situation of each team and client.

These milestones include:

* Potential client presentations (August/September);
* Team formation (September);
* “Entry conference” with client and faculty to explain the process of the course, establish relationship, assess the client organization, and gather data in order to clarify the presenting problem or issue and client’s initial vision of a successful project (September/October);
* Preliminary client-team contract or work agreement (October);
* Negotiations with client to finalize contract (October);
* Final, signed client-team contract and detailed team workplan (October/November);
* Team charter (October/November);
* End-of-first semester self, team/peer, and course evaluations; discussion of team process and progress (December);
* January term: Continue project work (January)
* First draft of final project report to faculty (February/March);
* Second draft of final project report to faculty (March/April);
* Rehearsal of client presentation before class/faculty for feedback before presentation to client (April);
* Final report and presentation to client (April/May);
* End-of-second semester reflection and celebration (April/May);
* End-of-course self, team /peer, client and course evaluations (April/May);

## Class Schedule Overview

Students should expect to meet weekly as a class or team unless agreed in class. **The sequence of classes, and due dates for assignments, could change** depending on your meetings with clients and the substance of your projects.

**Note that all interim and final deliverables must come to me first before they go to the client. We may go through several rounds of revision** before I feel the products are ready to be shared with the client.

Specific requirements for each class will be posted on Brightspace and emailed to you with enough lead time to prepare. **Instructions in email or Brightspace take precedence over what is written here**.

## Fall Semester

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| **PHASE and DATE** | **TOPIC(S)** | **ASSIGNMENTS DUE** |
| **Phase 1: CREATING TEAMS** | Introductions | * Watch video: What is Capstone? * Review syllabus and Student Capstone Guide * Review capstone proposals and come to class prepared with questions |
| Class 1 9/11/23 | Overview of Syllabus & Capstone Student Guide |
|  | Client presentations |

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| Class 2 9/18/23 | Client presentations  Discussion of projects | * Read capstone proposals and prepare questions for project liaison * **Due by noon on 9/20**: Complete the Project Selection Preferences Form available on Brightspace. This will give you the opportunity to add your resume and writing sample. Teams will be posted by 9/22. |
| **Phase 2: TEAM LAUNCH AND PLANNING** | NO CLASS; Meet  in your teams. | **Individual**   * Watch: Capstone consulting videos: Intro, What Consulting   Is and Isn’t and The Role of Technical and Interpersonal Skills |
| Class 3 |  | * Recommended: Read Flawless Consulting, chapters 19, 1,   2, 3 (in this order) |
| 9/25/23 |  |  |
|  |  | **Team**   * Exchange contact information |
|  |  | * Schedule one get-together purely about getting to know each other. See handout for sample questions and topics (or feel free to ignore). * Send out first client email by 9/29. (Send draft to me before sending to client.) * Schedule initial client meeting within the next 2 weeks. I must be present and will provide my availability. |
| Class 4 10/2/23 | Introduction to consulting; Preparation for entry meeting with client | **Individual**   * Read Top Ten Tips for Happy Capstone Teams * Readings related to team dynamics:   + 8 Ground Rules for Great Meetings   + 4 Ways to Manage Deadlines on Cross-Cultural Teams   + Circle of Conflict Adaptation   **Team**  In preparation of your client meeting, please share with me:   * An agenda * A set of questions for the client * Suggestions for project scope * Be prepared to report on your background research on your client (I don’t need to see anything written) |
|  | Team dynamics 1: Leadership styles |
| Class 5 10/10/23  NOTE: This is a TUESDAY, not a Monday. Monday, October 9 is fall | Contracting and project management 1  Hear from previous | **Individual**   * View: Consulting videos: The Project Management Triangle, Client Expectations Mgmt, Risk Mgmt, Client Mtg Mgmt. * Read Ethics Memo for students * Review Team Charter Examples |

