Course Time: 6:45pm - 8:25pm
Course Location: Waverly Building, 566A at 24 Waverly Place

COURSE SUMMARY

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.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Capstone integrates and enhances learning in several arenas: a content or issue area, process skills including project, client and team management, and research methods for gathering, analyzing and reporting data. The specific learning objectives are:

A. CONTENT
Students should:
• understand the policy context for their project;
• be familiar with specialized vocabularies required to perform the project successfully;
• be aware of critical research related to their content area;
• be capable of positioning and evaluating their project within its broader policy context.
B. PROCESS

- Overall, students should demonstrate a capacity for flexibility and resilience, as shown by adapting to changing and complex circumstances, balancing competing demands and accepting uncertainty and lack of clarity when necessary.

1. Project Management
Students should demonstrate the ability to:
- assess the client organization and its environment;
- frame and refine the problem presented by the client;
- develop a work agreement with the client for the project
- develop an internal project work plan with timelines and deliverables;
- monitor their progress against the work agreement and workplan;
- revise the workplan as necessary;
- develop well supported and realistic recommendations.

2. Client Management
Students should demonstrate the ability to:
- develop and sustain their relationship with the client;
- negotiate a work agreement with timelines and deliverables;
- maintain regular and productive contact with the client;
- solicit and integrate feedback on progress against the contract and modify as necessary;
- deliver final product to client’s satisfaction.

3. Team Management
Students should demonstrate the ability to:
- understand group formation and development;
- understand the importance of interpersonal dynamics and team norms;
- create and periodically review their team charter;
- develop clear role descriptions for team members;
- manage team assignments and accountability;
- advocate points of view and negotiate differences of opinion;
- solicit and offer feedback;
- appreciate and learn from cultural differences.

C. RESEARCH
Students should demonstrate the ability to:
- identify appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative data gathering and analysis methods for their particular project;
- follow established sampling procedures to create appropriate samples for their particular project;
- carry out data collection methods appropriate for their particular project, potentially including surveys and questionnaires, individual interviews, focus groups, and access to already existing datasets;
- situate their findings in the broader related literature;
- draw conclusions based on their findings;
• effectively communicate their work both orally and in writing.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

We have identified an array of potential projects. Potential clients will present their projects to you in the first couple of weeks in class. We will ask you for your preferences, but – just to be very clear – we will create the teams based not only on your preferences, but on your previous coursework, work and life experience, other expertise, and team size. Teams are comprised of 3-5 students.

The class will involve presentations from the instructors, possible guest speakers, class discussion and team meetings. Course requirements include:

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

Some client organizations may not be NYC-based. This will necessitate use of skype /teleconferencing /televideo conferencing for client meetings, depending on the facilities available to the client. Some projects may require travel for fieldwork which will take place during Winter break. The school will cover financial support for travel (airfare or train) if such work is necessary, but will not cover the full costs of travel and accommodations. It may not be required or possible for all students to travel.

**EVALUATION and GRADING**

Students will receive 1.5 credits for the fall semester and 1.5 for the spring semester. At the end of the first semester, students will receive a grade of “IP” (Incomplete Pass) to reflect the “work in progress” nature of the year long project. We will assign final grades at the end of the second semester.

Grades will be allotted to individuals, not to the team as a whole. That is, team members may receive different grades if we feel that is warranted. We will make this judgment based both on our 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.

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. Eighty percent (80%) of the final grade will be based on work products identified in the milestones as well as any interim deliverables to the client or assigned by the faculty member. Twenty percent (20%) of the final grade will be based on evidence of the individual student’s learning during the course through participation in the team’s work and class activities, his/her 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 TEXTS
There are no required texts for this course. We do recommend one book that is relevant for all Capstone sections (except the Research Capstone) since it addresses the consulting process: Block, Peter. 2011. *Flawless Consulting, 3rd edition*. Pfeiffer.

Additional readings will be suggested to team when projects are selected.

