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

P11. 3601, Section 002:  Urban Planning Capstone
Fall 2011/Spring 2012
Day and Time: Monday 6:45-8:25 PM
Location: TBD
Posted: August 16, 2011 (Please check for subsequent updates)

Melissa Kaplan-Macey, Adjunct Assistant Professor
NYU-Wagner School
295 Lafayette Street
New York, NY 10012
(212) 353-7487
Melissa.Kaplan@nyu.edu
Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES

Capstone is learning in action. Part of the core curriculum of the Masters program at the Wagner School, it provides students with both a critical learning experience and an opportunity to perform a public service. It also can provide students with a credential as they seek post-graduation employment. Over the course of an academic year, students work in teams to address challenges, solve problems and identify opportunities for a client organization. Ultimately, Capstone contributes not only to the students’ educations, but is a university resource for the public good.

The concept of the Capstone derives from architecture, where 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 integrating and enhancing student learning in several different arenas: a content or issue area, key process skills including project management and teamwork, and methods for gathering, analyzing and reporting data. Capstone requires students to integrate their learning in all these areas, and to do so in real time, in an unpredictable, complex real world environment. Although each student will be assigned to a team, the class will work as a learning community dedicated to the success of all the projects.

Potential projects have been identified and reviewed by the Capstone faculty. Faculty will assign students to project teams based on a number of factors including student preference and expertise as well as team size and the needs of a particular project. Teams are usually comprised of 3-5 students who bring a mix of skills and experience and have expressed an interest in the project.
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:
- Be capable of positioning and evaluating their project within its broader planning context;
- Be familiar with specialized vocabularies required to perform the project successfully; and
- Be aware of 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 and accepting uncertainty and lack of clarity when necessary. Students are expected to demonstrate the following abilities in the specific process areas:

1. Project Management
- Frame and refine the problem presented by the client;
- Develop a work scope with the client for the project;
- Develop a project work plan with timelines and deliverables;
- Monitor team progress against the scope and work plan;
- Revise the work plan, including deliverables, as necessary; and
- Develop well-supported and realistic recommendations.

2. Client Management
- Assess the client organization and its environment;
- Develop and sustain the team’s relationship with the client;
- Negotiate a project work plan with the client, including timelines and deliverables;
- Maintain regular and productive contact with the client;
- Solicit and integrate client feedback on progress against work plan as necessary; and
- Deliver final product to client’s satisfaction.

3. Team Management
- 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; and
- Appreciate and learn from cultural differences.
C. RESEARCH

The development of research skills is an important part of the course. This research will focus on the subject matter relevant to the students’ respective projects. Past project subjects include GIS, Transportation Planning and Analysis, Environmental Planning and Analysis, Housing, Market and Financial Analysis, Site Selection, Community Development and Partnerships, and Economic and Social Impact Analysis. With respect to research skills, students should demonstrate the ability to:

- Identify and 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 and literature related to their subject areas;
- Identify and implement appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative data gathering and analysis methods for their particular project;
- Situate their findings in the broader related literature;
- Draw conclusions based on their findings; and
- Communicate their work effectively both orally and in writing.

SUMMARY OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The class will involve presentations from the instructors and guest speakers, class discussion and team meetings and in some cases attendance at courses or lectures outside of the normal Capstone class schedule where appropriate and feasible. Course requirements at both the team and individual levels include the following:

- 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; and
- Completion of all evaluations.

Detailed requirements are provided below.

DETAILED COURSE MILESTONES AND REQUIREMENTS

The course requirements include student completion of milestones (both activities and products) detailed below. A detailed description of each class session and associated milestones is provided in the attached Class Schedule. Unless otherwise indicated, all written assignments should be submitted in hard copy and via email to Melissa.Kaplan@nyu.edu. The milestones include:

Fall Semester

- Attendance at one Wagner School Advanced Capstone Team Session
- Resume- 3 copies
- Project Interest Indicator Form
- Team Charter
- Initial client meeting (with faculty present)
- Client Meeting Summary Memo
- In-class presentation on client meeting
- Draft Scope of Work
- In-class presentation on scope
- Client meeting or conference call to review/finalize scope
- Final Scope of Work
- Draft Team Work Plan
- In-class presentation on Work Plan
- Final Scope of Work signed by client
- Final Team Work Plan
- In-class progress report presentation
- First Semester Work Log
- Self assessment, peer review & mid-course evaluations

