NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE

CAPSTONE: ADVANCED PROJECTS IN
FINANCE, POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Note: This syllabus may be revised due to changing team and project circumstances.

Spring 2018
Mondays 6:45 – 8:25
Location: Tisch LC7
Office Hrs: By appointment only

Professor Erica Coleman Hamilton  Email: edc204@nyu.edu

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

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.

B. 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.
2. **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.

3. **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.

C. **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.

D. **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.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Potential clients will present their projects to you in the first couple of weeks in class. Then I will ask you to fill out an Info and Preference Form in which you will rank the preferences and also provide background on your previous coursework, work experience, various forms of expertise, time availability, etc. My job is to create teams that can successfully complete the project but I will also take your preferences into account. Teams are comprised of 3-5 students.

The class will involve presentations from the instructor, 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.
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. I 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 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.

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. Fifty percent of the final grade is based on work products identified in the milestones as well as any interim deliverables to the client or assigned by the faculty member. Fifty percent 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 TEXTS


COURSE MILESTONES

The course has a series of milestones – both activities and products -- that will serve as interim work products. I’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.

• Potential client presentations (September/October);
• Team formation (September/October);
• “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; presentation to class/faculty for feedback prior to giving to client (October/November);
• Negotiations with client to finalize contract (October/November);
• Final, signed client-team contract and detailed team workplan (November);
• Team charter (November);
• End-of-first semester self, team/peer, and course evaluations; discussion of team process and progress (December);
• First draft of final project report to faculty (early March);
• Second draft of final project report to faculty (late 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 (May);
• End-of-course self, team/peer, client and course evaluations (early May);
• Presentation for Capstone Expo (May). (The Capstone Expo is mandatory for all students. Students unable to attend the Expo will see an automatic reduction in their grade.)
The intent is to use class time in a way that enables teams to produce the highest quality projects on a timely basis and achieve the learning objectives of the course. There will be more class-based presentations and discussions early on in the course as well as time for team meetings and consultation with other classmates and faculty during class time. The first part of the second semester will allow for greater time for team working sessions. Students should expect to meet weekly as a class or team unless otherwise indicated here or agreed to in class.

CLASS SCHEDULE

University Academic Calendars: https://www.nyu.edu/registrar/calendars/university-academic-calendar.html

We will meet weekly as a class or in teams unless agreed beforehand.

The sequence of classes, and due dates for assignments, could change depending in part on your meetings with clients and the substance of your projects. Specific requirements for each class will be posted on NYU Classes and emailed to you with enough lead time to prepare. NYU Classes takes precedence over what is written here.

SPECIAL SESSIONS

Will Carlin Capstone-related Workshops- Required for all Capstone students:
Session on Team Presentations
Monday, March 5, 2018
6:45-8:25pm, Tishman Auditorium at NYU Law

Capstone Expo:
Tuesday, May 8, 2018
Rosenthal Pavilion at the Kimmel Center
5:00-7:30pm
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<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC(S)</th>
<th>CLASS OVERVIEW</th>
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<td>1/22</td>
<td>No class. Teams will meet independently to work on projects.</td>
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| 1/29  | **Work Plan Revisions & Deliverable Check In** | We will check in on status of projects thus far as well as discuss any general questions students have and then students will break up into teams to check in on status of work vs. goals in work plan. Revisions will be made to Work Plans as needed. | • Teams must also schedule final Client Presentation by no later than 2/5. The professor must be present at the final Client Presentation. Teams must identify as many times as possible, during business hours and overlapping with professor’s availability (shared below), that can be offered to the client to schedule the first client meeting:   
  • April 23rd 9-11 or 1-3   
  • April 27th 9-11 or 1-3   
  • Teams will submit updated Work Plans via email to Professor by no later than 1/29.  |
| 2/5   | **Preparing for the Final Report, Presentation & Capstone Expo** |                                                                                | • Class discussion will focus on discussing and reviewing expectations for submissions for the final report, presentation (slides) and the Capstone Expo.   
  • Some class time will also be used for the professor to meet teams individually to discuss specific challenges or questions teams may have.  |
| 2/12  | **Team Check in Meetings with Professor & Work Time** |                                                                                | • During class meeting time professor will conduct individual team check-ins and teams will have time for team check-ins.  |
| 2/19  | **NO CLASS- University Holiday.**               |                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 2/26  | **Individual Team Meetings with Professor**    |                                                                                | • Teams will submit 1st draft of report by 2/27. Teams will receive feedback on 1st draft by no later than 3/5.   
  • Teams in need of clarity on feedback should email the professor to schedule a time to speak outside of class.  |
| 3/5   | **Mandatory Session with Will Carlin**         |                                                                                | • Session on preparing for presentations.   
  • Mandatory for all students  |
| 3/12  | **NO CLASS. University Holiday-Spring Break.** |                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 3/19  | **Individual Team Meetings with Professor**    |                                                                                | • Teams will submit 2nd draft of report and 1st draft slides on 3/20. Teams will receive feedback by no later than 3/26.   
  • Students interested in attending the 4/2 class should RSVP by no later than 5PM 3/26 by sending an email Kate at vaehamilton917@gmail.com and also ccing the professor. Class on 4/2 will only be held if at least 5 RSVPs are received. Students will notified by no later than 3/26 as to whether class will be held on 4/2.   
  • Teams in need of clarity on feedback should email the professor to schedule a time to speak outside of class.  |
<p>| 3/26  | No class. Teams will meet independently to work on |                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |</p>
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<th>Event Description</th>
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<td>4/2</td>
<td>Optional Class-Assessing Opportunities for Real Impact in the Public Sector</td>
<td>• Teams will submit 2nd draft slides by end of class on 4/2. Teams will receive feedback by no later than 4/9. &lt;br&gt;• In this session we will discuss key questions to consider in the diligence process for assessing potential roles to drive impact in the public sector. The discussion will provide valuable strategies and resources to leverage when considering opportunities for positions in the public sector including: staff members, volunteer roles and board member seats.</td>
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<td>No class. Teams will meet independently to work on projects.</td>
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<td>4/16</td>
<td>Final Team Presentations &amp; Preparing for End of the Year Assessments</td>
<td>• Each team will get 15-20 minutes to make their final presentation to the entire class. Following each presentation non-presenting students will be given 5-7 minutes to share feedback and ask questions. &lt;br&gt;• Students will complete final assessments by end of class.</td>
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<td>4/23</td>
<td>No class. Teams will meet independently to work on projects.</td>
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<td>4/30</td>
<td>Wrap Up, End of Year Assessments &amp; Preparation for Capstone Expo</td>
<td>• Teams should submit final presentation (slides) and reports by no later than 5/1.  &lt;br&gt;• Teams will report back on client response to final presentations. Students will also spend a portion of the class taking a step back and reflecting on the year’s work and their own learning and receive the final feedback from their teammates. &lt;br&gt;• Teams will receive end of the year feedback summaries from peers. &lt;br&gt;• The class discussion will focus on an outstanding questions regarding the Capstone Expo.</td>
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<td>5/7</td>
<td>No class. Teams will meet independently to work on projects.</td>
<td>• The Capstone Expo will happen on May 8th with additional details forthcoming.</td>
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