

# CAPSTONE: CAP-GP 3401 Section 3 Fall 2023 – Spring 2024

# Instructor Information

* Veronica Manning, MPA
* Contact: Vlb235@nyu.edu
* Office hours: By appointment

# Course Information

* Class Meeting Times: Mondays, 6:45 pm - 8:25 pm
* Classroom: 181 Mercer St (Paulson Center) Room 303 Loc: Washington Square (we will occasionally meet on Zoom. Meeting info will be found on Brightspace once those sessions are scheduled)

# 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

A. 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.

a. 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 |
| 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

Students that aren’t currently placed in a team are required to read the client proposals ahead of the first class (They are linked on the Brightspace site). During the first class, students will have the opportunity to view a brief presentation from the clients, via Zoom, and ask clarifying questions about their proposal. After class, 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.)

Some teams may want or need to travel to conduct field work. Students may apply for supplementary travel funding for airfare costs, but funding does not cover accommodation, in-country travel, or meal costs. Also note that it may not be required for possible for all students on a team to travel.

**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.

# Required Readings and Other Resources

Course readings will be available on the Brightspace website for this course. Readings may also include videos and/or podcasts. Readings are subject to change based on the progress of individual teams and may sometimes be different for each team.

# 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**  Class 1  9/11/23 | Introductions  Overview of  Syllabus &  Capstone  Student Guide  Client presentations (name clients) | * Watch video: What is Capstone? * Review syllabus and Student Capstone Guide * Review capstone proposals and come to class prepared with questions * **Due 9/14**: [Capstone Project Preference Form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf3BNJPuOQDdoq2vixSSx2SU-De8xsd0f1ovqStVxf83S0Tiw/viewform) **and Reflection Paper.**  Reflect on what your most successful team projects and the ones that needed improvement. What made them a success or failure? How did you contribute to the success? Taking lessons from your experience, what do you plan on doing in your Capstone teams to ensure a successful team experience and project?  See [Reflection Rubric](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bW8EsRouII_MZYK5bwgYZehpTTpDdNmL3Bna6J2lj7I/edit) for more details on how reflection papers will be   graded.  **Teams will be posted by 9/15.** |

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| Class 2  9/18/23 | What makes teams successful?  What do team members need from each other in order to solve their client’s problem?  Team Launch Exercise | **Individual**   * **Read**: [How Management Teams Can Have A Good Fight](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1KPQS_Pupc_G-9h11S9tEofSuxwl6tfW-) * Read:[**Teamwork on the Fly**](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aabuETx3mMN55SEns7ODzQK4tC5-arfe/view?usp=drive_link)   **Team**   * Setup Group Folder (invite Professor)   **Class Time:**   * Team Hangout |
| **Phase 2: TEAM**  **LAUNCH AND**  **PLANNING**  Class 3  9/25/23 | What are best practices for capstone projects?    Overview of Syllabus & Capstone Student Guide    Class Community Norms  Team Charters | **Individual**   * **Due**: Complete [2-hr NYU Module on](https://stream.nyu.edu/media/Anti-RacismA+Understanding+and+Mitigating+Racial+and+Other+Microaggressions+-+Online+Module/1_4u42ux0x) * [Microaggression](https://stream.nyu.edu/media/Anti-RacismA+Understanding+and+Mitigating+Racial+and+Other+Microaggressions+-+Online+Module/1_4u42ux0x) * Conduct background research on your client * Review client proposal, presentation and other relevant data available   **Team**   * **Due**: Complete Team Launch Document * **Due**: 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. * Shareout about Team Launch & Hangout |
| Class 4  10/2/23 | How do we manage the client, their expectations and deliver a final report that will WOW them?  Client Contracts | **Individual**   * **Read:** [Run Meetings That Are Fair to Introverts, Women and Remote Workers](https://brightspace.nyu.edu/content/enforced/81061-746-50768-7200-CapstoneFacult/Cullinan--Fair%20meetings.pdf?ou=81061) * **Read:** [Inclusive Language Guidelines](https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/language-guidelines.pdf) * **Watch**: Capstone consulting videos: Intro, What Consulting Is and Isn’t and The Role of Technical and Interpersonal Skills   **Team**   * **Due:** 1st Meeting Agenda * **Due:** Questions for Client * **Due:** Draft of Team Charter * **Due:** Suggestions for project scope * Be prepared to discuss your background research on your client * **Recurring assignment:** Weekly Update (Due Mondays, no later than 7am.) |

