Instructor Information

- Miriam Altman
- Email: mha256@nyu.edu
- Office Hours: By appointment. Please email me with as much advance notice as possible to set up virtual or in-person office hours.

Course Information

- Class Meeting Times: 6:45-8:25 pm
- Class Location: 25 W4th St., C-2

Course Prerequisites

- All 5 school-wide core courses;
- PADM-GP.2132 or 2310l and PADM-GP.4130;
- and one additional required SI3 specialization course.

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

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;
- connect their project with previous coursework in their broader program and specialization.

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 as defined through the problem identification process;
- establish a team charter, including agreed upon norms and team workflows;
- develop an internal project work plan including scope, timeline and deliverables;
- meet deadlines and monitor their progress against the contract and work plan;
- revise team charter and work plan as necessary.

b. Business Model Development
Students should demonstrate the ability to:
- identify the problem through customer discovery processes;
- develop and continually iterate upon the Business Model Canvas;
- maintain regular and productive communication with key stakeholders;
- solicit and integrate feedback from the stakeholders on design and deliverables;
- identify and execute upon a project next steps plan, such post-course launch, existing organization acquisition, or future team handoff;
- 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 beneficiary’s needs;
● prepare clear and well-argued verbal presentations tailored to the beneficiary’s needs.

Learning Assessment Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Learning Objective</th>
<th>Corresponding Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand the policy and/or management context for their project</td>
<td>Interim and final products</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frame and refine the problem through customer discovery</td>
<td>Interim and final products</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish a team charter, including agreed upon norms and team workflows;</td>
<td>Signed contract among team members</td>
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<td>Develop an internal project work plan</td>
<td>Team work plan</td>
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<td>Meet deadlines and monitor their progress against the workplan</td>
<td>Signed contract and team work plan</td>
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<td>Advocate points of view and negotiate differences of opinion</td>
<td>Self and team peer evaluations</td>
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<td>Appreciate and learn from cultural and other differences</td>
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**Course Requirements**

Students formed teams of 3-5 students prior to enrolling in this Capstone section. Only on a unique, case-by-case basis will student requests to change teams be considered.

The class will involve presentations from the instructor, guest speakers, class discussion, team presentations and 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 and customer discovery;
- participation in meetings with beneficiaries;
- participation in preparation and presentation of findings.

**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.

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% 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% 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.
Late individual or group assignments will only be considered prior to the assignment deadline. If students seek an extension on any assignment, s/he must communicate this request, along with rationale, to me via email at least 24 hours prior to the deadline. While I understand that circumstances arise and aim to be reasonable with students, as I know all students manage several commitments and obligations, I reserve the right to grant or deny extension requests on a case-by-case basis.

**Submitting Assignments**

All graded assignments, except for survey and evaluation links, should be submitted via Google Docs, Slides, Sheets, with edit access. The instructor will provide feedback via comments and suggested edits to these materials. For team assignments, one designated team member should turn in all assignments on behalf of the team.

Assignment templates, associated readings, video, and audio files are available in the “resources” section in Classes.

**Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings for the entirety of the meeting time. If a class session is optional, only partial attendance is required; I will convey this via the syllabus, in writing via Classes messaging and/or verbally in person. If a circumstance arises that interferes with this commitment, the student should email me as soon as possible, will be expected to work with teammates to catch up on missed materials, and is expected to submit materials due during the missed class meeting via NYU Classes by the deadline. If students miss more than two class meetings in a semester, I will report this to the Capstone and SI3 leadership to determine next steps and potential consequences.

**Technology in Class**

Students are welcome to bring and use personal laptops and other devices to class to use during team work time. Please leave all technology out of sight during guest, professor, or student colleague presentations. Should you like to take notes, please do so manually. All guest presenter materials will be available after class on NYU Classes, as well.

**Recommended Readings and Resources**

Varied articles and multimedia assignments are available on the NYU Classes website under Resources.

The below are recommended, though not required, readings and podcasts.

This course will heavily refer to the COR and Business Model Canvases. More information is available online, but for easy and quick reference, see here:

- **COR Canvas**: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1fl4Y49HFIL3Q91Ema4EVPnMLPN-d0--T4Glz2ERYg4/edit#gid=480380354
- **Business Model Canvas**: https://canvanizer.com/new/business-model-canvas

### Course Milestones

The course has a series of milestones – both activities and products -- that will serve as interim work products. I’ve suggested time frames in parentheses, though actual timing during the course of the year may vary depending on the specific situation of each team and client.

