



NYU

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

Capstone: CAP-GP 3401-3402

Fall 2021 – Spring 2022

Instructor Information

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Course Information

- Class Meeting Times: Mondays, 6:45 pm - 8:25 pm
- Via Zoom, invitation sent weekly on class site; possible in-person meeting later in year

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 proposals and, in most cases, will be able to interact with prospective clients via Zoom, before marking your preferences. We 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 our 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;
- continued project work through the winter break;
- completion of assignments on time;
- participation in all necessary project work;
- participation in meetings with clients;
- participation in preparation and presentation of findings.

Since Capstone is on-line again this year, most client and team meetings will be as well. Travel for fieldwork is possible but we will follow NYU guidance. 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. We 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 we feel that is warranted. We will make this judgment based both on our 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, we 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. **65% is based on work products** identified in the milestones as well as any interim deliverables to the client or assigned by the faculty member. **35% 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

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 advance.

The sequence of classes, and due dates for assignments, could change depending in part on your meetings with clients and the substance of your projects. Specific requirements for each class will be posted on Brightspace and emailed to you with enough lead time to prepare.

Brightspace takes precedence over what is written here.

Course readings will be available on the 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:

- Potential client presentations (September);
- Team formation (early October);
- “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 problem or issue and client’s initial vision of a successful project (October);
- Preliminary client-team contract or work agreement (October);
- Negotiations with client to finalize contract (October);
- Final, signed client-team contract (end of October) and detailed team workplan (early November);
- Team charter (late October/ early November)
- End-of-first semester self, team/peer, and course evaluations; discussion of team process and progress (December);
- January term: Continue project work (throughout 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 (May);
- End-of-course self, team /peer, client and course evaluations (May);
- Presentation for Capstone Expo (May).

Class Schedule Overview

The sequence of classes, and due dates for assignments, could change depending on your meetings with clients and the substance of your projects. Details for the Spring Semester are tentative and are likely to change as we all work together in the fall. Specific requirements for each class will be posted on Brightspace and emailed to you with enough lead time to prepare.

Information on Brightspace takes precedence over what is written here.

PHASE and DATE	TOPIC(S)	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Phase 1: CREATING TEAMS	Introductions Overview of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review syllabus and Student Capstone Guide ● Come prepared to introduce yourself to class.

<p>Class 1 9/13/21</p>	<p>Syllabus & Capstone Student Guide; Client Presentation #1-2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read capstone proposals and prepare questions for project liaison
<p>Class 2 9/20/21</p>	<p>Client presentations #3-5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read capstone proposals and prepare questions for project liaison
<p>Class 3 9/27/21</p>	<p>Discussion of team assignments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read capstone proposals and prepare questions for project liaison ● Due 9/23: Student Info and Preference Form. ● Attach resume, writing sample and Wagner transcript. Make this one document. Post on Brightspace. Teams will be posted by 9/27, before class.

<p>Phase 2: TEAM LAUNCH AND PLANNING</p> <p>Class 4 10/4/21</p>	<p>Introduction to consulting;</p> <p>Preparation for entry meeting with client</p>	<p>Individual</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 <p>Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exchange contact information ● Schedule one get-together purely about getting to know each other. See handout for sample questions and topics. ● Send out first client email by 10/7/21. (Send draft to professors before sending to client.) ● Schedule initial client meeting within the next week. One professor must join.
<p>Class 5 10/12/21 TUESDAY</p>	<p>Team dynamics</p> <p>Possible Guest Lecturer #1 – former student</p>	<p>Individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Readings related to team dynamics ● Optional: Leadership Compass <p>Team</p> <p>In preparation for your client meeting, share with professors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An agenda ● A set of questions for the client ● Suggestions for project scope ● Be prepared to report on your background research on your client (we don't need to see anything written)
<p>Class 6 10/18/21</p>	<p>Contracting and project management 1</p> <p>Possible Guest Lecturer #2 - consultant</p>	<p>Individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● View: Consulting videos: The Project Management Triangle, Client Expectations Mgmt, Risk Mgmt, Client Meeting Mgmt. ● Be prepared to report on client entry meeting ● Read Ethics Memo for students