RESOURCES
Students offer Capstone their energy, time and engagement, a range of experience and expertise, a stance of curiosity and flexibility, and a finished work product that advances the mission of an organization. As faculty, we offer a learning environment, both challenging and supportive, in which you can build on earlier experiences and make an important contribution to your client. Yet, we know that this is final year at Wagner and a time when multiple competing commitments including academic requirements, work, family and personal life intersect. Below is a list of resources that we hope you will seek out during the semester to succeed and make of Capstone a valuable experience:

- **Reach out to your professors**: We are here to facilitate learning and collaboration. Reach out with concerns, questions or to schedule an appointment.

- **Reach out to your peers**: You peers bring diverse skills, experiences and backgrounds and like you, will be juggling competing commitments during Capstone. Get to know your peers, build trust and accountability from the beginning so you can make mutual adjustments as needed and maintain commitment to your client’s project.

- **Wagner Research Librarian: Assistance with Research, Literature Review, Data Management, Data Analysis or GIS**. Students who need help with research and lit review should contact Andrew Battista, andrew.battista@nyu.edu. For help with data management (reformatting files, changing files from one software package to another), data analysis (SPSS, SAS, Stata), and GIS mapping, contact/visit Andrew or the NYU Data Service Studio located on the 6th floor of the Bobst library. This ITS/Libraries service conveniently locates staff, software, statistical computing, and data collection resources to support quantitative research at NYU. Consultation is available via email (data.service@nyu.edu), telephone (212-998-3434), by appointment, or on a walk-in basis. Information on workshops and other events is available by subscribing to the ITS/FTS Statistics and GIS Group Listserv at: statistics@forums.nyu.edu. Studio hours are listed on the library’s hours and access page www.library.nyu.edu/about/access

- **Student Capstone Guide**: This handbook includes key information and resources for students including a list of important Wagner contacts, guidelines on eligibility and reimbursement procedures for expenses, description of stakeholder expectations, ethical considerations, the Capstone Expo and how to include Capstone in your Resume.

- **Capstone Team Reimbursement Instructions and Form**: Each Capstone Team can be reimbursed up to $500 for Capstone-related expenses. Please review the reimbursement instructions information for details included reimbursable expenses and deadlines.
• **Reserving Space for Team Meetings**: At this point, you may be familiar with graduate study spaces and meeting locations around campus. For internal team meetings, you can always book collaborative spaces at Bobst Library. For client meetings, please contact NYU Wagner Events <wagner.events@nyu.edu> to request space **48-hours in advance of your meeting** and indicate how many people will be in attendance.

• **The Wagner Writing Center**: Wagner offers an array of writing-specific activities in order to support and promote writing excellence among all of its students. Visit the [Wagner website](#) for additional details.

• **Ethical Considerations**: A number of ethical issues can arise in Capstone projects. Please review the *Ethics Considerations in Capstone* memo included in the **Student Capstone Guide**, which lays out common issues and ways to address them. The issues described in the memo will relate to informant-related issues (informants are the people you speak with to gather information related to your project) and client-related issues (your Capstone client organization).

• **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**: Please review the [NYU Wagner Academic Code](#) to understand policy regarding student academic honesty. Academic honesty means that the work you submit is original and your own. Violations to this policy range from copying all or part of your capstone report straight from a book, the Internet, or a fellow student, to plagiarism. Wagner defines plagiarism as “presenting ideas or words without adequate acknowledgement of their source and, as with other acts of academic fraud, is a violation based on fact rather than intent.” The Wagner website lists the following examples of plagiarism and provides resources to help you learn appropriate citation of the many resources you will use during capstone. According to the website, any of the following acts constitutes plagiarism:
  
  o Using a phrase, sentence, or passage from another person's work without quotation marks AND attribution of the source. (Both quotations and attribution are necessary).
  
  o Using text from a source that is rearranged, paraphrased or discussed without attribution to the source;
  
  o Submitting work where a central idea for a section/paragraph is taken from a source, written in the student's own words and not cited in the text;
  
  o Submitting work completed by another (including work that was accessed via the internet) copied in its entirety or modified without attribution to the source.
COURSE MILESTONES

The course has a series of milestones – both activities and products -- that will serve as interim work products. We’ve suggested time frames in parentheses, though actual timing during the course of the year may vary depending on the specific situation of each team and client.

