



NYU

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

CAP-GP 3226-3227, Section 001

International Capstone:

Advanced Projects in International Finance, Management, Policy & Planning

Fall 2021 and Spring 2022

Instructor Information

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Course Information

- Class Time: Mondays, 6:45-8:25 p.m.
- Class Location: Virtual via Zoom (Fall); Spring arrangements to be announced

Course Description

This is a two-term course in which students work in teams on consulting assignments for a public or non-profit service agency (capstone client) focused on international development. This year's version offers a range of finance, management, planning and policy related projects. Many projects, however, cut across multiple areas, so teams may include members with various interests and from more than one Wagner program/specialization.

The main purpose of capstone is to provide teams with an opportunity to define and analyze a problem, present analytical findings, and develop solutions and recommendations for the client. Students will design the approach, conduct required data collection and analysis, and generally present the findings to the faculty advisor and clients through a seminar (if feasible and useful for the client) and a written report. The specific deliverables, however, may vary to some extent among clients.

An important goal of capstone is to **simulate as much as possible the professional world**, including its uncertainties and the need to work closely with teammates and clients to meet the desired objectives. Students should expect some changes to their initial plans. There will invariably be challenges along the way, and the team needs to be flexible and adaptable.

All capstone students are expected to familiarize themselves with requirements outlined in the [Capstone Student Guide](#), which is posted on Brightspace and is available along with other capstone resources from the NYU/Wagner Student Portal (you need to be logged in to access this).

Students may wish to read **Flawless Consulting** by Peter Block, 3rd edition. You can purchase it, access it online through NYU Libraries ([Flawless Consulting](#)), or check it out from [Bobst Course Reserves](#).

Course and Learning Objectives

Capstone involves some class meetings, but much of the work for capstone will be done outside of the classroom, and some capstone teams will do fieldwork if pandemic conditions permit. Classroom interactions, team coaching, and project activities will focus on four major areas of expertise:

1. How to **design and execute an extended project** for a client organization
 - Identify in collaboration with the client a real organizational or policy issue/problem
 - Design and execute a detailed work plan for analyzing the issue
 - Implement the work plan (including participation in any planned fieldwork)
 - Prepare and present clear, well organized, effective and on-time interim and final reports or other deliverables for the client (may be both oral and written)
2. How to successfully work with a **client and relevant stakeholders**
 - Understand how organizations function and how to work effectively in the institutional culture in which the client operates, which may be unfamiliar and/or challenging
 - Respond appropriately to client needs and expectations during implementation
3. How to function as a member of a **consulting team working for a client**
 - Manage team-client communication (accepting the constraints faced by the client and the team and the client's desired frequency and method of communication)
 - Contribute effectively to the team's process and tasks
 - Resolve internal team conflicts constructively and in timely manner
4. How to conduct and present **effective applied research**
 - Identify and carry out data collection methods appropriate for the defined capstone task, potentially including the use of existing data/information, surveys and questionnaires, individual interviews, and focus groups;
 - Follow appropriate sampling procedures (where relevant) for a particular project;
 - Identify and implement appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative analysis required to meet the capstone objectives;
 - Situate the findings from the project in the broader related literature;
 - Draw conclusions based on the capstone findings and identify possible future actions and applied policy research.
 - Communicate finds effectively in presentations and writing.

Learning Assessment Table

Course Learning Objective	Corresponding Means for Assessment
1. How to design and execute an extended project for a client organization	Team charter, client contract, work plan, team/client/advisor meetings
2. How to successfully work with a client and relevant stakeholders	Team-client meetings, fieldwork, self/peer evaluations, client evaluations of team
3. How to function as a member of a consulting team working for a client	Team/advisor meetings, self/peer evaluations
4. How to conduct and present effective applied research	Team progress/fieldwork report, final report/deliverable(s)

Project Team Formation

Students are assigned to a particular project based on a number of factors, including student preference, client preference, academic preparation, work experience, and required team size. Teams are usually comprised of three to five students who bring a mix of skills and experience and have expressed an interest in the project.

Summary of Course Expectations

1. Enrollment in both semesters
2. Attendance and participation in class activities and team meetings, including occasional school-wide capstone sessions (details in course schedule); please note that the attendance requirement is subject to NYU's Policy on Religious Holidays: [NYU Policy on Religious Holidays](#)
3. Completion of all assignments on time
4. Equitable participation of all team members in planning and executing tasks (including any fieldwork), meeting clients and faculty advisor, preparing deliverable(s) and presenting findings
5. Attendance at the capstone expo in May 2020 (see schedule)

Basic Course Format

The course is scheduled to meet weekly and may utilize a varied and flexible set of learning methods:

1. Presentations given by faculty or visiting experts as needed
2. Facilitated class discussions
3. Selected readings from textbooks/reference sources/journal articles
4. Individual team meetings (during and outside of class as needed)
5. Team/faculty/client consultations (during and outside of class as needed)
6. Experiential learning
7. Self-reflection and self/peer-evaluation

Once teams are formed and basic material is covered, most weekly class periods will be devoted to team meetings and team consultations with the faculty advisor and/or client rather than full class meetings.

