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**CAPSTONE: CAP-GP 3301-1-002**

**Fall 2024 – Spring 2025**

**Instructor Information**

Art Kleiner

apk1@nyu.edu

By appointment by Zoom; I will be available before class at 5:30-6:30 PM Mondays and also 3:30-4:30 PM Wednesdays, probably at the Wagner School (a 15-minute walk from class).

Course Information

* Class Meeting Times: Mondays, 6:45 pm - 8:25 pm
* Location: Room 403, NYU Paulson Center, 181 Mercer St, New York, NY 10012
* Brightspace site: https://brightspace.nyu.edu/d2l/home/388428
* Classroom: All classes will be in person unless we choose to meet by Zoom the previous week. I do not plan to offer Zoom attendance to in-person classes, but if it is necessary I may make accommodations to do so.

**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;

**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;
* 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.

**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.

**Learning Assessment Table**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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**

4 projects have been submitted to us. They are:

* Acumen Fund: Analysis of institutional funding and patient capital trends and the implications for compliance management processes in funding agreements, with the goal of increasing funds for investment in emerging economies – Eric Carroll and Josie Dee, New York – In class 7:30 Sept 16
* Beyond Capital Fund: Analysis of institutional funding trends, metrics ad strategy for launching CatalyzeHER, a development fund oriented toward women entrepreneurs in emerging economies --  Isabelle Schmidt, Dallas.
* Working Capital Fund: Analysis: Analysis of catalytic capital, and how it can be marshalled effectively to address supply chain issues such as labor rights and worker ownership – Martin Roeck and Ed Marcum, San Francisco – In class 7:30 Sept 9
* IBM WatsonX Project: Analysis of how to develop a new GenAI platform, InstructLab, with input from non-technical experts and community representatives – Becky Duane, New York. (Note: Students are already assigned to this project.)

During the first two sessions, we will discuss them and hear brief presentations from the clients.

Once you are familiar with the projects, 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 encourage the first and last meetings with the client to be in person if at all possible – but clients are in Dallas and San Francisco.

Some teams may need to travel in the US to conduct field work. Students may apply for supplementary travel funding for airfare costs, but funding does not cover accommodation, ground transportation, or meal costs.  It may not be required or 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. 50% is based on work products such as interim and final deliverables as well as other assignments. 50% 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. The peer and self-evaluations are particularly important, not just for grades but for the skills developed in this course.

**Required Readings and Other Resources**

We will be using material from Block, Peter. 2011. Flawless Consulting, 3rd edition. Pfeiffer. Flawless Consulting is available [online](https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/lib/nyulibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=661497) (and downloadable) through NYU’s Bobst Library.

(A 4th edition has recently come out, but the library does not have it and it is expensive. I am reviewing the 4th edition to see if there is any information needed from it.)

We will also be using a few chapters from The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook, by Peter Senge, Art Kleiner, Charlotte Roberts, Rick Ross, and Bryan Smith, 1994: Doubleday. I have provided these materials in the Readings.

We will also use some readings related to the topics.

All readings are available in the Brightspace folders under Content:

Readings/Additional Resources

and Exercises and Related Materials

**Use of Generative AI**

NYU and Wagner do not have a one-size-fits-all policy regarding student use of generative AI. It is not realistic to ban its use – and, in fact, I use it regularly and am teaching its use in another Wagner class.

Each team can decide whether or not to use Generative AI. This is up to the team, not to the individual student.

If you use it, start the process by using it as an idea generator.

Do not trust any sources. Any large learning model (LLM) is designed to provide you text that probabilities suggest you will appreciate. They do not know how to check sources or facts, and they will often tell you that they do. They cannot process large amounts of text.

They can be used to summarize material you feed into them, to generate ideas, and to roleplay.

If you use GenAI, you must document how you use it, keep a record of your prompts, and provide a brief summary of how it helped you.

To ensure academic integrity, all students must openly disclose any AI-generated material they use and provide proper attribution. This includes in-text citations, quotations, and references. You are responsible for the information you submit based on a generative AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws or contain misinformation or unethical content). Your use of generative AI tools must be properly documented and attributed in order to stay within university policies on academic honesty.

To indicate the use of a generative AI resource, teams should include the following statement in their assignments: "The author(s) acknowledge the utilization of [generative AI tool Name], a language model developed by [generative AI tool Provider], in the preparation of this assignment. The [generative AI tool Name] was employed in the following manner(s) within this assignment [e.g., brainstorming, grammatical correction, specific section of the assignment].

**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 TEAMSClass 19/9/24 | Introductions* Background
* Technical skills
* Managerial experience
* What you hope to get from the class

Overview of Syllabus & Capstone Student GuideClient presentations:Working Capital Fund | * Review syllabus and Student Capstone Guide
* Review capstone proposals and come to class prepared with questions

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| Class 29/16/24  | Client presentations: AcumenDiscussion of projects | * Read capstone proposals and prepare questions for project liaison
* Due 9/21: Student Info and Preference Form.
* Attach resume and writing sample and make this one document.  Post on Brightspace.  Teams will be posted by 9/23, before class.
 |
| Phase 2: TEAM LAUNCH AND PLANNINGClass 39/23/24 | Team rosters to be posted before today.Introduction to consulting;Preparation for entry meeting with client  |  Individual* Read Flawless Consulting, chapters 19, 1, 2, 3 (in this order)
* Watch: Capstone consulting videos: Intro, What Consulting Is and Isn’t and The Role of Technical and Interpersonal Skills