These milestones include:

- Preliminary team charters and role designations for professor feedback (September/October);
- Preliminary team work plan for professor feedback (October);
- Presentation of preliminary business model canvas (October);
- Final team charter and workplan, signed by all team members (October/November);
- Completion of a minimum of 40 customer discovery interviews (November/December);
- Presentation of draft II business model canvas and problem identification statement, mission and vision statement, and theory of change (December)
- End-of-first semester self, team/peer, and course evaluations; discussion of team process and progress (December);
- Landscape and competitive analysis (January);
- Barriers to entry assessment (January);
- Product definition and design (February);
- Strategy and implementation plan (February);
- Organizational and operational plan (February/March);
- Social impact metrics plan (February/March);
- Financing plan and financial model (February/March);
- Draft 1 of business case and hand-in deck to faculty for feedback (March);
- Rehearsal of client presentation feedback before presentation to panel (March/April);
- Draft 2 of business case and hand-in deck to peers for feedback (March/April);
- Final presentation to evaluation panel (April);
- End-of-second semester reflection and celebration (May);
- End-of-course self, team /peer, client and course evaluations (end April/beginning of May);
- Final draft business case and hand-in deck to professor for final grading (early May);
• Capstone Expo (mid-May).

Class Schedule Overview

For vacations and holidays, see the university’s academic calendar for 2019-20. (https://www.nyu.edu/registrar/calendars/university-academic-calendar.html) See also the policy on religious holidays.

During the year, we hold Capstone skills trainings during the Monday Capstone class time. These dates are:

• November 25, 2019 (Tentative): Presentation Skills
  o While students may have received prior training, this session will focus on group presentations and presenting in the context of consulting. This session is required for all Capstone students.

Also, Capstone Expo will be on Tuesday, May 12 2020.

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.

We will meet weekly as a class or in teams unless agreed beforehand or indicated otherwise in the schedule below.

The sequence of classes, and due dates for assignments, could change depending in part on guest speaker availabilities. Specific requirements for each class will be posted on NYU Classes and emailed to you with enough lead time to prepare. NYU Classes takes precedence over what is written here.

Fall Semester

09/9/19 - CLASS 1: Introductions

Due for this class:

• Team:
  o Prepare 5-minute team and project introductions; email optional slides to mha256@nyu.edu by 6pm

Class Meeting Detail: Students will gain an introduction to the course and to each team’s projects

• Introductions
• Ice breaker
• Team updates
• Syllabus, course structure, class structure review
9/16/19 - CLASS 2: Problem Identification I – Customer Interviews

Due for this class:

- **Individual**

**Class Meeting Detail:** Students will learn the customer discovery and problem identification process from guest presenter, Frank Rimalovski, Executive Director, the Leslie eLab.

- Presentation and workshop on customer discovery and problem identification
- Team meetings and work time on customer discovery interview questions, scheduling, and coordination
- Teams present customer discovery questions

9/23/19 - CLASS 3: Problem Identification II – Business Model Canvas

Due by this Class:

- **Team:**
  - Complete a minimum of five customer discovery interviews
  - Submit a synthesis of the trends among the interviews via Classes

- **Individual:**
  - Read or listen to Kinvolved on “The Business of Giving.”
    - Read here: Kinvolved, "The Business of Giving"
    - Listen here: Kinvolved, “The Business of Giving”
  - Review the Business Model Canvas

**Class Meeting Detail:** Students will check understanding of customer interviewing process, receive an introduction to the Business Model Canvas

- Review Business Model Canvas, using Kinvolved as an example

9/30/19 - NO CLASS (Rosh Hashanah)

10/7/19 - CLASS 4: Introduction to the Team Charter and COR Canvas

Due this Class:

- **Team:**
  - Submit draft Business Model Canvas via Classes

- **Individual:**
  - Read, *Why Diversity Matters,* from McKinsey
  - Read the “Values Alignment” case study
  - Read the “Transparency and Truthiness” case study
Class Meeting Detail: Instructor will introduce the COR Canvas, Team Charter, and facilitate discussion on developing diverse teams. Students will participate in discussion of the two case studies.

- COR Canvas and Team Charter Overviews
- Case and building diverse teams discussion in Capstone teams
- Case and building diverse teams discussion as a class

10/15/19* - CLASS 5: Case Studies: Partnership Alignment + Organizational Structure

*Note Monday classes meet on a Tuesday schedule due to Fall Break on 10/14.*

Due this Class:

- **Team:**
  - Submit draft 1 Team Charter via Classes
- **Individual:**
  - Read, “How to Make Your Startup Team More Diverse,” from Entrepreneur
  - Read the “Partnership Alignment” case study
  - Read the “Organizational Structure and Culture” case study

will participate in discussion of the two case studies, along with action plan to develop a diverse team, as part of the COR Canvas.

- Discussion in Capstone teams
- Discussion as a class
- Worktime on COR Canvas and Team Charters

10/21/18 - CLASS 6: COR Canvas

Due this Class:

- **Team:**
  - Submit COR Canvas via Classes
  - Prepare 5-minute presentations on team COR Canvas
- **Individual:**
  - NA

Class Meeting Detail: Students will present COR Canvases in Teams, and will learn the use, structure, and process of establishing a Team Charter.

