Capstone: Advanced Projects in Finance, Policy and Management
Fall 2018 – Spring 2019

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

Instructor Information

- Quintin Haynes
- Adjunct Professor of Policy and Management
- Email: quintin.haynes@nyu.edu
- Office Address:
- Office Hours are by appointment.

Course Information

- Class Meeting Times: 60 5th Ave, Room 265
- Class Location: Mondays, 6:45pm – 8:30pm

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.

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 one consulting firm dedicated to the success of all the projects.
Course and 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; and
- 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.

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; and
- revise contract and workplan as necessary.

b. 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; and
- submit deliverables on time.

c. 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; and
- 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; and
• 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; and
• prepare clear and well-argued verbal presentations tailored to the client’s needs.

Learning Assessment Table

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Learning Objective</th>
<th>Corresponding Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand the policy and/or management context for their project</td>
<td>Interim and final products</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Develop an internal project workplan</td>
<td>Team workplan</td>
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<td>Meet deadlines and monitor their progress against the contract and workplan</td>
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<td>Negotiate a contract with their client</td>
<td>Signed contract with client</td>
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<td>Advocate points of view and negotiate differences of opinion</td>
<td>Self and team peer evaluations</td>
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**Course Requirements**

Potential clients will present their projects to you in the first couple of weeks in class. I will ask you for your preferences, but 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 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; and
- participation in preparation and presentation of findings.

Some client organizations may not be New York-based, and will necessitate use of video and teleconferencing for client meetings. Specific projects may require travel for field work which will take place during Winter break. The school will cover financial support for the airfare if such work is necessary, but will not cover the full costs of travel. 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 yearlong project. I will assign final grades at the end of the second semester.

Grades will be allotted individually, not to the team. I will make this judgment based both on my assessment of each students’ contribution and learning, and on the feedback you give each other throughout the course.

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. 50% is based on work products identified in the milestones, as well as any interim deliverables to the client or assigned by the professor. 50% is 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.

Assignments listed on the syllabus should be emailed to me by Sunday 6pm the night before class.

Required Readings

Block, Peter. 2011. Flawless Consulting, 3rd edition. NOTE: The book is available at the NYU bookstore, but you may be able to get the book more cheaply on Amazon or on Block’s website www.designedlearning.com. There should be a link on the left side of the home page or you can click on Publications. ANOTHER NOTE: Make sure you get the 3rd edition.

There will be other readings assigned occasionally.

Course Milestones – Trust the Process

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.

These milestones include:

- 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 work plan (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).

Class Schedule Overview

DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

We will meet weekly as a class or in teams unless otherwise communicated.

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.

CAPSTONE SKILLS TRAINING:

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

• Monday, October 22nd, Tishman Auditorium, NYU Law - Project Management. This will cover the basics of project management.
• TBD, March, Tishman Auditorium, NYU Law - Presentation Skills training. This is required: All students must be present.

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.