



**NYU**

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

## Capstone: CAP-GP 3301.002 – SI3

### Fall 2021 – Spring 2022

#### **Instructor Information**

- Mo Coffey
- mcoffey@nyu.edu
- Office Hours by appointment

#### **Course Information**

- Class Meeting Times: Mondays, 6:45 pm - 8:25 pm
- Via Zoom – link in Brightspace

#### **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.

We are experimenting with different approaches to Capstone this year. Our class will be attempting to finish the Capstone process by mid-March 2022.

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.

## 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 a welcome introduction from clients 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 and time-zone locations, 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 all class activities and team meetings;**
- timely responses to instructor, teammates, and clients;
- completion of assignments on time;
- participation in project work;
- participation in meetings with clients; and
- **equitable** participation (contribute your full share) in all team activities: team meetings; meetings with the client and with the faculty advisor; planning and executing background research and any fieldwork; preparing deliverables and presenting your findings.

Since Capstone is on-line this year, 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 Brightspace 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. 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; their ability to act on peer and faculty feedback; accessibility and responsiveness to the team and instructor; individual and team preparation for and performance at client meetings; and end-of-semester faculty, peer and self-evaluations.

**Note on written submissions:** All written assignments for Capstone are professional documents. As such, they are to use clear, concise language and correct grammar. They are also to use data and well-documented and indexed evidence to craft a cogent argument. Although you will be preparing sections and elements as individuals, the final document is to be one, cohesive document with transitions leading the reader from one section into the next. They must all be properly cited with all sources references noted as applicable.

Deliverables are to be designed: formatted and laid out in a visually appealing manner using color, images and data visualization. (Visual appeal attracts the reader to the content and enhances the reader's ability to absorb content.) Please submit all draft documents to your Professor in Word format or as a Google doc, with a preference for Google docs as they can be easily shared and edited amongst a group of people.

### **Required Readings and Other Resources**

Reading links are posted under their relevant dates on the course syllabus. Additional readings will be added as the course progresses.

### **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.

## 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.

We are experimenting with different approaches to Capstone this year. Our class will be attempting to finish the Capstone process by mid-March 2022.

These milestones include:

- Potential client reports (September);
- 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 (early October);
- Preliminary client-team contract or work agreement (October);
- Negotiations with client to finalize contract (October);
- Final, signed client-team contract and detailed team workplan (October);
- Team charter (October)
- 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);
- Second draft of final project report to faculty (February/early March);
- Rehearsal of client presentation before class/faculty for feedback before presentation to client (early March);
- Final report and presentation to client (early to mid-March);
- End-of-second semester reflection and celebration (mid-March);
- End-of-course self, team /peer, client and course evaluations (mid-March); and
- 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 Classes takes precedence over what is written here.**

Fall Semester

PHASE and DATE	TOPIC(S)	ASSIGNMENTS DUE FOR CLASS (unless date otherwise specified)
<p><b>Phase 1: CREATING TEAMS</b></p> <p>Class 1</p> <p>9/13/21</p>	<p>Introductions</p> <p>Overview of Syllabus &amp; Capstone Student Guide</p> <p>Potential project introductions</p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: Syllabus and Student Capstone Guide</li> <li>• Read: Capstone proposals; come to class prepared with questions</li> <li>• Watch videos: client proposal</li> </ul>
<p><b>Phase 2: TEAM LAUNCH AND PLANNING</b></p> <p>Class 2</p> <p>9/20/21</p>	<p>Introduction to consulting; Preparation for entry meeting with client</p> <p>Two team activities</p> <p>Discussion: The Vulnerability Loop</p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read: Flawless Consulting, chapters 1, 2, 3 (optional: chapter 12) <a href="https://mcclo.files.wordpress.com/2011/12/peter-bloch-flawless-consulting.pdf">https://mcclo.files.wordpress.com/2011/12/peter-bloch-flawless-consulting.pdf</a></li> <li>• Read: What is intersectionality, and what does it have to do with me? <a href="https://www.ywboston.org/2017/03/what-is-intersectionality-and-what-does-it-have-to-do-with-me/">https://www.ywboston.org/2017/03/what-is-intersectionality-and-what-does-it-have-to-do-with-me/</a></li> <li>• Watch: Capstone consulting videos: Intro, What Consulting Is and Isn't and The Role of Technical and Interpersonal Skills</li> <li>• Optional watch: The Urgency of Intersectionality TedTalk <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality">https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality</a></li> </ul> <p>Optional read if you'd like a research-oriented piece on intersectionality: Intersectional Political Consciousness: Appreciation For Intragroup Differences and Solidarity in Diverse Groups <a href="https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ronni_Greenwood/publication/227738184_Intersectional_Political_Consciousness_Appreciation_for_Intragroup_Differences_and_Solidarity_in_Diverse_Groups/links/5b8cc86e92851c1e1243f2a1/Intersectional-">https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ronni_Greenwood/publication/227738184_Intersectional_Political_Consciousness_Appreciation_for_Intragroup_Differences_and_Solidarity_in_Diverse_Groups/links/5b8cc86e92851c1e1243f2a1/Intersectional-</a></p>