**Spring Semester**

- Summary memo detailing work tasks completed to date and findings related to each completed work task
- Detailed draft report outline
- Detailed final report outline
- First Draft Report
- Dry run client presentation to Capstone Class
- Second Draft Report
- Client Presentation
- Self assessment, peer review & end of course evaluations
- Final Report
- Wagner School Capstone End Event Exhibition
CREDITS AND COURSE EVALUATION CRITERIA AND GRADING

Credits

Students will be given two credits for the fall semester and two for the spring semester of Capstone. Note that it is the custom in Capstone to report end of first semester grades as IP to reflect the “work in progress” nature of the yearlong project (students should inform the professors if this is a problem).

Grading Criteria

Students will be graded on both the products they deliver to their clients and faculty and evidence of progressive learning throughout the course, based on the Learning Objectives (see above), including an ability to incorporate and bring an urban planning perspective to the project.

- 70% of the grade is based on work products and activities identified in the milestones.
- 30% is based on evidence of the individual student’s learning and performance during the course through active participation in the team’s work (as indicated by team member evaluations and the ongoing work log), class activities, meetings with faculty, and his/her ability to act on peer and faculty feedback. Quality of end of semester peer and self evaluations, demonstration of progressive improvement over the course, as well as individual performance on final presentation to the Capstone class and client will also be considered for this portion of the grade.

REQUIRED READING

NOTE: All readings for this course will be posted on the Capstone Blackboard site, distributed in class and/or placed on reserve at Bobst Library. Additional readings may be assigned throughout the year. Additional readings relevant to specific projects may be provided to teams after projects have been selected.

Team Building and Project Management:

Conflict Resolution:  

Data Collection Methods:  
- Scoping the Project (Available on Blackboard)

Presentation Skills:  

Planning Reports:  
CLASS SCHEDULE
FALL 2011 SEMESTER

The schedule and topics below may vary slightly based on individual project needs. 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. A greater number of class-based presentations and discussions are likely early on in the course in order for Capstone faculty to provide guidance on project management and direction. The second semester schedule allows for greater time for team working sessions.

