



**NYU**

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

Capstone: CAP-GP 3401.001

Fall 2021 – Spring 2022

### **Instructor Information**

- Elizabeth Angeles
- ea1599@nyu.edu
- Office Hours: Mondays after class, or by appointment

### **Course Information**

- Class Meeting Times: Mondays, 6:45 pm - 8:25 pm
- Via Zoom. See Brightspace website for link. That is the best way to enter class.

### **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 and 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.

### 2. 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.

#### 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;
- 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;
- appreciate and learn from cultural and other differences.

### 3. 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.

### 4. 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

<b>Course Learning Objective</b>	<b>Corresponding Assignment</b>
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
Negotiate a contract with their client	Signed contract with client
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

An array of potential projects has been identified for our section. You will see the applications and, in most cases, will be able to interact with prospective clients via Zoom, before marking your preferences. 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. 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 is on-line this year, your team and client meetings do not have to be. Teams

can work this out with each other and their client. But long-distance travel for fieldwork is very unlikely.

### **Capstone Expenses:**

Each capstone team is entitled to reimbursement of up to \$500 of Capstone related expenses, such as photocopying, phone calls, supplies, etc. None of these funds can be spent hiring others to do work that you are expected to do, e.g., 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 website.

### **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 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. **70% of the 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. **30% of the grade 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.

### **Required Readings and Other Resources**

- **Block, Peter. 2011. *Flawless Consulting*, 3rd edition. Pfeiffer.** *Flawless Consulting* is also available [online](#) (and downloadable) through NYU’s Bobst Library.
- Other readings, as assigned. Course readings will be available on Brightspace for this course.

- **NYU Wagner Reference Librarian:** Kathryn (Katie) Wissel is available for support with research and literature reviews. She is available for online appointments. (<https://library.nyu.edu/people/kathryn-wissel/>)

### **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 (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/November);
- 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 (March/April);
- Final report and presentation to client (April);
- End-of-second semester reflection and celebration (April/May);
- End-of-course self, team /peer, client and course evaluations (April/May);
- Presentation for Capstone Expo (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. Specific requirements for each class will be posted on Brightspace and emailed to you with enough lead time to prepare.

**Instructions via email or Brightspace take precedence over what is written here.**

**Deliverable Expectations**

- Allow time for edits on all deliverables. **All deliverables must be submitted to me for review at least one week before it is due to the client.** This should be incorporated in your workplan timelines.
- Expect at least **two to three rounds of revisions** from me before it goes to the client.
- When submitting drafts of deliverables for my review, I expect that they have been proofread and that the team feels it is ready to go to the client.

**Fall Semester**

PHASE and DATE	TOPIC(S)	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
<b>Phase 1: CREATING TEAMS</b> Class 1 9/13/21	Introductions  Welcome & Client Liaison Q&A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Watch video: <a href="#">What is Capstone?</a></li> <li>● Review capstone proposals and come to class prepared with questions</li> </ul>
Class 2  9/20/21	Overview of Syllabus & Capstone Student Guide  Introduction to consulting	<b>Individual</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Complete Project Preference Form available on Brightspace (Due 9/15)</b></li> <li>● Review syllabus and Student Capstone Guide</li> <li>● Watch: <a href="#">Capstone consulting videos</a>: Intro, What Consulting Is and Isn't and The Role of Technical and Interpersonal Skills</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 2: TEAM LAUNCH AND PLANNING</b>  Class 3  9/27/21	Preparation for entry meeting with client	<b>Individual</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read Flawless Consulting, chapters 19 and 1 (in this order)</li> </ul> <b>Team</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Exchange contact information</li> <li>● Schedule one get-together purely about getting to know each other. See handout for sample questions and topics (or feel free to ignore).</li> <li>● <b>Send out the first client email by 9/24/21. (Send draft to me for approval before sending to client.)</b></li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Schedule initial client meeting within the next 2 weeks. I must be present and will provide my availability.</li></ul>
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<p>Class 4 10/4/ 21</p>	<p>Team dynamics 1: Leadership styles</p>	<p><b>Individuals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Readings related to team dynamics</li> <li>● Leadership Compass Self Assessment. This can be found in the Team Building folder.</li> </ul> <p><b>Team</b> In preparation of your client meeting, please share with me:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● An agenda</li> <li>● A set of questions for the client</li> <li>● Suggestions for project scope</li> <li>● Be prepared to report on your background research on your client (I don't need to see anything written)</li> </ul>
<p>Class 5 10/12/21</p> <p><b>LEGISLATIVE DAY. This is a Tuesday but Capstone classes meet according to Monday schedule</b></p>	<p>Contracting and project management 1</p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● View: Consulting videos: The Project Management Triangle, Client Expectations Mgmt, Risk Mgmt, Client Mtg Mgmt.</li> <li>● Read Ethics Memo for students</li> <li>● Optional Reading: Flawless Consulting, Chapters 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9.</li> </ul> <p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Draft contract (if you've conducted client entry meeting)</li> <li>● Draft workplan</li> </ul>
<p>Class 6 10/18/ 21</p>	<p>Team Dynamics 2: Creating team cultures that honor everyone's backgrounds and workstyles; Discussion of team charter assignment</p>	<p><b>Individuals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Readings related to Team Dynamics</li> </ul> <p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Draft contract (if have conducted client entry meeting)</li> <li>● Draft workplan</li> <li>● Be prepared to report on client entry meeting</li> </ul>