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| break. Classes on Tuesday, October 10 meet on a Monday schedule. | Capstone students | * Optional Reading: [Flawless Consulting, Chapters 4, 5, 6](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1q7Cr6M-X11qR3v-mHppSML48NBvPQog_), 8   and 9.  **Team**   * Be prepared to report on client entry meeting * Draft contract (if have conducted client entry meeting) * Begin discussing team charter |
| Class 6 10/16/23 | Team Dynamics 2: Creating team cultures that honor everyone’s backgrounds and workstyles; Discussion of team charter assignment | **Individuals**   * Review Team Charter Examples   **Team**   * Be prepared to report on client entry meeting * Draft contract (if have conducted client entry meeting) * Begin drafting team charter |
| Class 7 10/23/23 | Contracting and project management 2 | **Individual**:   * View Project Management tutorial: [Project Management](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__www.linkedin.com_learning-2Dlogin_share-3Faccount-3D2131553-26forceAccount-3Dfalse-26redirect-3Dhttps-253A-252F-252Fwww.linkedin.com-252Flearning-252Fproject-2Dmanagement-2Dsimplified-2D2019-253Ftrk-253Dshare-5Fent-5Furl-2526shareId-253Djt-25252FM-25252B7SeSUymyiEvkyB57Q-25253D-25253D&d=DwMBaQ&c=slrrB7dE8n7gBJbeO0g-IQ&r=kp19uzugGBflJBnA6isg0Q&m=PBqqu15hXmgBjr8VAbKVCM772no6ICjb-nlrannl2i8-hdeQTCCppGaUhoRQg5Ux&s=E8F8oGS6RJJw7ApUBEomom8HXvFnfM2oMr04LOoX1uY&e) [Simplified (about 1.5 hours)](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__www.linkedin.com_learning-2Dlogin_share-3Faccount-3D2131553-26forceAccount-3Dfalse-26redirect-3Dhttps-253A-252F-252Fwww.linkedin.com-252Flearning-252Fproject-2Dmanagement-2Dsimplified-2D2019-253Ftrk-253Dshare-5Fent-5Furl-2526shareId-253Djt-25252FM-25252B7SeSUymyiEvkyB57Q-25253D-25253D&d=DwMBaQ&c=slrrB7dE8n7gBJbeO0g-IQ&r=kp19uzugGBflJBnA6isg0Q&m=PBqqu15hXmgBjr8VAbKVCM772no6ICjb-nlrannl2i8-hdeQTCCppGaUhoRQg5Ux&s=E8F8oGS6RJJw7ApUBEomom8HXvFnfM2oMr04LOoX1uY&e); If you are interested in a more in-depth tutorial, please let me know. * Read “Reflection-Advice Letters” from previous Capstone students   **Team**   * Be prepared to report on client entry meeting * Draft contract; Prepare to share contract with client, once Professor feedback is received * Draft team charter |
| **Phase 3: RESEARCH SKILLS AND PROJECT WORK** | Finalizing Contract;  Catch-up week, | **Individual**   * Review [Wagner Capstone Library Guide](https://guides.nyu.edu/wagner/capstone) * If your deliverable includes Literature Review: Experiment with using Bobst Library databases to identify scholarly articles regarding your topic. Be ready to show results in class.   **Team**   * Prepare to share contract with client, once Professor feedback is received |
|  | review material |
| Class 8 | and identify gaps |
| 10/30/23 |  |

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| Class 9 11/6/23 | Data collection and surveys  [**Guest speaker:**](https://wagner.nyu.edu/community/faculty/rachel-swaner)[**Rachel Swaner**](https://wagner.nyu.edu/community/faculty/rachel-swaner) | **Individual**   * If literature reviews are part of deliverable: Review examples of literature reviews and be prepared to discuss strengths and weaknesses   **Team**   * Final contract (depending on team) * Draft workplan * Final team charter |
| Class 10 11/13/23 | Interviews and focus groups; Prepare for self and team peer evaluations | **Individual**   * Flawless Consulting, Ch 10 and 13 * Readings on how to give feedback:   + HBR: How to Give Feedback People Can Actually Use   + HBR: Don’t Be Nice; Be Helpful   **Team**   * Final contract (depending on team) * Continue developing workplan * Finalize team charter |
| **Phase 4: PROJECT WORK AND FEEDBACK**  Class 11 11/20/23 | Team reports Team check-ins | **Individual**   * Self and team peer evaluations   **Team**   * Be prepared to give update to classmates * Final workplan * Final team charter |
| Class 12 11/27/23 | NO CLASS |  |
| Class 13 12/4/23 | Team and individual meetings to discuss evaluations | **Individual**   * Read and reflect on evaluations |

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| Class 14 12/11/23 | Team and individual meetings to discuss evaluations | **Individual**   * Read and reflect on evaluations |

**January Term**

While classes don’t meet, this is generally an important time for group work. Students are expected to be available and working during this time (except for the holiday week between Christmas and New Year’s). If your team is planning to travel, just make sure to work things out among yourselves.

