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


SYLLABUS
FALL 2015-SPRING 2016

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Hours: By appointment; students are encouraged to call or e-mail faculty at any time.

Class Meeting Time & Location:

Mondays (Beginning September 14, 2015)
Time:  6:45 – 8:25 PM
Place: Waverly Building; Room 367 (Fall 2015)
       24 Waverly Place

COURSE SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES

This is a two-term course in which students work in teams to perform a project for a client health care, non-profit or public agency. The course will guide students in defining a complex problem and developing solutions for the client in real time. Students will design the approach, conduct the data collection and analysis, and present findings, both orally and in writing, to the client.

Capstone is learning in action. Part of the core curriculum of the Masters program at the Wagner School, Capstone 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, conduct research or identify opportunities for organizational improvement. Capstone contributes to the students’ education, the client organization and is a university resource for the public good.

Capstone is a rigorous course with a higher set of performance expectations than many courses at the Wagner School. It draws from all previous policy, management, and statistics courses at Wagner, and guides students in a year long effort that integrates and applies lessons from these courses. Learning will also come from shared experiences in class as the course
progresses. Although each student will be part of a team, the class will also operate as a single team dedicated to the success of all the projects. The work of the capstone is both a critical learning experience and an act of public service.

Faculty will identify an array of potential projects which will be presented by potential clients for student consideration during the early class sessions. Students will then be assigned a project based on a number of factors, including student preference, skills and team size. Teams are usually comprised of four to five students who bring a mix of skills and experience and have expressed an interest in the project. To the degree possible, students will get one of their top choices of projects.

**HPAM COMPETENCIES ADDRESSED IN THE COURSE**

Core competencies:

- The ability to manage teams, projects and people; to work in change-oriented health care organizations; and mentor a diverse and changing workforce (FO/CF/TP/SA)
- The ability to draw implications and conclusions to develop an evolving vision that results in organizational viability (FR FP)
- The ability to communicate and interact productively (via listening, speaking and writing) on matters of healthcare with a diverse and changing industry, workforce and citizenry (FO/CF/TP/SA?FR/FP)
- The ability to present convincingly to individuals and groups the evidence to support a point of view, position or recommendation (FR/FP/FO)

Other related competencies:

- The ability to measure, monitor and improve safety, quality, access and system/care delivery processes in health care organizations (FR/FP/CF/TP/SA)
- The ability to use information systems and evidence-based management principles for problem-solving, strategic planning and decision-making and implementing and measuring change (FR/FP/CF/TP/SA)
- The ability to synthesize evidence, and apply statistical, financial, economic and cost-effectiveness tools/techniques in organizational analysis (FR/FP)
- The ability to engage in continuous learning; to reflect on and assess one’s strengths and developmental needs; to seek feedback from others; and establish and sustain a professional development network (FO/TP/SA)

The final team report to the client, the final team presentation to the client, faculty observation, client feedback, team/peer evaluations and class participation in the course will assess progress against these competencies. No student will receive a B or higher without demonstration of satisfactory progress towards mastery of each competency.

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1 FO – Faculty Observation; CF – Client Feedback; TP – Team/Peer Evaluation; SA – Self Assessment; FR – Final Capstone Report; FP – Final Client Presentation
MAJOR LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Capstone integrates knowledge acquired throughout the course of graduate study at NYU/Wagner and provides students the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to apply these competencies in the setting of a fully functioning and complex health care organization.

Students completing the course will have successfully demonstrated the ability to:

- Understand the policy context for their project
- Evaluate the project within a broad policy context
- Be aware of critical research and literature related to the projects content area
- Be familiar with specialized vocabularies required to successfully perform the project
- 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
- Successfully undertake an end-to-end response to a request for assistance from an organization, to include 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, with timeline and deliverables
  - monitor their progress against the work plan
  - revise the work plan as necessary
  - develop supported and realistic recommendations
- Communicate their work effectively, both orally and in writing

Students will also 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

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

There is one required textbook for the course.