<p>Class 7 10/25/ 21</p>	<p>Contracting and project management 2</p>	<p><b>Individual:</b> View Project Management tutorials. You can choose between these options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Project Management Foundations (about 3 hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/learning/project-management-foundations-2016/welcome?u=2131553">https://www.linkedin.com/learning/project-management-foundations-2016/welcome?u=2131553</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>o Project Management Simplified (about 1.5 hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/learning/project-management-simplified/outlining-the-twelve-steps?u=2131553">https://www.linkedin.com/learning/project-management-simplified/outlining-the-twelve-steps?u=2131553</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prepare to share contract with client, once Professor feedback is received</li> </ul>
<p>Class 8 11/1/ 21</p>	<p>Finalizing Contract;  Catch-up week, review material and identify gaps</p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Due before class:</b> Submit reflection via Brightspace - Half a page reflection answering one or various of the following: What resonated from the reading? What questions are you still holding? Are there past or current experiences that connect with the consulting themes discussed?</li> </ul> <p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prepare to share contract with client, once Professor feedback is received</li> </ul>
<p><b>Phase 3: RESEARCH SKILLS AND PROJECT WORK</b></p> <p>Class 9 11/8/</p>	<p>Data collection and surveys</p>	<p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Final contract (depending on team)</li> <li>● Draft workplan</li> <li>● Final team charter</li> </ul>

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Class 10 11/15/ 21	Interviews and focus groups; Prepare for self and team peer evaluations	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Flawless Consulting, Ch 10 and 13</li> </ul> <p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Final workplan</li> <li>● Readings on how to give feedback</li> </ul>
<p><b>Phase 4: PROJECT WORK AND FEEDBACK</b></p> <p>Class 11 11/22/ 21</p>	Prepare for self and team evaluations	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Self and team peer evaluations</li> </ul> <p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be prepared to give update to classmates</li> </ul>
Class 12 11/29/ 21	NO CLASS	
Class 13 12/6/21	Team meetings to discuss evaluations	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read and reflect on evaluations</li> </ul>

Class 14 12/13/ 21	Team meetings to discuss evaluations	<b>Individual</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Read and reflect on evaluations</li></ul>
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## January Term

While classes don't meet, this is generally an important time for group work. Students and faculty are expected to be available and working during this time (except for the holiday week between Christmas and New Years).

