



**NYU**

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

## Capstone: CAP-GP 3226 002 Fall 2021 – Spring 2022

### **Instructor Information**

Victoria Donohue | vw345@nyu.edu | Office Hours by appointment

### **Course Information**

- Class Meeting Times: Mondays, 6:45 pm - 8:25 pm
- Via Zoom <https://nyu.zoom.us/j/96476063905>

### **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

<b>Course Learning Objective</b>	<b>Corresponding Assignment</b>
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 must be in line with the university's [travel policy](#) as well as any international and national restrictions. If travel is undertaken, the school will provide financial support, 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% of the final grade **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% of the final grade **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.

## Online and Virtual Participation

Please review Wagner’s [Zoom in the Classroom](#) series about classroom etiquette, participation, and more. If you are unable to participate with video on, please contact me.

Students may not share the Zoom classroom recordings. The recordings are kept within the NYU Brightspace site and are for students enrolled in this course only.

You have 24/7 support via NYU’s IT services. Explore the [NYU servicelink knowledgebase](#) for troubleshooting and student guides (NYU Brightspace, Zoom, etc). Contact [askIT@nyu.edu](mailto:askIT@nyu.edu) or 1-212-998-3333 (24/7) for technology assistance, or contact [Zoom’s 24/7 technical support](#) (includes a chat function), or review [Zoom’s support resources](#). Your peers are another source of support, so you could ask a friend or classmate for help or tips.

## Required Readings and Other Resources

Students are encouraged to supplement their hands-on Capstone experience with academic support resources that explain, warn about and provide solutions for common issues in consultant-client relationships. The materials below will be referenced throughout the semester, and additional materials may be suggested to students.

- Block, Peter. 2011. Flawless Consulting, 3rd edition. Pfeiffer, available [online](#) (and downloadable) through NYU's Bobst Library.
- Sidekick Manifesto, Shawn Humphreys. <https://sidekickmanifesto.org/manifesto/>
- "Introduction to Consulting" video series by Casey Heim on [Brightspace](#)

Course readings will be available on the NYU Brightspace 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:

#### *Client Onboarding*

- Potential client presentations (September);
- Team formation (by the end of 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);

#### *Client Agreement & Consultant Commitments*

- 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);

#### *Publish Internal Drafts*

- 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);

#### *External Audience Presentations & Close*

- 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.

### Fall Semester

PHASE and DATE	TOPIC(S)	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
<b>Phase 1: CREATING TEAMS</b>  Class 1  9/13/21	Introductions  Overview of Syllabus & Capstone Student Guide  Client presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Watch video: What is Capstone?</li> <li>● Read Mutual Expectations</li> <li>● Review syllabus and <a href="#">Student Capstone Guide</a></li> <li>● Review <a href="#">capstone proposals</a> and come to class prepared with questions</li> </ul>
Class 2  9/20/21	Client presentations  Discussion of projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read capstone proposals and prepare questions for project liaison</li> <li>● <b>Due 9/24:</b> <a href="#">Student Info and Preference Survey</a>.</li> <li>● <b>Due 9/24:</b> Upload resume, writing sample and Wagner transcript into a single document on Brightspace. Teams will be posted by 9/27, before class.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Phase 2: TEAM LAUNCH AND PLANNING</b></p> <p>Class 3</p> <p>9/27/21</p>	<p>Introduction to Consulting</p> <p>Team Kick-Off</p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Flawless Consulting, chapters 19, 1, 2, 3 (in this order)</li> <li>• Watch: Capstone consulting videos: Intro, What Consulting Is and Isn't and The Role of Technical and Interpersonal Skills</li> </ul> <p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kick-off team building! Exchange contact information and schedule a get-together purely about getting to know each other. See Getting to Know You and Top 10 Tips.</li> <li>• <b>By 10/1:</b> Send out first client email by 1 October 2021. (Send draft to me before sending to client.)</li> <li>• <b>By 10/11:</b> Schedule initial client meeting. I must be present and will provide my availability.</li> </ul>
<p>Class 4</p> <p>10/4/21</p>	<p>Team Building</p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Due 10/3:</b> Complete the Leadership Compass Self-Assessment (under Team Building)</li> </ul> <p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>By 10/4:</b> In preparation for your client meeting, please share with me:</li> <li>• An agenda</li> <li>• A set of questions for the client</li> <li>• Suggestions for project scope</li> <li>• Be prepared to report on your background research on your client</li> </ul>
<p>Class 5</p> <p>10/12/21</p>	<p>Contracting and Client Management</p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Read:</u> Flawless Consulting, Chapters 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9.</li> <li>• <u>View:</u> Consulting videos: The Project Management Triangle, Client Expectations Mgmt, Risk Mgmt, Client Mtg Mgmt.</li> <li>• <u>Read</u> Ethics Memo for students</li> </ul>