Some additional books students may find useful are:

- FYI - Website with excellent educational and reference material relevant to the course: Center for Evidence-Based Management - [www.cebma.org](http://www.cebma.org)

Any reading assignment not in the assigned text will be posted on NYU Classes, under the Resources tab and in a sub-folder of the Documents folder for that specific class session.

**METHODS OF INSTRUCTION**

The class will involve the following methods of instruction:

- Presentations from instructors
- Class discussion
- Team meetings during and outside of class
- Outside speakers
- Other readings as assigned

**EVALUATION CRITERIA & GRADING**

Final grades are assigned at the end of the second semester. Grades are based on faculty assessment of the overall quality of the Capstone Team’s final written report (including work plan, client contract, search strategy, research design, literature and data collection, analysis and recommendations and timeliness) and an oral presentation of the work to the client. Client feedback will be sought and considered in overall evaluation by faculty. An overall team grade will be assigned to the work of the team; however, each team member’s grade may then be adjusted based upon peer feedback and faculty assessment of the student’s participation in class and in team activities (see page 2 – *HPAM Competencies Addressed in the Course*; see page 5 – *Guiding Principles for Class and Team Participation*).

The final work product is expected to be a professional, graduate level document clearly delineating the problem faced by the organization, the steps taken by the team to address the problem, and recommendations. Findings/recommendations should be comprehensively stated, specifically citing both relevant research and rationale, as well as indicating the sequence of steps suggested.
The final grade is assigned at the end of the second semester. Students will be given 1.5 credits for the fall semester and 1.5 credits for the spring semester of capstone. It is the custom in Capstone to report end of first semester grades as **IP (Incomplete/Passing)** to reflect the “work in progress” nature of the year-long project. Faculty will provide teams with informal interim feedback of the progress of their work at the beginning of the Spring semester.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CLASS AND TEAM PARTICIPATION**

The best way to learn is to actively participate in your education. In this class, *participation* is defined in terms of the quality of contributions to class discussion and the Capstone Team. There are four prerequisites for successful participation in the work of your team and contributions to the success of Capstone:

- **Be on time.** If you’re not here, you can’t contribute (to class or to team discussions). Taking this course is a tacit agreement with your professors and your team colleagues. It is understood there may be infrequent but good reasons why a student may have to miss a class – work, illness, personal emergency or when you are late through no fault of your own. Nevertheless, understand in this course especially, being part of a larger team of colleagues is a major learning objective.
- **Be prepared.** If you have to be here you may as well be prepared. This will help you participate and get the most out of class. It’s a good idea to read ahead in the assignments just to cover any last minute emergency.
- **Step up.** View the course as a safe test of assertiveness training (speaking up) and filter control (thinking before you speak). Speak in a loud enough voice so that faculty and your classmates can hear what you have to say.
- **Be Polite.** Feel free to be critical of ideas, but not persons. When you disagree with what someone has to say in class, be courteous. Don’t interrupt. This is how you would want to be treated if you have something to contribute to the discussion.

**COURSE ELEMENTS AND TIMETABLE**

Students will work in teams on a project that is expected to require the entire academic year for completion. The course can be divided into the following components:

- Project Identification and Team Assignments – 3 weeks
- Workplan/Contract Development – 6 weeks
- Workplan Implementation – 4 months
- Final Report Drafting and Revisions – 4-8 weeks
- Prepare and Deliver Client Final Briefing – 2-3 weeks
TEAM BUDGETS

Each team has a $500 annual operating budget for their project expenses. In addition, NYU/Wagner offers supplemental travel funding for airfare/train travel for students who must travel outside of NYC for project research. While generous, the supplemental travel funding rarely covers all student expenses.

FEEDBACK AND QUESTIONS

We are committed to making this course a valuable learning experience for you. Mid-way through the course we will spend part of a class session evaluating our progress, and will make any necessary changes to keep us on track. We welcome your feedback regarding class at any time in the semester. Also please feel free to ask questions as they arise. It is easiest to reach us by e-mail, but we’re also available to set up an appointment with you.