Team* Exchange contact information
* Schedule one get-together purely about getting to know each other.  See handout for sample questions and topics (or feel free to ignore).
* Send out first client email by 9/27. (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.
 |
| Class 4Team dynamics9/30/24 | Team dynamics 1: Leadership styles  | Individual* Readings related to team dynamics: David Kantor
* Leadership Compass

TeamIn preparation of your client meeting, please share with me:* An agenda
* A set of questions for the client
* Suggestions for project scope
* Be prepared to report on background research on your client (I don’t need to see anything written)
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| Class 5Consulting, Project management10/7/24 | Contracting and project management 1Hear from previous Capstone students | Individual* Reading: [Flawless Consulting, Chapters 4, 5, 6](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1q7Cr6M-X11qR3v-mHppSML48NBvPQog_), 8 and 9.
* View: Consulting videos: The Project Management Triangle, Client Expectations Mgmt, Risk Mgmt, Client Mtg Mgmt.
* Read Ethics Memo for students
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| Class 6Diversity, equity, and inclusion10/15/24**NOTE: This is TUESDAY, not Monday.** | Team Dynamics 2: Creating team cultures that honor everyone’s backgrounds and workstyles;Discussion of team charter assignment | Individuals* Read: Equity as a Way of Life
* Read: Power, Safety and Learning

Team* Draft contract (if have conducted client entry meeting)
* Be prepared to report on client entry meeting

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| Class 7Project management10/21/24 | Contracting and project management 2 | Individual:View Project Management tutorials (will be posted on Brightspace. You can choose between these options:* + Project Management Foundations (about 3 hours)
		- https://www.linkedin.com/learning/project-management-foundations-2016/welcome?u=2131553
	+ Project Management Simplified (about 1.5 hours)
		- https://www.linkedin.com/learning/project-management-simplified/outlining-the-twelve-steps?u=2131553

Team* Draft contract (if have conducted client entry meeting)
* Draft team charter
* Be prepared to report on client entry meeting
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| Phase 3: RESEARCH SKILLS AND PROJECT WORKClass 810/28/24 | Literature reviews | Virtual in-class session with NYU Librarians to discuss library research, including literature reviews.Individual* Review [Wagner Capstone Library Guide](https://guides.nyu.edu/wagner/capstone)
* Experiment with using Bobst Library databases to identify scholarly articles regarding your topic.  Be ready to show results in class.
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| Class 9Consulting11/4/24  | Surveys  | Individual* Review examples of literature reviews and be prepared to discuss strengths and weaknesses

Team* Final contract (depending on team)
* Draft workplan
* Final team charter
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| Class 10Consulting11/11/24  | Interviews and focus groups;Prepare for self and team peer evaluations | Individual* Flawless Consulting, Ch 10 and 13

Team* Final contract (depending on team)
* Readings on how to give feedback
 |
| Phase 4: PROJECT WORK AND FEEDBACKClass 1111/18/24 | Team reportsTeam check-ins | Individual* Self and team peer evaluations

Team* Be prepared to give update to classmates
* Final workplan
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| Class 1211/25/24  | NO CLASS; I will meet with individual teams as necessary |   |
| Class 13 12/2/24  | WRITING TUTOR CAPSTONE SESSION (with other SI3 and Management sections) |  IndividualJoin this session to learn about writing challenges and support.  |
| Class 1412/9/24  | Team and individual meetings to discuss evaluations | Individual* Read and reflect on evaluations

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**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 members of your team are 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 WORKClass 11/27/25 | Team updatesDiscuss spring scheduleData analysis | Individual* Flawless Consulting, ch 14

Team* Be prepared to give team update
* Revised work plan and team charter (using track changes)
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| Class 22/3/25 | Formatting final reports |    |
| Class 32/10/25 | NO CLASS |    |
| Phase 6: PROJECT WORK AND REPORT WRITINGClass 42/18/25**NOTE: This is a TUES,DAY, not a Monday. Monday is Presidents Day. Tues,day is a Legislative Day, meaning classes are running on a Monday schedule.** |  Discuss outlinesTeam updates | Team* Report outlines due 2/17

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| Class 52/24/25 |  NO CLASS | Team* Schedule final presentation for client. I must be present and will provide availability.
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| Class 63/3/25 | NO CLASS | Team: * First draft final report
 |
| Class 73/10/25 | Team updatesDiscuss first draftsDiscuss 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.
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| Class 83/17/25 | NO CLASS |  |
| SPRING BREAK3/24/25 | NO CLASS  |   |
| Phase 7: WRITING AND PRESENTINGClass 93/31/25  | Rehearsals of client presentations | Team* Draft slides for your final presentation
* Second draft of final report
 |
| Class 104/7/25  | Rehearsals of client presentations  | Team* Draft slides
 |
| Class 114/14/25 | Rehearsals of client presentations | Individual* Self and team peer evaluations

Team* Draft slides
* Third and final draft of final report
 |
| Class 124/21/25  | NO CLASS |   |
| Phase 8: CONCLUSION! EVALUATION, REFLECTION, CELEBRATIONClass 134/28/25  | Self and peer evaluations | Individual* Read and reflect on evaluations
 |
| Class 145/5/25  | Reflect and Celebrate |  Team:* Teams should send final version of final report to me and Wagner Capstone alias (wagner.capstone@nyu.edu)

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**Letter Grades**

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

| 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:

(A) 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.

(B) 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.

**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](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/code). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/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](https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html) 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.