**Note:** While class time is allotted for team meetings/work, it is expected that students and their teams will need to devote additional non-class time to complete the work necessary on their Capstone projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Agenda</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Advanced Capstone Team Sessions</strong>&lt;br&gt;Students are required to attend one of the Advanced Capstone Team Sessions (students who have taken the Wagner 2-credit Team Building class are exempt). Students are responsible for confirming time and registration on the Capstone site. The sessions are held in the Rudin Forum on the 2nd Floor of the Puck Building.</td>
<td>Begin first semester work log</td>
<td>Course Syllabus (on Blackboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Class Overview &amp; Client Presentations</strong>&lt;br&gt;Overview of Capstone objectives, schedule, and requirements; client presentations. Faculty will describe criteria for assignment of students to projects.</td>
<td>Resume: Each student to bring three copies of current resume to class on 9/19</td>
<td>Mutual Expectations for Capstone, part of Student Capstone Guide (on Blackboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19</td>
<td><strong>Client Presentations (cont.)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Continuation of client presentations</td>
<td>Project Interest Indicator Form (due 9/20) Available on Blackboard</td>
<td>Susan Whelan, <em>Creating Effective Teams</em>, Chapter 3 (on Blackboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Team Dynamics, Team Charters and Client Meeting Preparation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Introduction to team dynamics, establishment of team norms and importance of team communication. Discussion of expectations for initial client meetings. Teams will meet to develop team charters, discuss their clients and prepare for initial client meeting.</td>
<td>Schedule client meeting for week of 10/3&lt;br&gt;<strong>Please consult professor’s schedule and invite to attend client meeting</strong></td>
<td>Sample team charters (on Blackboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ethics Considerations in Capstone, Part of Student Capstone Guide (on Blackboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peter Block, <em>Flawless Consulting</em>, Chapter 5: The Contracting Meeting (on Blackboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Class Agenda</td>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>Readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 10/3   | **Scope of Work & Client Engagement**<br>Elements of successful client engagement and the scope of work, including project schedule and deliverables. | - Getting to know each other meeting  
- Team charter (due 10/3)  
- Client meeting (complete by 10/12) | - Sample Scope Agreement *(on Blackboard)*  
- Project management checklist *(on Blackboard)*  
- Scoping the Project *(on Blackboard)* |
| 10/17  | **Team Presentations on Client Meetings**<br>Teams to make presentations on their initial client meetings. Presentations will be followed by Q&A and discussion of client interaction and potential issues. | - Client meeting summary memo (due 10/17)  
- Presentation on client meeting (to be given in class on 10/17) | - Fisher and Ury, *Getting to Yes*, Chapters 1 & 2 *(on Blackboard)* |
| 10/24  | **Presentations on Scope of Work**<br>Teams to present their scope of work to the class. Presentations will be followed by Q&A and feedback. Following presentations, faculty will meet with each team individually during class time to discuss team scopes. | - Draft scope of work (due 10/24)  
- Presentation on scope of work (to be given in class on 10/24)  
- Schedule 2^{nd} client meeting for week of 10/24 | |
| 10/31  | **Team Meetings**<br>Teams to meet during class time to discuss final scope of work and begin team work plan (project initiation, data collection, outreach, etc.). | - Client meeting or conference call to review/finalize scope (complete by 10/31)  
*Meet with client to present/negotiate scope agreement. Professor present at meeting only as needed.* | |
| 11/7   | **Team Work Plan and Team Meetings**<br>Group discussion of team work plans. Teams to meet during class time to discuss assignment of work tasks. | - Final scope of work (due 11/7)  
*The final scope will become the contract with your client for the Capstone project. Final scope to be submitted to faculty on 11/7 for sign-off and then submitted to client for signature.* | - Sample work plan *(on Blackboard)* |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Agenda</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/14</td>
<td><strong>Team Updates &amp; Discussion of Research Methods and Public Outreach</strong></td>
<td>▪ Draft team work plan (due 11/14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teams to present assignment of work tasks, data collection and initial</td>
<td>▪ Presentation on assignment of work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>contacts/outreach, followed by Q&amp;A and feedback. Remainder of class to</td>
<td>tasks, data collection and initial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>focus on research methods/needs and outreach, including census data,</td>
<td>contacts/outreach (to be given in class on 11/14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interviewing, surveys, observation, and other methods applicable to specific</td>
<td>▪ Final scope of work signed by client (due 11/14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>projects.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/21</td>
<td><strong>Team Meetings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No formal class agenda. Teams to meet during class time; faculty to be</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>available upon request. Guest lecturer may be scheduled.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/28</td>
<td><strong>Team Progress Report Presentations &amp; Team Meetings</strong></td>
<td>▪ Progress report presentation on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teams to present research and/or field work in progress, followed by Q&amp;A</td>
<td>research and/or field work (to be given in class on 11/28)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and discussion of issues/opportunities. Team meetings during any remaining</td>
<td>▪ Final team work plan (due 11/28)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>class time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/5</td>
<td><strong>Team Charter Revisited &amp; Self Assessment/Peer Review</strong></td>
<td>▪ First semester work log due (12/5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion of team charters- how well are they serving the team? Discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to include strategies to manage common problems that arise within</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>teams and any issues specific to a particular team. To be followed by an</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>overview of self assessments, peer reviews and mid-course evaluations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/12</td>
<td><strong>First Semester Progress Assessment &amp; Second Semester Work Plan</strong></td>
<td>▪ Written self-assessment, peer review of team members and mid-course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty to meet with each team individually to review semester progress,</td>
<td>evaluations (due 12/12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>review work plan and highlight any issues for the second semester. Time</td>
<td><em>Forms available on Blackboard</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>provided for team meetings.</td>
<td>▪ Sign up for individual time slot to meet with faculty to review peer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>evaluations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/19</td>
<td><strong>Individual Peer Evaluation Meetings</strong></td>
<td>▪ Students to meet individually with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No formal class agenda. Class time for individual</td>
<td>faculty to review peer evaluations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>meetings with faculty.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>