		<p><a href="#">Political-Consciousness-Appreciation-for-Intragroup-Differences-and-Solidarity-in-Diverse-Groups.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Exchange contact information</li> <li>● Schedule one get-together purely about getting to know each other.</li> </ul> <p><b>Due 9/16 by 5pm:</b> Student Info and Preference Form. Email your resume and Wagner transcript, as one file, to Mo at mcoffey@nyu.edu. Teams will be posted by 9/19.</p>
		<p><a href="#">Intragroup-Differences-and-Solidarity-in-Diverse-Groups.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Exchange contact information</li> <li>● Schedule one get-together purely about getting to know each other.</li> <li>● <b>Due 9/16 by 5pm:</b> Student Info and Preference Form. Email your resume and Wagner transcript, as one file, to Mo at mcoffey@nyu.edu. Teams will be posted by 9/19.</li> </ul>
<p>Class 3</p> <p>9/27/21</p>	<p>Small group dynamics</p> <p>Preparation for first client meeting</p> <p>Project management, contracting, and timelines</p> <p>Team charters</p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read (skimming ok): Flawless Consulting, Chapters 4, 5, 6</li> <li>● Read: Examples of team charters</li> <li>● Read: Ethics Memo for students</li> </ul> <p>Optional: Watch: Consulting videos: The Project Management Triangle, Client Expectations Mgmt, Risk Mgmt, Client Mtg Mgmt</p>

<p>Class 4</p> <p>10/4/21</p>	<p>Anti-Racist Culture in Organizations</p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read: Using an Anti-Racist Intersectional Frame at CSSP <a href="https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Antiracist-Frame-12.10.19.pdf">https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Antiracist-Frame-12.10.19.pdf</a></li> <li>● Read: White Supremacy Culture in Organizations <a href="https://coco-net.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Coco-WhiteSupCulture-ENG4.pdf">https://coco-net.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Coco-WhiteSupCulture-ENG4.pdf</a></li> <li>● Read: Dismantling White Supremacy in Nonprofits: A Starting Point <a href="http://www.ynpntwincities.org/dismantling_whitesupremacy_in_nonprofits_a_starting_point">http://www.ynpntwincities.org/dismantling_whitesupremacy_in_nonprofits_a_starting_point</a></li> <li>● Read: Seeing and Naming Racism in Nonprofit and Public Organizations <a href="http://www.mayenoconsulting.com/wordpress/seeing-and-naming-racism-in-nonprofit-and-public-organizations/">http://www.mayenoconsulting.com/wordpress/seeing-and-naming-racism-in-nonprofit-and-public-organizations/</a></li> </ul>
		<p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Send out first client email by 9/30/21. (Send draft to me before sending to client with multiple date/times options, to which I will provide my availability.) Client meeting must occur by October 11. <b><u>*I must be copied on every client communication for the duration of capstone.</u></b></li> <li>● Schedule initial client meeting to occur virtually no later than October 11; I must be present.</li> </ul> <p><b>Due 10/1 by 3pm:</b> In preparation for your client meeting, please share with me via email:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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 (I don't need to see anything written)</li> </ul>