<p>Class 6 10/18/21</p>	<p>Team Dynamics  Discuss Team Charter</p>	<p><b>Individuals</b></p> <p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>By 10/18:</b> Draft client contract (*after client entry mtg)</li> <li>• Be prepared to report on client entry meeting</li> </ul>
<p>Class 7 10/25/21</p>	<p>Contracting  Project Management</p>	<p><b>Individuals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• View Project Management tutorials (also on NYU Brightspace). You can choose between these options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Project Management Foundations</a> (about 3 hours)</li> <li>○ <a href="#">Project Management Simplified</a> (about 1.5 hours)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>* LinkedIn Learning is free for all NYU students. Log in with your NYU email and password and authenticate. You are not required to connect your accounts.</p> <p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>By 10/25:</b> Draft contract <b>DUE</b></li> <li>• Draft team charter</li> </ul>
<p>Class 8 11/1/21</p>	<p>Literature reviews</p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review samples of literature reviews and be prepared to discuss strengths and weaknesses</li> </ul> <p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>By 11/1:</b> Draft team charter <b>DUE</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Phase 3: RESEARCH SKILLS AND PROJECT WORK</b></p> <p>Class 9 11/8/21</p>	<p>Surveys  Librarian – Katie Wissel</p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review <a href="#">Wagner Capstone Library Guide</a></li> <li>• Experiment with using Bobst Library databases to identify scholarly articles regarding your topic. Be ready to show results in class in class.</li> </ul> <p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>By 11/8:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Final contract <b>DUE</b></li> <li>○ Draft workplan <b>DUE</b></li> <li>○ Final team charter <b>DUE</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>Class 10 11/15/21</p>	<p>CLASS CONTINGENT (evals – TBD)</p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flawless Consulting, Ch 10 and 13</li> </ul> <p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing to give feedback</li> </ul>
<p><b>Phase 4: PROJECT WORK AND FEEDBACK</b></p> <p>Class 11 11/22/21</p>	<p>NO CLASS MEETING</p>	<p>Time is available for teams to meet and make progress on deliverables; can schedule time with instructor as-needed</p> <p><b>DUE:</b> Final workplan</p>
<p>Class 12 11/29/20</p>	<p>Team meetings to discuss evaluations</p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and reflect on evaluations</li> </ul>
<p>Class 13 12/6/21</p>	<p>NO CLASS MEETING</p>	<p>Time is available for teams to meet and make progress on deliverables; can schedule time with instructor as-needed</p>
<p>Class 14 12/13/21</p>	<p>Looking Ahead</p>	<p>Travel planning, as needed Workplan updates</p>

## 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 Year's).

## 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**. Also, for planning purposes, I've noted here some potential deadlines, **but these are preliminary and could change**.

DATE	TOPIC(S)	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
<b>Phase 5: PROJECT WORK</b>  Class 1  1/24/22	>>Team updates  Discuss spring schedule  Overview of final reports: format, content	<b>Team</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be prepared to give team update</li> </ul> <b>In Class</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will review sample final reports (cannot be circulated but will be reviewed visually)</li> <li>We will review final PowerPoint presentations</li> <li>We will discuss all spring semester deliverables</li> </ul>
Class 2  1/31/22	<i>NO CLASS MEETING</i>	<i>Time is available for teams to meet and make progress on deliverables; can schedule time with instructor as-needed</i>
Class 3  2/7/22	<i>NO CLASS MEETING</i>	<i>Time is available for teams to meet and make progress on deliverables; can schedule time with instructor as-needed</i>
<b>Phase 6: PROJECT WORK AND REPORT WRITING</b>  Class 4  2/14/22	>>Team updates	<b>Team</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>DUE:</b> Report outlines</li> <li>Begin scheduling final presentation for client. I must be present and will provide availability.</li> </ul>

2/21/22  ** No Class **	NO CLASS MEETING	President's Day
Class 5  2/28/22	NO CLASS MEETING	<i>Time is available for teams to meet and make progress on deliverables; can schedule time with instructor as-needed</i>
Class 6  3/7/22	>> Team updates  Discuss outlines	<b>DUE:</b> First draft of final report
3/14/22	NO CLASS	<i>Time is available for teams to meet and make progress on deliverables; can schedule time with instructor as-needed</i>
Class 7  3/21/22	Team updates  Discuss client presentation  Discuss Capstone Expo	<b>Team</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation from each team on key findings from your work and draft recommendations.</li> <li>• Include your "elevator pitch" on most important findings and what they mean to your project.</li> </ul>
Class 8  3/28/22	NO CLASS	<i>Time is available for teams to meet and make progress on deliverables; can schedule time with instructor as-needed</i>
<b>Phase 7: WRITING AND PRESENTING</b>  Class 9  4/4/22	NO CLASS	<i>Time is available for teams to meet and make progress on deliverables; can schedule time with instructor as-needed</i>  <b>Team</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DUE:</b> Second draft of final report</li> </ul>
Class 10  4/11/22	In-class client presentations	<b>Team</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DUE:</b> Draft powerpoint presentation</li> </ul>
Class 11  4/18/22	In-class client presentations	

Class 12 4/25/22	TBD how class time is used	<b>Individual</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self and team peer evaluations (** date may change pending Wagner's system availability)</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 8: CONCLUSION, EVALUATION, REFLECTION, CELEBRATION</b>  Class 13 5/2/22	TBD how class time is used	<b>Individual</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read and reflect on evaluations</li> </ul> <b>Team</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>DUE:</b> Final powerpoint presentation</li> <li><b>DUE:</b> Final report</li> </ul>
Class 14 5/9/22	Reflect and Celebrate	<b>Team:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pending any changes from the client, teams should send final version of final presentation and report to me and Wagner Capstone alias (wagner.capstone@nyu.edu)</li> </ul>
5/10 and 5/11 5 pm – 8 pm	CAPSTONE EXPO	<b>Team</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation to other Capstone faculty &amp; students</li> </ul>

### 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](mailto: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.