If you have a disability that requires special accommodation, please let us know ASAP so that we can be helpful to you.
CLASS SCHEDULE

The list of weeks and topics that follows is preliminary and subject to change. Note that it is front-loaded with information and skill building sessions in the first term, and project tracking in the second. The intent is to use the class time in a way that enables teams to produce the highest quality projects on a timely basis. We will not meet as a full class each week as the year goes on, so as to allow teams a chance to use class time to meet, in consultation with faculty as necessary. Expect to meet weekly, whether as a class or as a team.

FALL TERM

Fall 2015 full class meeting dates and topics:

- September 14, 2015  Overview of course; project selection process
- September 21, 2015  Proposed Capstone project presentations by Clients;
- September 28, 2015  Proposed Capstone project presentations by Clients
  (continued); project selection/assignment process
- October 5, 2015  Team assignments; team dynamics; team charters
- October 19, 2015  Understanding the client; preparation for Initial Client
  Meeting; the Capstone “experience”
- October 26, 2015  Capstone advanced team training session
- November 2, 2015  Evidence-Based Approach to Management Improvement
  Processes; Organizing the project – the work plan
- November 16, 2015  Gathering qualitative data
- November 23, 2015  Workplan/contract presentation rehearsal
- December 14, 2015  Fall Semester summary; winter break task list; Spring
  Semester preparation

Fall 2015 individual team meeting dates:

- November 9, 2015
- November 30, 2015
- December 7, 2015
- December 14, 2015 (Optional)

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2 Teams should plan to meet at least once each week throughout the Fall and Spring semesters. As the work of your project progresses you will undoubtedly find it necessary to meet more frequently, either in person or via conference call/other virtual media. Our classroom is available to you for team meetings every Monday evening from 6:45-8:25pm on the dates shown above. Faculty will be in attendance on the dates of the full class meetings, and also available as necessary on the open team meeting dates. During the semester each team should use the open team meeting dates for “check-in” sessions with the faculty. Teams may wish also to schedule a meeting with faculty during winter break to review/discuss group and individual progress during the first semester and goals for the second semester.
SESSION 1: SEPTEMBER 14, 2015 – Overview of Capstone course

- Overview and introductions
- Review of syllabus and clarification of course organization and expectations

Readings:
- Review course syllabus posted on NYU Classes
- Review Capstone proposals posted on NYU Classes
- Review Student Capstone Guide posted on NYU Classes

SESSION 2: SEPTEMBER 21, 2015 – Project presentations

- Capstone Project proposals presented by prospective clients (4)

SESSION 3: SEPTEMBER 28, 2015 – Project presentations continued

- Capstone Project proposals presented by prospective clients (4)
- Students complete project preference form

Due by September 30, 2015:
- Complete and submit project preference form
  - Include a ½ to 1 page memo stating why you are interested in and especially qualified to participate in your top two project choices.

SESSION 4: OCTOBER 5, 2015 – Team assignments; team dynamics; team charters

- Team assignments
- What is capstone really about?
- Discussion of team dynamics, team charters and the usefulness of creating and continually refining team “norms” and performance expectations
- Team meetings:
  - Clients and proposed projects
  - Creation of team norms
    - Creation of team charter, based on norms discussions
  - Each team will designate one member to serve as faculty liaison and one team member to serve as client liaison.
- Discussion of Capstone by former student
Readings:
- Sample team charters

Due by October 9:
- E-mail team charter to assigned faculty.
- To the extent possible, schedule and conduct initial client meeting between 10/20 and 10/30. Faculty assigned to the team must be present for the initial client meeting. Subsequent class discussions and deliverables presume an initial meeting is held within this period.

*October 12, 2015 – Fall Recess; no class scheduled*

**SESSION 5: OCTOBER 19, 2015 – Understanding the client; preparation for Initial Client Meeting; the Capstone “experience”**

- Preparing for the initial client meeting
  - What problem does the client want to solve?
    - What is the researchable/answerable question?
  - What is the client’s expectation of the project management process?
  - What should you learn from the meeting?
  - How can you help your client give you that information?
  - Ethics related issues [i.e. does the project qualify as a research project for which Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is needed?]