## 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**.

DATE	TOPIC(S)	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
<p><b>Phase 5: PROJECT WORK</b></p> <p>Class 1 1/24/22</p>	<p>Team updates</p> <p>Discuss spring schedule</p> <p>Team check ins</p>	<p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In Class Activity - Reflections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide a quick update on where you are in the work. What are you working on right now and what is coming up?</li> <li>○ What are one or two things you have learned about how organizations or collaborations work and how they could work better?</li> <li>○ What are one or two things you are proud of in your work so far?</li> <li>○ What is one thing you think you could have done better? Is there something that the next time you do it, you would do differently?</li> <li>○ What are one or two concerns you have moving forward? How can your classmates help you think through how to meet these challenges?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● In class - begin to work on revised work plan and team charter (using track changes)</li> </ul>
<p>Class 2 1/31/22</p>	<p><b>Formatting final reports</b></p> <p><b>Discussion with Emily Austen</b></p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <p>Recommended Reading: Flawless Consulting, ch 14. This chapter is called <u>Preparing For Feedback</u> and offers suggestions for how to start making decisions about what to include and how to present recommendations as you start to think about your</p>

		<p>final report.</p> <p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By <b>Monday, 2/7 at 10 AM</b> email a draft outline of your final report to Emily Austin at ea86@nyu.edu and copy me. It should be as detailed as possible and about one page long.</li> <li>• Email updated work plan and team charter to me before class (with tracked changes)</li> </ul>
		<p>recommendations as you start to think about your final report.</p> <p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By <b>Monday, 2/7 at 10 AM</b> email a draft outline of your final report to Emily Austin at ea86@nyu.edu and copy me. It should be as detailed as possible and about one page long.</li> <li>• Email updated work plan and team charter to me before class (with tracked changes)</li> </ul>
<p>Class 3  2/7/2  2</p>	<p>Final Report Planning</p>	<p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Emily Austin on outlines</li> </ul>
<p>Class 4 2/14/ 22</p>	<p>NO CLASS</p>	<p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report outlines due <b>2/14</b></li> </ul>
<p>2/21/22 President's Day, No Class</p>		

<p><b>Phase 6: PROJECT WORK AND REPORT WRITING</b></p> <p>Class 5 2/28/ 22</p>	<p>Discuss outlines Team updates</p>	<p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Schedule final presentation for client (recommend aiming for week of April 18 or week of April 25). I must be present and will provide availability.</li> </ul>
<p>Class 6 3/7/ 22</p>	<p>NO CLASS</p>	<p><b>Team:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● First draft final report</li> </ul>
<p>3/14/22 Spring Break, No Class</p>		
<p>Class 7 3/21/ 22</p>	<p>Team updates Discuss first drafts Discuss client presentation</p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recommended Reading: Flawless Consulting, ch 15. This Chapter is called <u>Managing the Meeting For Action</u> and discusses tips for how to structure and manage a meeting where you want to collect the client’s reaction and want the client to do something as a result of your study.</li> </ul> <p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Presentation from each team on key findings from your work and draft recommendations.</li> <li>● Include your “elevator pitch” on most important findings and what they mean to your project.</li> </ul>

Class 8 3/28/ 22	NO CLASS	
Class 9 4/4/ 22	Rehearsals of client presentatio ns	<b>Team</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Draft powerpoint presentation</li> <li>● Second draft of final report</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 7: WRITING AND PRESENTI NG</b> Class 10 4/11/ 22	Rehearsals of client presentatio ns  Prepare for Capstone Expo	<b>Team</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Draft powerpoint presentation</li> </ul>
Class 11  4/18/  22	Rehearsals of client presentatio ns	<b>Individual</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Self and team peer evaluations</li> <li>●</li> </ul> <b>Team</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Draft powerpoint presentation</li> <li>● Third and final draft of final report</li> </ul>
Class 12 4/25/ 22	NO CLASS	
<b>Phase 8: CONCLUSION! EVALUATION, REFLECTION, CELEBRATION</b>  Class 13  5/2/2  2	Evaluations & Final Drafts	<b>Individual</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read and reflect on evaluation</li> </ul>

Class 14 5/9/2 2	Reflect and Celebrate	<b>Team:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams should send final version of final report to me and Wagner Capstone alias (wagner.capstone@nyu.edu)</li> </ul>
5/10 & 5/11	CAPSTONE EXPO	<b>Team</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final Presentation (format TBD)</li> </ul>

### **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.