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| Class 5  10/10/23  NOTE: This is a  **TUESDAY**, not a  Monday. Monday,  October 9 is fall break. Classes on  Tuesday, October 10 meet on a  Monday schedule. | Group Dynamics | **Individual**   * Read [Ethics Memo for students](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_BJP0Y7a1zMQ_UqQ64VFy46VNpBCR21i/edit) * Read: [Creating Value With Diverse Teams](https://brightspace.nyu.edu/content/enforced/81061-746-50768-7200-CapstoneFacult/DiStefano--diverse%20teams.pdf?ou=81061)   **Team**   * **Due:** Final Team Charter * **Due:** Final First Meeting Agenda * **Recurring assignment:** Weekly Update   **Class Time:** Expert Team Activity |
| Class 6  10/16/23 | Project management  Work plans | **Individuals**   * Reading**:** [What is PERT and how can we use it?](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-pert-how-can-we-use-dave-fourie-pmp-prince2-) * View Project Management tutorials   + [Preventing Scope Creep](https://www.linkedin.com/learning/project-management-preventing-scope-creep-2018/dealing-with-it?u=2131553)   **Team**   * **Recurring assignment:** Weekly Update   **Class Time**   * Design Thinking Overview * In Class: Map deliverables and tasks |
| Class 7  10/23/23 | Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in organizations | **Individual**:   * Read: [Dismantling White Supremacy in Nonprofits](https://ynpntwincities.org/blog-1/dismantling-white-supremacy-in-nonprofits-a-starting-point) * Read: [Racial Equity Principles](https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/racial-equity-principles.html) * Read: [White Supremacy Culture Characteristics](https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/characteristics.html)   + Be prepared to discuss how White Supremacy Culture may show up in your teams or with your clients   + What practices can you implement in your teams and with your client to support anti-racism? * (Optional) Spotify Podcast: [The Debate Inside Progressive Politics w/Maurice Mitchell](https://open.spotify.com/episode/6OoaxGjW022LrmbcBXyQUy) * (Optional) Read: [Building Resilient Organizations](https://forgeorganizing.org/article/building-resilient-organizations)   **Team**   * **Recurring assignment:** Weekly Update * **Due**: Draft contract * **Due**: Draft work plan * **Due**: Revised team charter w/DEI lens   **Class Time**   * Be prepared to report on client entry meeting |

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| **Phase 3:**  **RESEARCH**  **SKILLS AND**  **PROJECT WORK**  Class 8  10/30/23 | Client Contracts  Environmental Scan | **Team**   * **Due**: Final Work Plan for Fall Semester * **Due:** Revised Contract * Present work plan and risks * **Recurring assignment:** Weekly Update   **Class Time**   * Environmental Scan overview * Presentation Skills Mini Workshop |
| Class 9  11/6/23 | Giving and Receiving Feedback | **Individual**   * **Read**: [​​How to Give Feedback People Actually Use](https://hbr.org/2017/10/how-to-give-feedback-people-can-actually-use) * **Read**:[Don’t Be Nice; Be Helpful](https://hbr.org/2011/03/dont-be-nice-be-helpful.html) * **Read**: [You’ve Been Doing a Fantastic Job..](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/06/your-money/how-to-give-effective-feedback-both-positive-and-negative.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0&mtrref=undefined)   **Team**   * **Due**: Final SIGNED contract * **Due**: Environmental Scan Outline * **Recurring assignment:** Weekly Update   **Class Time**   * CATME overview |
| Class 10  11/13/23 | Literature Review | **Individual**   * Review examples of literature reviews and be prepared to discuss strengths and weaknesses * Read: [Writing a Literature Review](https://ssrmc.wm.edu/literature-review-module/)   **Team**   * Review [Wagner Capstone Library Guide](https://guides.nyu.edu/wagner/capstone) * Use Bobst Library databases to find scholarly articles * **Due**: Draft of Environmental Scan * **Recurring assignment:** Weekly Update |
| **Phase 4: PROJECT**  **WORK AND FEEDBACK**  Class 11  11/20/23 | Team reports Team check-ins | **Individual**   * **Due**: Self and team peer evaluations via CATME   **Team**   * **Due**: Environmental Scan * **Due**: Outline of Literature Review * Be prepared to give update to classmates * **Recurring assignment:** Weekly Update |
| Class 12  11/27/23 | NO CLASS |  |
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| Class 13  12/4/23 | Team and  individual meetings to discuss evaluations | **Due:** Draft of Literature Review  **Due:** Team and Individual Feedback (CATME)  In Class: CATME Team Discussions **Recurring assignment:** Weekly Update |
| Class 14  12/11/23 | Team and  individual meetings to discuss evaluations | **Individual**  **●** Read and reflect on evaluations  **Team**  **Due: Final** Literature Review  **Due:** Slide Deck presenting findings from research (Environmental Scan and Literature Review)  **Recurring assignment:** Weekly Update |

# 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**  Class 1  1/22/24 | Team updates  Discuss spring schedule  Data analysis | **Individual**   * Flawless Consulting, ch 14   **Team**   * Be prepared to give team update * Revised work plan and team charter (using track changes) |
| Class 2  1/29/24 | Formatting final reports |  |

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| Class 3  2/4/24 | NO CLASS |  |
| Class 4  2/11/24 |  | **Team**  ● Report outlines due 2/19 |
| **Phase 6: PROJECT**  **WORK AND REPORT**  **WRITING**  NO CLASS  PRESIDENTS DAY  2/19/24 | Discuss outlines Team updates | **Team**  ● 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 | NO CLASS |  |

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| 3/25/24 |  |  |
| **Phase 7: WRITING**  **AND PRESENTING**  Class 9  4/1/24 | Rehearsals of client presentations | **Team**   * Draft slides for your final presentation * Second draft of final report |
| Class 10  4/8/24 | Rehearsals of client presentations | **Team**  ● Draft slides |
| 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 |
| **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:

1. **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.

1. **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. All Wagner students have already read and signed the Wagner 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) 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 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.