Readings:

**SESSION 6: OCTOBER 26, 2015 – Capstone Advanced Team Session**

Kimmel Center for University Life  
60 Washington Square South  
Room TBA
SESSION 7: NOVEMBER 2, 2015 - An Evidence-Based Approach to a Management Improvement Process; Organizing the project – the work plan

- How do you conduct evidenced-based research on a program/agency or about a specific problem?
  - What information, both within the client organization and external to it, is relevant to achieving your desired results and where can it be found?
  - What data resources are available through various means, including interviews, surveys, literature searches, focus groups, and their application to the team projects?
- How do you go about helping the client solve the problem?
  - Discussion of the elements of a successful work plan -- project objectives, milestones, and resource requirements
- Team meetings:
  - Data gathering and work plan
  - Students will have an opportunity to review previous capstone work plans

Readings:
- Kahn CR. Picking a research problem – the critical decision. NEJM. 1994; 330(21): 1530-1533. ON NYU CLASSES

Additional reading material you may find helpful:

SESSION 8: NOVEMBER 9, 2015 – Capstone Presentation: Gathering Qualitative Data

Guest Speaker: ANITA KAPLAN

Readings:

SESSION 9: NOVEMBER 15, 2015 – Work plan discussions – continued in team meetings (LOCATIONS TBD)

• Class will be devoted to team meetings with assigned faculty focused on the development of work plans, particularly: identifying project milestones; plans for data gathering and literature review; and creation of task lists. Background information gathered about client and in support of the project will be discussed in the meeting.

Due November 20:
• Proposed project description and work plan, with milestones, for your engagement with the client.
• Schedule client meeting to present revised/refined project description and work plan. Meetings should take place between November 24th and December 4th.

SESSION 10: NOVEMBER 23, 2015 – Work plan presentation rehearsals

• Project work plan presentations
  o Each team will present a brief rehearsal of the revised project description and work plan they will present to the client.

At the end of the class, mid-year evaluation forms will be distributed. Forms will include a self-evaluation, evaluation of other team members and a course evaluation. Completed mid-year team/peer evaluation form are due on or before December 7, 2015.

SESSION 11: NOVEMBER 30, 2015 – Mid-year evaluation processes (LOCATIONS TBD)

• Team meetings with professor
  o Team dynamics
    ▪ Have team norms been useful?
    ▪ Strategies to cope with common problems
    ▪ Discussion of team/peer evaluation process
SESSION 12: DECEMBER 7, 2015 - Managing the client and the team - in team meetings with professor (LOCATIONS TBD)

- Teams will present results of work plan meetings with clients.
- Team meetings to discuss progress and finalization of work plans, incorporating feedback from client.
- Discussion of work to be accomplished over the semester break
  - Will the team need to get information from or about the users of the client services?
  - Have you identified what you need to know and how/when/where you are going to get that information?

Due no later than Dec. 11:
- After final review with assigned faculty, work plans should be sent to clients and project work should begin. The work plans should include signature lines for team members and for an authorized representative of the client. Signed copies of final work plans to be sent to assigned faculty.

SESSION 13: DECEMBER 14, 2015 - Last scheduled class of fall semester

- Summary of results of course evaluations
- Discussion of requests by students/teams for additional resources
- Team meetings

SESSION 14: DECEMBER 16, 2014 (Wednesday) – Optional class/team meetings

WINTER BREAK

Students may wish to schedule a meeting with professor during winter break to review/discuss feedback from the mid-year evaluation, their progress during the first semester and goals for the second semester.

Teams should schedule a meeting with professor during winter break (this can be by conference call) to review/discuss the team’s progress during the first semester, tasks to be accomplished during the Winter Break and team activities for the second semester.