<p>Class 5</p> <p>10/12/21</p> <p>*TUESDAY</p>	<p>Person/role/system framework</p> <p>Reflection: The Culture Code</p> <p>Group Activity: Leadership Compass de-brief</p> <p>Team charters &amp; scope questions</p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read: Person-Role-System framework <a href="https://www.aecf.org/m/blogdoc/PersonRoleSystemFramework-2013.pdf">https://www.aecf.org/m/blogdoc/PersonRoleSystemFramework-2013.pdf</a></li> <li>● Read: Making Dumb Groups Smarter HBR <a href="https://hbr.org/2014/12/making-dumb-groups-smarter">https://hbr.org/2014/12/making-dumb-groups-smarter</a></li> <li>● Read: The Culture Code, chapters 10 and 12</li> <li>● Activity: Leadership Compass, complete in advance of class and bring your results to share</li> <li>● Skim: Flawless Consulting, Chapters 8 and 9</li> </ul>
		<p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Due 10/12 by 3pm:</b> Draft team charter</li> <li>● Begin drafting contract</li> <li>● Be prepared to report on client entry meeting</li> </ul>
<p>Class 6</p> <p>10/18/21</p>	<p>Discussion work plans Review draft contracts Stating the Problem</p> <p>The Art of Feedback</p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Read: Flawless Consulting, Chapters 10 and 13</li> <li>● Read: The Culture Code, Chapter 4</li> <li>● Optional: Project Management tutorials (will be posted on NYU Classes). You can choose between these options:</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Project Management Foundations (about 3 hours) <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/learning/project-management-foundations-2016/welcome?u=2131553">https://www.linkedin.com/learning/project-management-foundations-2016/welcome?u=2131553</a></li> <li>○ Project Management Simplified (about 1.5 hours) <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/learning/project-management-simplified/outlining-the-twelve-steps?u=2131553">https://www.linkedin.com/learning/project-management-simplified/outlining-the-twelve-steps?u=2131553</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Team</b></p> <p><b>Due 10/17 by 3pm:</b> Draft contract; revisions due promptly as required; to be sent to client by 10/20.</p>

<p><b>Phase 3: RESEARCH SKILLS, PROJECT WORK, AND FEEDBACK</b></p> <p>Class 7</p> <p>10/25/21</p>	<p>Equity in Data and Research Design</p> <p>Literature reviews and research</p>	<p><b>Individual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read <b>thoroughly</b>: How to Embed a Racial and Ethnic Equity Perspective in Research <a href="https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/RacialEthnicEquityPerspective_ChildTrends_October2019.pdf">https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/RacialEthnicEquityPerspective_ChildTrends_October2019.pdf</a></li> <li>• Read: Wagner Capstone Library Guide</li> <li>• Read: Examples of literature reviews and be prepared to discuss strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>• Activity: 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>Due 10/25 by 3pm:</b> Revised team charter and finalized contract</li> <li>• <b>Due 10/25 by 3pm:</b> Draft Work Plan</li> </ul>
<p>Class 8</p> <p>11/1/21</p>	<p>Continued conversation on equity and intersectionality</p>	<p><b>Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Due 11/1 by 3pm:</b> Client signed team contract, revised team charter, and revised work plan</li> </ul>
<p>Class 9</p> <p>11/8/21</p>	<p>TBD – Based on individual team project needs</p>	
<p>Class 10</p> <p>11/15/21</p>	<p>TBD – Based on individual team project needs</p>	

Class 11 11/22/21	TBD – Based on individual team project needs	
Class 12 11/29/21	TBD – Based on individual team project needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self and team peer evaluations</li> </ul>
Class 13 12/6/21	TBD – Based on individual team project needs	TBD
Class 14 12/13/21	TBD – Based on individual team project needs	TBD

Dates will be adjusted for the following deliverables given each team’s timeline and scope of work:

- Written outline of final report – Due by January 19
- Final capstone abstract draft and photo for Wagner administration - TBD
- First draft of final report – Due by February 22
- Mock final presentations – early March
- Final report and deliverables to client – Due by March 10
- Final presentations to client – Due by March 10

### **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 December 24 – January 1).

### **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.**

Due to academic calendar holiday breaks, there will be no class on 2/21 or 3/14.

Spring project deadlines will be determined on a per-project basis once the team's workplan and client contract are finalized.

The Capstone Expo has traditionally been held on the second Tuesday in May. We are unsure if this will be happening this year, but please continue to hold the date until told otherwise.