- COR Canvas 5-minute team presentations
- Team Charter work time / team meetings with instructor
10/28/18 - Independent Team Meetings

11/4/19 - CLASS 7: Midterm Team Check-ins

Due this Class:
• **Team:**
  - Complete a minimum of 20 customer discovery interviews
  - Synthesize notes from customer discovery interviews and submit synopsis via Classes
  - Submit one-page Problem Identification Statement via Classes
  - Prepare 5-minute team updates presentation with slides, including share out of trends in customer discovery interviews, resulting updates to Business Model Canvas, and Problem Statement. Email slides by 6pm to mha256@nyu.edu.

• **Individual:**
  - Complete survey evaluating COR Canvas

**Class Meeting Detail:** Students will share key learnings from trends in customer discovery interviews, calling out changes to initial Business Model Canvas, based on learnings, and engage in discussion and Q&A with other teams in the class.

11/11/19 - CLASS 8: Mission, Vision, and Theory of Change

Due this Class:
• **Team:**
  - Submit final draft, signed by all team members, of Team Charters via Classes

• **Individual:**
  - N/A

**Class Meeting Detail:** Students will gain insights on developing a mission, vision, and theory of change for the social venture.
  - Instructor presentation and workshop

11/18/19 - CLASS 9: Landscape Analysis and Barriers to Entry

Due this Class:
• **Team:**
  - Submit team/organization mission, vision, theory of change via Classes

**Class Meeting Detail:** Students will learn competitive analysis and barriers to entry.
  - Instructor presentation and workshop

11/25/19 - Required Session: Presentation Skills

  Location: Greenberg Lounge, NYU Law School
Class Meeting Detail: While students may have received prior training, this session will focus on group presentations and presenting in the context of consulting. This session is required for all Capstone students. The location will be announced closer to the date, and will meet during the regular Capstone class period.

12/2/19 - CLASS 10: Semester-end Updates

Due this Class:

- **Team:**
  - Complete 40+ customer interviews (20 new interviews since last presentation)
  - Synthesize notes from all 40 customer discovery interviews and submit synopsis via Classes
  - Prepare 10-minute team updates presentation, including findings from customer discovery, changes in Business Model Canvas, problem statement, mission, vision, and theory of change. Submit slides to mha256@nyu.edu by 6pm.

- **Individual:**
  - Complete individual, team, and course evaluations

Class Meeting Detail: Students will present learnings based upon 40+ customer discovery interviews, problem statement, mission, vision, and theory of change. Students will engage in discussion and Q&A with other teams in the class.

12/9/19 - CLASS 11: Team Work Product and Dynamics Check Ins

Due this Class:

- **Team:**
  - Prepare questions regarding and work product feedback, competitive and landscape analyses work due after the break
  - Submit landscape and competitive analysis via Classes

- **Individual:**
  - Prepare responses to professor’s team meeting prompts regarding team dynamics

Class Meeting Detail: Students will review both work product feedback, as well as individual, team, and course feedback with the professor.

- Professor meets with each team to review evaluations (anonymously, in aggregate) and engage in discussion

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). If faculty or team members are not available for some portion of this time, this should be made clear and discussed within each team, between team and faculty, and between team and client.
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.

1/27/20 - CLASS 12: Team Updates and Introduction to Spring Semester
Due this Class:
- **Team:**
  - Complete 70+ customer interviews (30 new interviews since last presentation)
  - Synthesize notes from all 70 customer discovery interviews and submit synopsis via Classes
  - Prepare 5-minute team updates presentation, including findings from customer discovery, changes in Business Model Canvas, and competitive and landscape analysis. Submit slides to mha256@nyu.edu by 6pm.
- **Individual:**
  - Read guest lecturer, Alexandra Meis, prep materials, available on Classes

**Class Meeting Detail:** Students will present learnings based upon 70+ customer discovery interviews. Students will engage in discussion and Q&A with other teams in the class. Instructor will review Spring Semester expectations and final Business Case and Hand In Deck.

2/3/20 - CLASS 13: Product Development
Due this Class:
- **Team:**
  - Prepare product hypothesis, overview, and/or MVP design
- **Individual:**
  - Read guest lecture prep materials, available on Classes

**Class Meeting Detail:** Students will learn strategies for product development and design.
- Guest lecture and team workshop: Alexandra Meis, Chief Product Officer, Kinvolved

2/10/20 - CLASS 14: Strategic Planning
Due this Class:
- **Team:**
  - Submit Product Definition and Design via Classes

**Class Meeting Detail:** Students will learn to develop a strategic plan through workshop with instructor.
2/17/20 - NO CLASS (Presidents Day)

2/24/20 - CLASS 15: Operational Planning and Evaluation

Due this Class:

- **Team:**
  - Submit Strategy and Implementation Plan via Classes
- **Individual:**
  - Review guest lecturer, Stephanie Khurana, prep materials

**Class Meeting Detail:** Students will learn to develop and operational and evaluation plan. Student teams will also participate in mid-semester team dynamics check in with instructor.