Suggested reading assignments during Winter Break:
SPRING TERM

The second term is structured to allow for regularly scheduled check-ins and consultation among teams, between teams and with faculty on progress in meeting project objectives and milestones defined by the work plans and assignments in this syllabus. Faculty is also available by appointment to meet with teams throughout the term as well as during scheduled class time. Instructional presentations in class will be modified as necessary, based on common problems and skill-building activities suggested by the teams’ experiences.

The two major products of the second term are the project Presentation and the project Report.

- The Presentation is the event at which the team presents the client with a summary of findings and recommendations and an overview of the methodology used. It may include the use of visual presentation tools, such as handouts, transparencies, PowerPoint, etc. It will likely be an interactive session during which the team will be asked to explain or discuss findings, recommendations or methodology and to include/exclude/emphasize or de-emphasize parts of the presentation in the final report.
- The Report is the final document that states the problem, describes in more detail the methodology used to address the problem, proposes and explains the conclusions and may include the source material used to support the report. It may contain other relevant information such as the result of a literature search on the topic or whatever else the consulting team thinks will be useful to the client.
- Both the presentation and the report are expected to be professional products, reflecting graduate level work and of immediate use to the client.

Spring 2016 full class meeting dates and topics:

- January 25, 2016  Deliverables: the final report and presentation
- February 29, 2016  Presentation Skills workshop
- March 28, 2016  Team presentation rehearsals
- April 4, 2016  Team presentation rehearsals
- May 2, 2016  Final class
- May 10, 2016 (Tuesday)  NYU/Wagner Capstone Expo

Spring 2016 individual team meeting dates³:

- February 1, 2016
- February 8, 2016
- February 22, 2016
- March 7, 2016

³ Teams should plan to meet one or more times each week. Our classroom is available to you for team meetings every Tuesday evening from 4:30-6:10pm on the dates shown above. Faculty will be in attendance on the dates of the full class meetings, and also available to meet as necessary on the open team meeting dates. Each team should plan specific times throughout the semester to “check-in” with faculty.
• March 21, 2016
• April 11, 2016
• April 18, 2016
• April 25, 2016 (Optional)

SESSION 15: JANUARY 25, 2016 - **FIRST DAY OF 2ND SEMESTER** – The final report and the final presentation

• Syllabus/schedule for spring semester
• Preparing the final report
• Preparing the final presentation
• Team meetings

Readings:
• Damschroder LJ, Aron DC, Keith RE, et al. Fostering implementation of health services research findings into practice; a consolidated framework for advancing implementation science. *Implementation Science*. 2009; 4(50). **ON NYU CLASSES**

SESSION 16: February 1, 2016 – **TEAM MEETINGS (LOCATION TBD)**

• Team meetings

SESSION 17: February 8, 2016 – **TEAM MEETINGS (LOCATION TBD)**

• Team meetings

**FEBRUARY 15, 2016 – PRESIDENTS’ DAY - NO SCHEDULED CLASS MEETING**

SESSION 18: February 22, 2016 – **MILESTONE CHECK IN TEAM MEETINGS (LOCATION TBD)**

• Team meetings
  • Discuss outline for final team presentation and report
  • Review task list/task accomplishments/any interim deliverables
  • Discuss important findings and most important recommendations (to date)
SESSION 19: FEBRUARY 29, 2016 — PRESENTATION SKILLS WORKSHOP

Presenting Your Project
Will Carlin
Kimmel Center for University Life
60 Washington Square South
4th Floor – Eisner & Lubin Auditorium

Readings:
  - Organize your thoughts 47-50
  - Apply storytelling principles 63-64
  - Craft the beginning 67-70
  - Make the ending powerful 73-4
  - Storyboard one idea per slide 123-126
  - Rehearse your material well 155-158
  - Get the most out of your Q & A 187-190

Due March 1:
- Preliminary outline of final report

SESSION 20: March 7, 2016 - TEAM MEETINGS (LOCATION TBD)

- Team meetings

Due March 21:
- Initial version of slides for presentation
- Rough draft of Report (to include organization, overview of methodology and key ideas on which presentation will be built (need not include final wording). Draft should be e-mailed in advance of class to professor, and delivered in hard copy form at class.
- Each team will schedule a final presentation to the client, to take place (to the extent possible, during the period from April 5 through April 22. Assigned faculty member must be present for the final client meeting. Teams will sign up for a “rehearsal” presentation to the class on March 28 or April 4.

