



NYU

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

Capstone: CAP-GP 3401-1 Section 6

Fall 2020 – Spring 2021

Instructor Information

- Veronica Manning
- Vlb235@nyu.edu
- Office Hours: By appointment

Course Information

- Class Meeting Times: Mondays, 6:45 pm - 8:25 pm
- Via Zoom
 - Meeting ID 932 9448 8131
 - URL: <https://nyu.zoom.us/j/93294488131>

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 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
Negotiate a contract with their client	Signed contract with client
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

An array of potential projects has been identified for our section. You will see the applications and, in most cases, will be able to interact with prospective clients via Zoom, before marking your preferences. 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. 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.

Since Capstone is on-line this year, we presume client and team meetings will be as well. Travel for fieldwork is very unlikely. If it turns out to be possible in January or the spring, the school will provide 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 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, phone calls, supplies, etc. None of these funds can be spent hiring others to do work that you are expected to do, e.g., 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 NYU Classes website.

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. 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. **60% is based on work products** identified in the milestones as well as any interim deliverables to the client or assigned by the faculty member. **40% 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.

Required Readings and Other Resources

Course readings will be available on the NYU Classes website for this course.

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)
- 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/November);
- 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 (March/April);
- Final report and presentation to client (April);
- End-of-second semester reflection and celebration (April/May);
- End-of-course self, team /peer, client and course evaluations (April/May);
- Presentation for Capstone Expo (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. Specific requirements for each class will be posted on NYU Classes and emailed to you with enough lead time to prepare.

Racial equity will be a through-line in the syllabus.

NYU Brightspace takes precedence over what is written here.

Fall Semester 2021

Important note about assignments:

- Assignments are due Sunday at 6 pm prior to class unless otherwise noted.
- Recurring assignment: Team Weekly Update
- Due dates for project related deliverables such as the contract, literature review, environmental scan may be different for each team. Each team will have their own internal workplan. If you will not hand in a deliverable by the dates on the syllabus, please let the Instructor know of your new deadline ahead of time.

DATE	TOPIC(S)
9/13/21 Class 1	Welcome & Introductions What are best practices for capstone projects? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In Class: Introduce yourself to your team• In Class: Class Community Norms• Conduct background research on your client• Review client proposal, presentation and other relevant data available• Review Syllabus and Capstone Guide• Due 9/15: Draft of email to client (send to instructor)• Reading: Flawless Consulting, Chapters 1, 2, 3
9/20/21 Class 2	What makes teams successful? What do team members need from each other in order to solve their client's problem? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In Class: Team Charter• In Class: Meeting Preparation, Agenda, Roles• Due: 1st Reflection Paper: Reflect on what your most successful team projects and the ones that needed improvement. What made them a success or failure? How did you contribute to the success? Taking lessons from your experience, what do you plan on doing in your Capstone teams to ensure a successful team experience and project? See Reflection Rubric for more details on how reflection papers will be graded.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Due: Schedule client kickoff (must include Instructor)• Due: 1st Meeting Agenda• Due: Questions for Client• Due: Suggestions for project scope• Reading: How Management Teams Can Have A Good Fight• Recurring assignment: Weekly Update
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<p>9/27/21</p> <p>Class 3</p>	<p>How do we manage the client, their expectations and deliver a final report that will WOW them?</p> <p>Client Contracts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: Capstone consulting videos: Intro, What Consulting Is and Isn't and The Role of Technical and Interpersonal Skills • Due: Draft of Team Charter • Due: Draft Project Scope • Due: Memo on Initial Client Meeting (due 1 week after initial client meeting) • Be prepared to report on your background research on your client (I don't need to see anything written) <p>Optional Session: Wagner Alums Share Tips/Advice on Capstone Experience (Date/Time: TBD)</p>
<p>10/4/21</p> <p>Class 4</p>	<p>What are we working towards? How can backwards planning, work plans, and good team communication get my team to the finish line?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backwards Planning from Final Report • In Class: Expert Team Activity • Due: Client Contract
<p>10/12/21 Tuesday</p> <p>Class 5</p>	<p>Project Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View: Consulting videos: The Project Management Triangle, Client Expectations Mgmt, Risk Mgmt, Client Mtg Mgmt. • In Class: Map deliverables and tasks • In Class: Draft Work Plans • Due: Final Signed Contract
<p>10/18/21</p> <p>Class 6</p>	<p>Project Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In class: Present work plan and risks • Due: Work Plan
<p>10/25/21</p> <p>Class 7</p>	<p>Literature Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review <u>Wagner Capstone Library Guide</u> • Use Bobst Library databases to find scholarly articles • Review examples of literature reviews and be prepared to discuss strengths and weaknesses • In class: Share results of research and discuss lit review examples • This week: Draft outline of literature review
<p>11/1/21</p> <p>Class 8</p>	<p>How will your team develop a culture of feedback and reflection?</p> <p>Giving and Receiving Feedback</p>

11/08/21 Class 9	Debrief Feedback Due: Self, Team and Instructor Mid Semester Evaluation Due: Draft of Literature Review
11/15/21 Class 10	Environmental Scan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review examples of environmental scans • This week: Draft outline of environmental scan
11/22/21 Class 11	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Teams
11/29/21 Class 12	Team meetings Due: Draft of Environmental Scan
12/6/21 Class 13	Team Evaluations and Debriefs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In class: Discuss evaluations Due: Team and Individual Feedback Due: Literature Review
12/13/21 Class 14	Individual Meetings with Instructor Due: Environmental Scan

Spring Semester

During this semester, much of the time will be set aside for teams to meet/work on their own or with me. The schedule below incorporates flexibility about the need for formal class meeting times. However, as needed, I may schedule problem-solving or skill-building sessions, or call for a required meeting with your team, so **you must be available every Monday night during class time**. Also, for planning purposes, I have set below target deadlines, but, as you know from fall semester, **these deadlines could differ across projects with instructor permission**.

DATE	TOPIC(S)
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1/24/22 Class 1	<p>Team Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present Progress Updates <p>Due: Outline of Final Report Due: Update Work Plan</p>
1/31/22 Class 2	Final Reports and Presentation
2/7/21 Class 3	Due: Draft of Final Presentation
2/14/22 Class 4	Due: Draft of Recommendations
2/21/22 Class 5	No Class - President's Day
2/28/22 Class 6	Due: Draft of Final Report Due: Schedule final presentation to client
3/07/22 Class 7	TBD
3/14/22 Class 8	No Class - Spring Break
3/21/22 Class 9	Editing Reports
3/28/22 Class 10	Reflection and Offering Feedback
4/04/22 Class 11	Presentation Rehearsal # 1

04/11/22 Class 12	TBD
04/18/22 Class 13	Presentation Rehearsal #2 Due: Final Draft of Final Report
04/25/22 Class 14	Getting the most from Capstone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update LinkedIn with Capstone experience
05/02/22 Class 15	Evaluations
05/09/22 Class 16	Reflect and Celebrate Due: Submit final reports to Instructor and wagner.capstone@nyu.edu

Capstone Expo - Tuesday, May 10, 2022 (Tentative Date)

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 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 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.