3/2/20 - Class 16: Funding, Financial Planning, and Modeling

Due this Class:

- **Team:**
  - Submit Operational and Social Impact Metrics/Evaluation Plans via Classes

**Class Meeting Detail:** Students will learn to create a startup financing plan and financial model.

- Guest lecture by Stephanie Khurana, Managing Director, Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation
- Startup financing plan and model workshop with instructor

3/9/20 - NO CLASS: Independent Team/Instructor* Meetings

Due this Date (by 10pm):

- **Team:**
  - Submit draft Business Case and Hand-In Deck, including:
    - Problem Statement, including synthesis of 70+ customer interviews
    - Mission, Vision, Theory of Change
    - Competitive and Landscape Analysis, Barriers to Entry
    - Product Definition and Design
    - Strategy and Implementation Plan
    - Operational Plan
    - Social Impact Metrics/Evaluation Plan
    - Startup Financing Plan
    - Financial Model
3/16/20 - NO CLASS: Spring Break

3/23/20 - NO CLASS: Independent Team/Instructor* Meetings
*Student teams may schedule virtual meetings with instructor this and next week to review Business Case and Hand-in Deck feedback, as needed.*

3/30/20 - Class 17: Final Presentation Rehearsal - Group I
Due this Class:
  ● Team:
    ○ Draft final presentations (for those two teams rehearsing today)

Class Meeting Detail: Two student teams will rehearse final presentations and provide feedback to opposite team.

4/6/20 - Class 18: Final Presentation Rehearsal - Group II
Due this Class:
  ● Team:
    ○ Draft final presentations (for those two teams rehearsing today)

Class Meeting Detail: Two remaining student teams will rehearse final presentations and provide feedback to opposite team.

4/13/20 - NO CLASS: Independent Team Meetings

4/20/20 - CLASS 19: Final Team Presentations
Due this Class:
  ● Team:
    ○ Final presentations prepared and decks submitted (by Sunday evening) via email to mha256@nyu.edu.

Class Meeting Detail: Students will deliver final presentations to external evaluators.
  ● External evaluators will be announced, and bios provided, a few weeks prior to the class.
  ● This class may meet in an alternative location to accommodate guests.
  ● Students will be invited to welcome at least one guest, depending upon space, to observe final presentations. Refreshments will be provided. This class will last until 9pm to accommodate all teams’ presentations.
4/27/20 - NO CLASS: Independent Team/Instructor* Meetings

*Students may schedule meetings with instructor to review panel feedback, as desired, to inform final draft business case and hand-in deck.

Due this date:

- **Individual:**
  - Self, team, and course evaluations

5/4/20 - NO CLASS: Independent Team Meetings

5/11/20 - CLASS 20: Team Reflections

Due this Class:

- **Team:**
  - Submit Final Business Case and Final Hand-in Deck via Classes
- **Individual:**
  - Prepare verbal responses to team reflection meetings, provided by professor

**Class Meeting Detail:** Students will meet in teams with professor to review individual, team, and course feedback.

- Students will write a brief welcome/lessons learned note to a future Capstone student during class.
- Teams will make last-minute preparations for Capstone Expo

5/12/20 - CAPSTONE EXPO!

**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 mosecsd@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.

Instructor Bio

Miriam Altman
Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder, Kinvolved (LinkedIn)

A former NYC Department of Education high school history teacher, Miriam Altman is CEO and Co-founder of Kinvolved, a social enterprise that takes a holistic approach to fighting student absenteeism, combining technology tools and human interventions to increase funding to school districts, create more economically viable communities, and improve graduation rates.

Miriam’s responsibilities include strategic planning and execution, business development and sales, fundraising and investor relations, and external relations and representation, and more.

Kinvolved has been featured in outlets, including the New York Times and National Public Radio, and has won awards from The Robin Hood Foundation, Teach For America, New York University, the University of Pennsylvania, and more.

Miriam is a winner of the Gratitude Award, Forbes 30 Under 30, and the Jo Ivey Boufford Award for Innovative Solutions to Public Service Challenges by New York University. She was a 2018 School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) Entrepreneurial Fellow at Columbia University, a Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation entrepreneur, and is an Education Pioneers and Teach For America Corps alumna.

Miriam earned an MPA from the Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at New York University, where she is an Adjunct Professor in the Social Innovation specialization, an MA, Ed., from Lehman College, and at BA with Honors from Brown University.