Evaluation Criteria

Grades are assigned **at the end of the full course** in the spring (**incomplete interim grades of IP (satisfactory) or IF (unsatisfactory) are assigned for the fall semester**). Students are graded on:

1. All work products/submitted assignments generated by the team (70 percent of grade; **same grade given to all team members**)
 - Project and product management
 - i. Project deliverables, team charter, draft and revised work plans, progress/fieldwork report, other agreed-on progress reports, draft and revised final report,
 - ii. timeliness of work assignments
 - Client satisfaction, as determined by a final written evaluation done by the client of the content and presentation of oral and written reports
2. Students' individual performance as a member of a consulting team (30 percent of grade; **can result in the adjustment of individual final grades**)
 - Evidence of learning throughout the course
 - Individual contribution to the team/class discussions
 - Written peer evaluations of team members
 - Written self-evaluation memo

Academic Honesty and Grading Policy

Capstone will abide by the NYU Wagner School policy guidelines on academic honesty and grading. It is each student's responsibility to become familiar with these policies. All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](#) and are expected to pursue and meet the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity. 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. Please see the NYU Wagner Student Portal for detailed information on the academic code and grading policy.

- [Academic Code](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/code) (https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/code)
- [Grading](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/grading) (https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/grading)

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 requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center early in the semester for assistance.

Overview of Course Format

1. Although **some teams may follow a more accelerated or extended schedule to meet client needs or team preferences**, fall semester generally focuses on **team start-up, background work, and fieldwork preparation (if any)**. **Fieldwork is usually in January**. Spring semester will typically focus primarily on **drafting and revising the final report or deliverable(s)**.
2. A portion of a few class meetings, depending on team needs, may be used for **skill-building/consultation sessions** that will help the teams produce high quality projects on a timely basis.
3. Most class periods will set aside time for **faculty advisor/team consultations**; teams may also need to meet their advisor by appointment outside of the class period.
4. Students should generally **expect to meet weekly** as a team, although there may be some weeks when it is not necessary to meet or when multiple meetings (in person or virtual) are required. These meetings need not always occur during the regular class period or in the classroom if team members collectively agree to another time and place, but students should arrange to be available to meet during the scheduled class time.

Assignments

To complete capstone, students must submit a number of assignments/evaluations:

1. **Team charter**
2. **Client-team contract/agreement**
3. **Team workplan**
4. **Mid-year course/self/peer evaluations** (individual)
5. **Team progress report** (or field research report);
6. **Final team report** and/or other deliverable(s); and
7. **Final self/peer/client evaluations** (individual)

Only the final output produced at the end of the academic year is formally graded.

Further details on each assignment will be discussed in class. In order to ensure that all team members will be able to graduate in Spring 2022, it is essential to meet the deadlines specified below.

The following schedule is illustrative—**some clients may request earlier or later deadlines due to their specific needs, and it is always to your advantage to complete requirements early if possible.**

1. Team charter

Deadline: October 18, 2021

Length: Approximately 2-3 pages.

A **team charter** is a summary of the team's objectives, structure, and work practices (see template and samples on Brightspace). It should reflect a consensus of **all** team members on how you will interact with each other, your client, and faculty advisor. The purpose is to make

procedures clear and to provide a mechanism with which to hold team members accountable. **All team members must sign the charter and the terms are binding.**

2. Client-team contract/agreement

Deadline: November 1, 2021 (Draft); December 13, 2021 (Final)

Length: Approximately 3-5 pages

A **client-team contract/agreement** specifies the basic details agreed upon with the client—the objective, the details of what the team will do, the interim and final deliverable(s), the roles of the team and client and the basic work plan/timeline (see template and samples on Brightspace). **If a team is producing deliverable(s) other than a single final report, specific terms and deadlines must be agreed on with the client and adviser as part of the agreement.**

3. Team workplan

Deadline: November 15, 2021 (Draft); December 13, 2021 (Final)

Length: Chart or Excel spreadsheet with explanatory text/reference to client agreement as needed

The **team workplan** should elaborate the time schedule and workplan outlined in client-team agreements. It should include a list of deliverables and due dates. It should also include a detailed list of tasks needed to accomplish each deliverable, the due date, and the person responsible (see template and samples on Brightspace). The client and the instructor must approve the work plan. The final deadline is an **outside date**; it is intended to allow time between client consultations and finalization of work plans and revisions. If a team is doing field work in January, failure to meet this deadline may jeopardize the team's ability to travel.