These milestones include:

- Preference/information forms (September/October) and team formation;
- “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);
- Summary by team of first meeting with client and clear statement of the problem (October);
- Apply for Capstone travel if required by project (October);
- Preliminary client-team contract or work agreement; presentation to class/faculty for feedback prior to client presentation (October/November);
- Negotiations with client to finalize contract (October/November);
- Final, signed client-team contract and detailed team workplan (October/November);
- Team charter (October/November);
- First project deliverable to client (December);
- End-of-first semester self, team/peer, and course evaluations; discussion of team process and progress with faculty (December);
- Fieldwork/Research and interim report to faculty (January/February);
- Class presentations and feedback (February/March);
- 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 (March/April);
- Final report and presentation to client (April);
- End-of-second semester reflection, positioning project in larger issue context (May);
- End-of-course self, team /peer, client and course evaluations (end April/beginning of May);
- Presentation for Capstone Expo (May).
CLASS SCHEDULE: FIRST SEMESTER

The list of weeks and topics that follows is preliminary and subject to change. Students should expect to meet weekly as a class or team unless agreed in class.

Twice during the year, the Wagner Capstone Program will hold skills trainings during the Monday Capstone class time. These dates are:

1) October 10, 2016: Project Management. This will cover the basics of project management. This is required for our course and might be voluntary for other sections.

2) March 6, 2017: Presentation Skills training. This is required for all capstone sections: All students must be present.

Also, Capstone Expo will be on Tuesday, May 9, 2017.

Week 1 [Monday, September 12, 2016]: Overview & Client Presentations

Overview and introductions: Get to know each other a little. Review the syllabus and clarify course structure and expectations including the three main documents you will use in Capstone: Team Charter, Client Agreement and Team Workplan. We will also begin with our first potential client presentations.

- **Client Presentations:**
  - 7:00pm-7:20pm: Start Small Think Big with Christine Coakley
  - 7:30pm-7:50pm: United Way of Massachusetts Bay with Gail Sokoloff (GoogleHangout)
  - 8:00pm-8:20pm: Rapid Results Institute with Kristin Oberdorf (GoogleHangout)

- **Assignment due September 12:**
  - Please review all client proposals (posted on NYU Classes) and prepare questions that will help the class clarify the services you might be required to complete for each organization.

Week 2 [Monday, September 19, 2016]: Client Presentations

Continue with client presentations, course outcomes and logistics.

- **Client Presentations:**
  - 7:00pm-7:20pm: Project Hospitality with Christopher Hellstrom or Michelle Gassama
  - 7:30pm-7:50pm: Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce/Brooklyn Alliance with Emily Anderson
  - 8:00pm-8:20pm: NYC Housing Authority with Sybille Louis

- **Assignment due Wednesday, September 21:**
  - Team selection: Please submit your project preference form and your resume through the Assignments section on NYU Classes. The preference form will be posted on NYU Classes by Monday, September 12th.
**Week 3 [Monday, September 26, 2016]: Leadership Overview & Initial Client Meetings**

You will come to class knowing your project teams. Teams will be posted on NYU Classes. Overview of the Direction-Alignment-Commitment leadership model and how it may be used to improve your Capstone team effectiveness. Prepare for initial client meeting, both as a class and in teams. What do you need to learn from this meeting? How can you help your client give you that information?

- **Readings due:** *Making Leadership Happen*, and *What is Your Leadership Culture?* from the Center for Creative Leadership
- **Assignments due Wednesday, September 28:**
  - Schedule one get-together that is purely about getting to know each other.
  - Schedule and conduct initial client meeting during the period from October 3rd-14th. A faculty member must be present at the meeting and we will give you our availability.

