

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE
CAPSTONE: ADVANCED PROJECTS IN FINANCE
CAP-GP.3401 & CAP-GP.3402 – Section 007

Fall 2015 – Spring 2016
Mondays, 6:45 PM – 8:25 PM
Waverly Bldg, Rm 431

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CLASS SCHEDULE

For vacations and holidays, see the university's academic calendar for 2015-16, found at this link:

<http://www.nyu.edu/registrar/calendars/university-academic-calendar.html#1158>

The list of weeks and topics that follows is preliminary and subject to change. Students should expect to meet weekly as a class or team unless agreed in class.

WEEK	DATE	DESCRIPTION
1	Sept 7	LABOR DAY – NO CLASS
2	Sept 14	Class Meeting – Introduction & Client Presentations
3	Sept 21	Class Meeting – Client Presentations & Former Student Presentation
4	Sept 28	Class Meeting – Client Presentations
5	Oct 5	Class Meeting – Team Building
6	Oct 13	Class Meeting (TUESDAY) – Team Charter, Work Agreement, Work Plan
7	Oct 19	Class Meeting – Work in Teams
8	Oct 26	TEAM BUILDING – KIMMEL CENTER (Rooms TBA)
9	Nov 2	Class Meeting – Work in Teams
10	Nov 9	Class Meeting – Giving and Receiving Feedback
11	Nov 16	Work in Teams – No Class
12	Nov 23	Class Meeting – Work in Teams
13	Nov 30	Work in Teams – No Class
14	Dec 7	Class Meeting – Semester Review

SPRING SEMESTER – IMPORTANT DATES

February 29, 2016 – Presentation Skills

May 10, 2016 – Capstone Expo

DELIVERABLES AND DEADLINES

These are **absolute final deadlines**; teams are encouraged to have deliverables ready before the final deadline.

DELIVERABLE	DEADLINE
Upload Resume to NYU Classes	Sept 14
Review all Client proposals	Sept 14
Fully read Fall Syllabus	Sept 14
Fully read Student Capstone Guide	Sept 14
Upload Student Information and Preference Form NYU Classes	Sept 30
Initial Client Meeting	Oct 16
Initial Team Charter	Oct 16
Team Social Activity	Oct 19
Second Client Meeting – draft work agreement with client	Nov 13
Upload Draft Work Agreement to NYU Classes	Nov 13
Finalize Work Agreement with client and upload to NYU Classes	Dec 2
Upload Draft Internal Work Plan to NYU Classes	Dec 2
Peer and Self-Evaluations	TBA

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

The classroom should be treated as a professional space. As such, the following is expected:

1. **Punctuality.** Class sessions will start promptly at 6:45. Please arrive early so you are ready to participate in class on time.
2. **Attendance.** Attendance at all scheduled class sessions is mandatory. If you will be unable to attend a class session, email the instructor and your team, with an explanation, prior to the class session

3. **Electronic Devices.** Use of electronic devices (cell phones and laptops) will not be necessary during lectures or group discussions. The expectation, therefore, is that electronic devices will be closed, put away, and silenced during lectures/discussions.

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

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:

CONTENT

Students should:

- understand the policy context for their project;
- be familiar with specialized vocabularies required to perform the project successfully;
- be aware of critical research related to their content area;
- be capable of positioning and evaluating their project within its broader policy context.

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.

1. Project Management

Students should demonstrate the ability to:

- assess the client organization and its environment;
- frame and refine the problem presented by the client;
- develop a work agreement with the client for the project
- develop an internal project work plan with timelines and deliverables;
- monitor their progress against the work agreement and workplan;
- revise the workplan as necessary;
- develop well supported and realistic recommendations.

2. Client Management

Students should demonstrate the ability to:

- develop and sustain their relationship with the client;
- negotiate a work agreement with timelines and deliverables;
- maintain regular and productive contact with the client;
- solicit and integrate feedback on progress against the contract and modify as necessary;
- deliver final product to client's satisfaction.

3. Team Management

Students should demonstrate the ability to:

- 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;
- appreciate and learn from cultural differences.

RESEARCH

Students should demonstrate the ability to:

- identify appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative data gathering and analysis methods for their particular project;
- follow established sampling procedures to create appropriate samples for their particular project;
- 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;
- situate their findings in the broader related literature;
- draw conclusions based on their findings;
- effectively communicate their work both orally and in writing.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

We have identified an array of potential projects. Potential clients will present their projects to you in the first three weeks of class. *We will ask you for your preferences, but – just to be very clear – we will create the teams based not only on your preferences, but also on your previous coursework, work and life experience, other expertise, and team size.*

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.

Some client organizations may not be based in New York City. This will necessitate use of phone and/or video conferencing for client meetings, depending on the technologies available to the client. *Some* projects may require travel for fieldwork 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.

GRADING

Students will receive two credits for the fall semester and two 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. We 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.

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.

The final grade will be weighted as follows: **75%** based on the quality of the final work product delivered to the client and any interim deliverables produced by the team; **25%** based on the individual student’s learning during the course as evidenced by participation in the team’s work and class activities, his/her ability to act on peer and faculty feedback, preparation for and performance at client meetings, and end-of-semester faculty, peer and self evaluations.

OFFICE HOURS

We will hold office hours after class, on Mondays, from 8:25 PM to 9:25 PM. For Mondays on which we do not meet as an individual section, office hours will be by appointment only; appointments should be requested by 5:00 PM Sunday.

We will make ourselves available by appointment for phone consultation and in-person meetings as needed.

Our preferred method of communication is email (geoff.davenport@nyu.edu, ns140@nyu.edu). Typically, we will respond to emails within one business day. If a matter is time-sensitive, please indicate so in the subject line of the email.