4. Mid-year course-/peer-/self-evaluations

Deadline: Available online in November, submission date to be announced

Length: Completion of evaluation forms—course, peer and self

Each individual must complete a set of course, peer (one for each other team member) and self-evaluation forms. **NYU Wagner will provide information in advance of the due date.**

5. Team progress (or field research) report

Deadline: January 31, 2022

Length: 10-20 pages of text (but negotiable with advisor); attachments as needed

Each team must prepare a **progress report** on preliminary results and questions emanating from work in the first semester and January (including field research if applicable) in a format agreed on with the faculty advisor and client. It is not intended to be a polished report since teams doing field work will have just returned, but it should summarize the work and initial impressions. These reports serve as the basis for discussions with the client and advisor at the beginning of the spring semester and will help to clarify the content and format of the final report/deliverable(s).

6. Final team report/deliverable(s)

Deadline: April 4, 2022 (Draft); May 9, 2022 (Final)

Length: Varies in form and length as per client needs; attachments as necessary

There are 3 steps towards completing the final report/deliverable(s): (1) the team progress/field research report (as applicable, see above) submitted on January 31, 2022; (2) a first draft of the final report due on April 4, 2020 (to allow adequate time for faculty and client comments and team revisions); and (3) the final report or other deliverable(s) due on May 9, 2020. **Only the final deliverable(s) will be formally graded.** Class sessions in April may be used as rehearsals for final professional presentations if one is to be given to the client.

7. Final course-/peer-/self-/client-evaluations

Deadline: Available online in April, submission date to be announced

Length: Completion of evaluation forms

Each individual must complete peer (one for each other team member), self and client evaluation forms. **NYU Wagner will provide information in advance of the due date.** The final course evaluation (individual) is conducted through the regular online evaluation system by the NYU Wagner administration as for any other course. Each class member will receive separate instructions by email about how to access and complete the regular course evaluation form.

Capstone Expenses

Each capstone team (whether the team travels or not) is entitled to be reimbursed for up to \$500 of miscellaneous capstone related expenses, such as photocopying, phone calls, supplies, etc. The form needed to claim for the expenses and a detailed explanation of eligible expenses, reimbursement procedures, and deadlines is provided in the **Capstone Student Guide** referred to above.

Capstone Travel

Some capstone teams travel domestically or internationally as part of their work program if the client expects fieldwork and Covid-19 pandemic conditions allow it. NYU assists with air and train ticket expenses, but the **funding is limited, and teams must apply for it--there is no guarantee that Wagner can fully cover ticket expenses.** The application form is posted on the Wagner capstone website and more information about the process will be provided in class. The form needed to claim for approved expenses and a detailed explanation of eligible expenses and reimbursement procedures is provided in the **Capstone Student Guide**, referred to above.

Students who travel internationally for capstone must follow all NYU regulations and procedures. The NYU Wagner **Global Travel Handbook** is posted on the NYU Wagner capstone website and on Brightspace. More information will be provided to teams who travel, including a dedicated briefing with NYU Wagner administrative staff in December 2021.

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Preliminary Weekly Schedule, Academic Year 2021-2022

NOTE: This schedule is tentative and may need to be modified. Students will be notified of any modifications. **The individual schedules for some capstone teams may have to be modified to meet the needs of particular clients.**

PRELIMINARY FALL 2021 SCHEDULE

- Sept. 13: Introduction of capstone course and course participants, review of project opportunities
- Sept. 20: Client briefings, continued review and discussion of project opportunities and student preferences
- Sept. 27: Project selection and team formation
- Oct. 4: Getting started: organizational and task diagnosis/negotiating with clients/initial contact with clients
- Oct. 12: (**Tuesday—NYU Legislative Day**): Team charter and initial client-team contract/agreement preparation and individual team meetings
- Oct. 18: **Team charter due**; work on client-team contract/agreement
- Oct. 25-Nov. 1: Individual team meetings and agreement preparation; **Draft client-team contract/agreement due Nov. 1**
- Nov. 8-15: Teams discuss/revise draft client-team contract/agreements, draft detailed workplan. **Draft workplan due Nov. 15**
- Nov. 22-Dec. 6: Individual team meetings, conduct capstone work, revised team-client contract/agreement as needed
- Dec. 13: **Deadline for final approval of client-team contract/agreement and workplan by client and advisor**

PRELIMINARY SPRING 2022 SCHEDULE

- Jan. 24: Progress reports/problem-solving sessions/team meetings
- Jan. 31: **Team progress (field research if applicable) report due**
- Feb. 7-14: Individual team meetings and report/deliverable drafting
- Feb. 21: **No Class (Presidents Day Holiday)**
- Feb. 28-Mar. 7: Individual team meetings and report/deliverable drafting
- Mar. 14: **No Class (Spring Break Week)**
- Mar. 21-28: Individual team meetings and report/deliverable drafting
- April 4: **Draft of final report and/or other deliverables due**
- Apr. 11-May 2-: Report revisions/rehearse final presentations as needed/schedule presentations to clients as required
- May 9: **Final capstone report/deliverable(s) due ***FINAL DEADLINE*****
- May 10: or 11 NYU/WAGNER CAPSTONE EXPO, details to be determined.