**Week 4 [Monday, October 3, 2016]: Leading with Integrity**

We will discuss ethics-related issues in Capstone and the values that will guide your work as a group. We will also discuss common data collection methods, and the elements of a successful client-team work agreement and a (internal) workplan.

- **Reading due:** Ethics Considerations in Capstone memo included in the [Student Capstone Guide](#)
- **Assignment due October 3:**
  - At this point, we expect Teams to have confirmed their first client meeting with a faculty member, which should take place from October 3rd through the 14th. The objective of this meeting is to clarify project outcomes and deliverables and negotiate the scope of services if needed. You should leave this meeting with enough information to draft your client agreement and work plan.
  - We will ask all teams to identify your availability for a second client meeting between October 24th and November 4th. The objective of your second client meeting is to negotiate your final work agreement. Your assigned faculty advisor must attend this second meeting.

**FALL RECESS - Monday, October 10, 2016**

**Week 5 [Monday, October 17, 2016]: Teamwork and Leadership**

We will revisit leadership principles to build effective teams and use them to set expectations for team culture and dynamics. We will revisit the Team Charter and hear from teams that met with their client. If necessary, will continue discussion of work agreements and workplans. Teams will work on their client-team work agreement and internal workplan.

- **Assignment due October 24th:**
  - Team Charter
  - As first step toward developing full work agreement, teams prepare document including: statement of the problem, objective of project, information needed, boundaries of the project, final product and interim deliverables. These must be emailed to your faculty advisor.
**Week 6 [Monday, October 24, 2016]: Project Management with Will Carlin**

Your course will be required to attend the Project Management session taught by Will Carlin. This session will be held in the Rudin Family Forum.

- **Assignment due October 30th:**
  - Final client-team work agreement (adding client support and involvement, and set of tasks) and final internal workplan. **These must be emailed your faculty advisor.**
  - Negotiate work agreement with client between October 24th through November 7th. This could involve in-person meetings or could be done by email and phone. Your assigned faculty advisor must attend this meeting.

**Week 7 [Monday, October 31, 2016]: Adaptive Leadership**

Overview of Adaptive Leadership as an effective framework for helping groups address challenges. Understand the difference between technical and adaptive elements of a group leadership challenge and learn a structured consultation process involving the three key adaptive leadership activities; observation, interpretation and intervention. Each team presents their work agreement as rehearsal for presentation to and negotiation with the client. Team meetings to incorporate feedback into plan.

- **Assignment due November 7th:**
  - Prepare document including potential challenges your project, influence levers and key stakeholders. **These must be emailed to your faculty advisor.**
  - Final written work plan agreed with client. This should be signed by the client and team.

**Week 8 [Monday, November 7, 2016]: Communication and Feedback**

Cross-team learning and feedback session. Each team will present particular challenges they face in their projects and their plans to develop and sustain a relationship going forward. Those teams that have met with clients present the results of the meeting.

- **Assignment due November 14th:**
  - Prepare document for faculty meeting including progress to date and potential challenges. This will include reviewing how the team has worked together so far and what elements of the Team Charter you wish to retain or change. **These must be emailed to your faculty advisor.**

**Week 9 [Monday, November 14, 2016]: Work in Teams**

Faculty advisors meet with teams to discuss progress and challenges. Teams begin draft of client interim progress memo to share with client, which may include upcoming milestones or updates on December deliverables if applicable.

- **Assignment due December 12th:**
  - Client Memo. **These must be emailed to your faculty advisor.**
Week 10 [Monday, November 21, 2016]: Policy Methods and Instruments
This session will focus on policy instruments and data gathering methods you will need for your projects; we will focus on the tools you intend to use, but could include: interviewing, surveys, observation, literature review, and focus groups.

Week 11 [Monday, November 28, 2016]: Conflict and Leadership
Overview of conflict as an important leadership opportunity and strategies for handling disagreements and skillfully engaging with clients and peers to manage a conflict situation.