## Spring Semester

During this semester, much of the time will be set aside for teams to meet on their own or with me. We can be flexible about the need for formal class meeting times. However, as needed, we will schedule problem-solving or skill-building sessions, **so you must be available every Monday night during class time**. Also, for planning purposes, I’ve noted here some potential deadlines, **but these are preliminary and could change**.

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| **DATE** | **TOPIC(S)** | **ASSIGNMENTS DUE** |
| **Phase 5: PROJECT WORK** | Team updates | **Individual**   * Flawless Consulting, ch 14 |
| Class 1 1/22/24 | Discuss spring schedule  Data analysis | **Team**   * Be prepared to give team update * Revised work plan and team charter (using track changes) |
| Class 2  1/29/24 | Formatting final reports |  |
| Class 3  2/5/24 | NO CLASS |  |
| Class 4 2/12/24 |  | **Team**   * Report outlines due 2/19 |
| **Phase 6: PROJECT** | Discuss outlines | **Team** |

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| **WORK AND REPORT WRITING**  NO CLASS PRESIDENTS DAY  2/19/24 | NO CLASS  Team updates | * Schedule final presentation for client. I must be present and will provide availability. |
| Class 5  2/26/24 | NO CLASS |  |
| Class 6  3/4/24 | NO CLASS | **Team:**   * First draft final report |
| NO CLASS SPRING BREAK  3/11/24 |  |  |
| Class 7 3/18/24 | Team updates Discuss first drafts Discuss client presentation | **Individual**   * Flawless Consulting, ch 15   **Team**   * Presentation from each team on key findings from your work and draft recommendations. |
|  |  | * Include your “elevator pitch” on most important findings and what they mean to your project. |
| Class 8  3/25/24 | NO CLASS |  |
| **Phase 7: WRITING AND PRESENTING** | Rehearsals of client presentations | **Team**   * Draft slides for your final presentation * Second draft of final report |
| Class 9 |  |
| 4/1/24 |  |
| Class 10 4/8/24 | Rehearsals of client presentations | **Team**   * Draft slides |

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| Class 11 4/15/24 | Rehearsals of client presentations | **Individual**   * Self and team peer evaluations   **Team**   * Draft slides * Third and final draft of final report |
| Class 12 4/22/24 | NO CLASS |  |
| **Phase 8: CONCLUSION! EVALUATION, REFLECTION, CELEBRATION**  Class 13 4/29/2 | Self and peer evaluations | **Individual**   * Read and reflect on evaluations |
| Class 14 5/6/24 | Reflect and Celebrate | **Team:**   * Teams should send final version of final report to me and Wagner Capstone alias (wagner.capstone@nyu.edu) |

# Letter Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

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| **Letter Grade** | **Points** |
| **A** | 4.0 points |
| **A-** | 3.7 points |
| **B+** | 3.3 points |
| **B** | 3.0 points |

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| **Letter Grade** | **Points** |
| **B-** | 2.7 points |
| **C+** | 2.3 points |
| **C** | 2.0 points |
| **C-** | 1.7 points |
| **F** | 0.0 points |

Student grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

**(A) Excellent**: Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.

**(A-) Very good**: Very strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.

**(B+) Good**: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the graduate student grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course.

**(B) Adequate**: Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some indication that understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate but student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.

**(B-) Borderline**: Weak work for a graduate student; meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in “good standing.”

**(C/-/+) Deficient**: Inadequate work for a graduate student; does not meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.

**(F) Fail**: Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance has been consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with serious limits in many areas. Weaknesses or limits are pervasive. Wagner Academic

# Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner’s Academic Code](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/code). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/academic-oath). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

# Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or email CSD at (212-998-4980 or [mosescsd@nyu.edu](mailto:mosescsd@nyu.edu)) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

# NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

[NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.