March 14, 2016 – SPRING BREAK - NO SCHEDULED CLASS MEETING
TEAM MEETINGS MAY BE HELD AT OPTION OF TEAM
SESSION 21: MARCH 21, 2016 – TEAM MEETINGS (LOCATION TBD)

- Team meetings
  - Review presentation format & slides
  - Discuss initial draft of final report

SESSION 22: MARCH 28, 2016 – PRESENTATION REHEARSALS

- Rehearsals
- Team meetings

SESSION 23: April 4, 2016 – PRESENTATION REHEARSALS

- Rehearsals
- Team meetings

At the end of the class evaluation forms will be made available. They will cover self-evaluation and an evaluation of other team members. *Evaluations to be returned in class on May 4th via mail or e-mail prior to May 2nd.*

SESSION 24: APRIL 11, 2016 - TEAM MEETINGS (LOCATION TBD)

- Continue work on final presentation and project

Due April 17:
- Near final draft of team report

SESSION 25: APRIL 18, 2016 - TEAM MEETINGS (LOCATION TBD)

- Team meetings
  - Incorporate changes requested by client during the final presentation
  - Review near final draft of report
- Discussion about Capstone End Event

Teams wishing to be considered for school-wide Capstone Awards (Writing Award or Teamwork Award) should submit Final Report to Faculty no later than April 26.

SESSION 26: APRIL 25, 2016 - NO FORMAL CLASS MEETING. CLASS TIME RESERVED; TEAMS ARE FREE TO MEET ON THEIR OWN
SESSION 27: May 2, 2016 - FINAL CLASS

- Hand in Final Report* with any modifications suggested by the client during the presentation meeting.
- Report back on final presentations
- Review of class and lessons learned
- Turn in team/self evaluations
- Course evaluation
- Celebration!

SESSION 28: TUESDAY, May 10, 2016 - CAPSTONE EXPO – Location TBD
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Mission of NYU Wagner is:

... to be a path-breaking leadership school of public service, with a faculty of thought leaders who re-frame the way people understand and act on issues of public importance, and graduates who are bold, well-prepared change makers who expertly navigate real-world complexity and produce results that matter.

Academic Integrity is vital to this mission, to education at NYU Wagner and membership in the Wagner community.

It is a core value. It forms the foundation of trust among students, and between students and teachers. Cheating has no place in our community. Academic dishonesty or other offenses against the community are not individual acts affecting only the individuals involved. Cheating violates our communal trust in each other; it is an offense against our community of scholarship. If tolerated, it undermines all we stand for. Honesty matters at Wagner, just as it does in the broader world of public service.

It is a shared value. Administration, faculty and students each play a vital part in promoting, securing and nurturing it. I invite you to visit the NYU Wagner website and review our Academic Code and Academic Oath (www.wagner.nyu.edu/current/policies), as well as the Wagner Student Association’s Code of Professional Responsibility. If at any time you have a question about Academic Integrity or suspect a violation of our code, seek guidance from any member of the faculty or administration.

It is a promoted value. It is incumbent on all members of the community to promote it, through scholarship, responsible participation in School events, assistance to other community members who are struggling with it, and by upholding the codes of the school and the Wagner Student Association.

Included below is a list of resources for understanding and avoiding plagiarism:

- "Plagiarism: What is It and How to Recognize and Avoid It," The Writing Center at Indiana University, www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html
- “Principles Regarding Academic Integrity, Northwestern University, www.northwestern.edu/uacc/plagiar.html

Reference Citation:

- For research resources regarding appropriate citation of the many different sources you will use in your work, see Writing on the NYU/Wagner webpage, under "Current Students/Academic Services."
- The use of the AMA Manual of Style is recommended for reference citation. A quick reference guide to this style is posted on Blackboard.

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