Week 12 [Monday, December 5, 2016]: Work in Teams
Team meetings. We will be available as needed.

- Assignments due December 12th
  - Client Memo
  - Individual end-of-semester written self-assessment, peer review of team members and feedback for me on the course. These must be emailed to your faculty advisor.

Week 13 [Monday, December 12, 2016]: Progress Reports and Semester Check-in
We will review feedback about the course. Also, we will meet with each team individually to review progress, discuss results of peer evaluations, and highlight any issues for second semester. We may schedule an hour with each team, which means some meetings will take place the following day during class time.

Week 14 [Tuesday, December 13, 2016 - Legislative Day for Monday class]
Progress Reports and Semester Check-in (Continued)
We will continue to meet with remaining teams individually to review progress, discuss results of peer evaluations, and highlight any issues for second semester.
CLASS SCHEDULE: SECOND SEMESTER
During this semester, much of the time will be set aside for teams to meet on their own or with their assigned faculty advisor. We can be flexible about the need for formal class meeting times as the semester progresses. 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, we have noted here some potential deadlines, but these are preliminary and could change.

Week 1 [Monday, January 23, 2017]: Spring Semester Overview
Class meeting: Will discuss schedule for the spring semester; I will meet with each team.

➢ Assignment due:
  o Revise workplan and team charter and send to your assigned faculty advisor.
➢ Assignment due January 29th:
  o Fieldwork/Research interim report to your assigned faculty advisor.

Week 2: [Monday, January 30, 2017]: Team Presentations: Fieldwork/Research
Team presentations and class feedback on Fieldwork/Research interim reports.

Week 3 [Monday, February 6, 2017]: Final Presentations and Reports
Class meeting: Discussion of formats and language for final presentations and final reports. Also, team meeting time.

➢ Assignment due February 13th:
  o First draft of final report

Week 4 [Monday, February 13, 2017]: Work in Teams
Team meeting time.

PRESIDENT’S DAY – No classes: Monday, February 20, 2017

Week 5 [Monday, February 27, 2017]: Feedback on First Draft of Final Reports
Class meeting: Discuss first drafts of final reports. Also, team meeting time.
  ➢ Assignments for March 6th:
    o Second draft of final report

Week 6 [Monday, March 6, 2017]: Presentation Skills Training
This is required for all capstone sections: All students must be present. Location to be confirmed in the Spring semester.

SPRING RECESS – No Classes: Monday, March 13 through Sunday, March 19, 2017

Week 7 [Monday, March 20, 2017]: Work in Teams
Team meeting time.
Week 8 [Monday, March 27, 2017]: Scheduling Final Client Presentations
Class meeting: Discuss managing the client meeting; also team meeting time.

- **Assignment due April 3rd:**
  - Each team should schedule their final presentations to the clients during the period between April 3-21. We should be present (we will give you our availability).
  - Draft slides for final presentation due to faculty advisor

Week 9 [Monday, April 3, 2017]: Work in Teams or Presentation Rehearsals
Team meeting time or class meeting: Team rehearsals of final presentations

Week 10 [Monday, April 10, 2017]: Work in Teams or Presentation Rehearsals
Team meeting time or class meeting: Team rehearsals of final presentations

Week 11 [Monday, April 17, 2017]: Work in Teams or Presentation Rehearsals
Team meeting time or class meeting: Team rehearsals of final presentations

Week 12 [Monday, April 24, 2017]: Client Feedback on Final Presentation
Class meeting: Report back on client response to final presentations and necessary changes to final report. Discuss preparation for Capstone End Event.

- **Assignments due May 1st**
  - Final Project Report
  - Final Team, Self and Client Evaluations

Week 13 [Monday, May 1, 2017]: Work in Teams
Team meeting time

Week 14 [Monday, May 8, 2017]: Take a step back and reflect on the year’s work and your own learning. Celebration!

CAPSTONE EXPO - Tuesday, May 9, 2017