<p>Class 7 10/25/21</p>	<p>Team Dynamics 2: Creating team cultures that honor everyone's backgrounds and workstyles; Discussion of team charter assignment</p>	<p>Individuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings related to team dynamics <p>Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft contract • Be prepared to report on client entry meeting
<p>Class 8 11/01/21</p>	<p>Contracting and project management 2</p>	<p>Individual: View Project Management tutorials (will be posted on Brightspace). You can choose between these options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project Management Foundations (about 3 hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ https://www.linkedin.com/learning/project-management-foundations-2016/welcome?u=2131553 ○ Project Management Simplified (about 1.5 hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ https://www.linkedin.com/learning/project-management-simplified/outlining-the-twelve-steps?u=2131553 ○ Read "Reflection-Advice Letters" from previous Capstone students <p>Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final contract • Draft team charter • Draft workplan
<p>Phase 3: RESEARCH SKILLS AND PROJECT WORK</p> <p>Class 9 11/08/21</p>	<p>Literature reviews Interviews and focus groups</p>	<p>Individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Wagner Capstone Library Guide <p>Experiment with using Bobst Library databases to identify scholarly articles regarding your topic. Be ready to show results in class in class.</p> <p>Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second draft of workplan • Final team charter

<p>Phase 4: PROJECT WORK AND FEEDBACK</p> <p>Class 10</p> <p>11/15/21</p>	<p>Team reports Team check-ins</p>	<p>Individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings on how to give feedback • Self and team peer evaluations <p>Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to give update to classmates • Final workplan
<p>Class 11</p> <p>11/22/21</p>	<p>NO CLASS</p>	
<p>Class 12</p> <p>11/29/21</p>	<p>Team meetings to discuss evaluations; project work</p>	<p>Individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and reflect on evaluations • Necessary project work
<p>Class 13</p> <p>12/6/21</p>	<p>Team meetings with professors; project work</p>	<p>Individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare midyear status report • Necessary project work
<p>Class 14</p> <p>12/13/21</p>	<p>Team meetings with professors with pre-break status report; preparing work plan for break</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each team prepares work plan for winter break, with tasks for each team member

January Term

While classes don't meet, this is an important time for group work. Students and faculty are expected to be generally 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, we've noted here some potential deadlines, **but these are all preliminary and could change**.

DATE	TOPIC(S)	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Phase 5: PROJECT WORK Class 1 1/31/22	Team updates Discuss spring schedule Data analysis	Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to give team update • Revised work plan and (optional) team charter, using track changes
Class 2 2/7/22	Formatting final reports; team meetings	
Class 3 2/14/22	Team meetings as needed	
NO CLASS PRESIDENTS DAY 2/21/22		Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report outlines due 2/18
Phase 6: PROJECT WORK AND REPORT WRITING Class 4	Discuss outlines Team updates	Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule final presentation for client. Faculty lead for the team must be present and will provide availability.

2/28/22		
Class 5 3/7/22	Team meetings as needed	
Class 6 3/14/22	Team meetings as needed	Team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First draft final report
NO CLASS SPRING BREAK 3/21/22		
Class 7 3/28/22	Team updates Discuss first drafts Discuss client presentation	Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation from each team on key findings from your work and draft recommendations. • Include your “elevator pitch” on most important findings and what they mean to your project.
Class 8 4/4/22	Team meetings as needed	
Phase 7: WRITING AND PRESENTING Class 9 4/11/22	Rehearsals of client presentations	Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft PowerPoint presentation • Second draft of final report
Class 10 4/18/22	Rehearsals of client presentations Prepare Capstone Expo	Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft PowerPoint presentation

Class 11 4/25/22	Rehearsals of client presentations	Individual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self and team peer evaluations Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft PowerPoint presentation • Third and final draft of final report
Class 12 5/2/22	Rehearsals of client presentations Prepare Capstone Expo	Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of final report (if necessary)
Phase 8: CONCLUSION! EVALUATION, REFLECTION, CELEBRATION Class 13 5/9/22	Self and peer evaluations	Individual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and reflect on evaluations
Class 14 5/10/20	Reflect and Celebrate	Team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams should send final version of final report to us and Wagner Capstone alias (wagner.capstone@nyu.edu) • We will try to arrange an in-person celebration
Week of 5/10/22?	CAPSTONE EXPO?	Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final posterboard

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 us. 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 one of us.

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 us in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.