



NYU

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

CAPSTONE: CAP-GP 3401-003

Fall 2021 – Spring 2022

Instructor Information

- Erica Foldy
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- By appt. Just email me, I am pretty flexible.

Course Information

- Class Meeting Times: Mondays, 6:45 pm - 8:25 pm
- Via Zoom. See the Brightspace website for the link. That is the best way to enter the class.

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
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

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.

Though Capstone is on-line this year, your team and client meetings do not have to be. Teams can work this out with each other and their client. But long-distance travel for fieldwork is very unlikely.

Capstone Expenses:

Each Capstone team is entitled to reimbursement of up to \$500 of Capstone related expenses, such as photocopying, supplies, etc. None of these funds can be spent hiring others to do work that you are expected to do, like 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 course 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 "I" (Incomplete) 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. **70% is based on work products** identified in the milestones as well as any interim deliverables to the client or assigned by the faculty member. **30% 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; individual and team preparation for and performance at client meetings; and end-of-semester faculty, peer and self-evaluations.

Required Readings and Other Resources

Block, Peter. 2011. Flawless Consulting, 3rd edition. Pfeiffer. *Flawless Consulting* is available [online](#) (and downloadable) through NYU's Bobst Library. (This link may only work if you have the NYU Libraries website open. If you are having a hard time with the link, then go to the NYU Libraries website and search for the book by title and author's name. Then make sure you are getting the 3rd edition. You should have several e-book options available.)

You can also buy the book on his [website](#).

Other course readings will be available on the Brightspace website.

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.

Milestone	Date
Entry meeting with client	Sept/Oct.
Preliminary client-team contract	Sept/Oct
Contract negotiations	Sept/Oct
Final, signed contract and detailed team workplan	Oct/Nov.
Team charter	Oct./Nov.
End-of-semester self, team-peer and course evals; discussion of team process and progress	December
January term: Continue project work	January
First draft of final project report	Feb/March
Second draft	March/April
Third and final draft	April/May
Rehearsal of client presentation	April
Client presentation	April/May
Capstone Expo	May
End-of-semester evals, reflection & celebration	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 Brightspace and emailed to you with enough lead time to prepare.

Instructions in email or Brightspace take precedence over what is written here.

Fall Semester

PHASE and DATE	TOPIC(S)	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Phase 1: Team Launch and Planning	Introductions Overview of	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Watch video: What is Capstone?• Review Syllabus and Student Capstone Guide• Flawless Consulting, chapters 19 and 1 (in that order)

Class 1 9/13/21	Syllabus & Capstone Student Guide Former Capstone students present	
Class 2 9/20/21	Introduction to consulting; Prepare for client entry meeting	<p>Individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read Flawless Consulting, chapters 2,3,4,5,6 ● Watch Capstone consulting video series <p>Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exchange contact information ● Schedule one "first date" get-together purely about getting to know each other. See handout for sample questions and topics (or feel free to ignore). ● Send out first client email by 9/24. (Send draft to me before sending to client.) ● Schedule initial client meeting within the next 2 weeks if possible. I must be present and will provide my availability.
Class 3 9/27/21	Team dynamics 1: Leadership styles	<p>Individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Readings related to team dynamics ● Leadership Compass <p>Team</p> <p>In preparation of your client meeting, please share with me:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An agenda ● A set of questions for the client ● Suggestions for project scope
Class 4	Contracting and project	<p>Individual:</p> <p>View Project Management tutorials (will be posted on</p>

10/4/21	management	<p>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"> <input type="checkbox"/> 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"> <input type="checkbox"/> https://www.linkedin.com/learning/project-management-simplified/outlining-the-twelve-steps?u=2131553 <p>Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft contract (if have conducted client entry meeting) • Draft workplan • Be prepared to report on client entry meeting
Class 5 10/12/21 NOTE: This is a TUESDAY, not a Monday. Monday, October 11 is fall break. Classes on Tuesday, October 12 meet on a Monday schedule.	Team Dynamics 2: Creating team cultures that honor everyone's backgrounds and workstyles; Discussion of team charter assignment	<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 (if have conducted client entry meeting) • Draft workplan • Be prepared to report on client entry meeting
Class 6 10/18/21	Catch-up Week: Time to take a breath, review material, identify gaps...	<p>Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft contract (if have conducted client entry meeting) • Draft workplan • Be prepared to report on client entry meeting • Draft team charter
Phase 2: RESEARCH SKILLS AND PROJECT WORK Class 7 10/25/21	Literature reviews	<p>Individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Wagner Capstone Library Guide • Review examples of literature reviews <p>Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final contract (depending on team) • Final workplan • Final team charter
Class 8	Interviews and focus groups:	<p>Individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flawless Consulting, Ch 10 and 13

11/1/21	Guest speaker Rachel Swaner	Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to describe the purpose of your interviews and/or focus groups and the kinds of questions you might want to ask. • Be prepared with questions for the guest speaker.
Class 9 11/8/21	Surveys	Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to describe the purpose of your survey (if you will be using one) and the kinds of questions you might want to ask. • Be prepared with questions for the guest speaker.
Phase 3: PROJECT WORK AND FEEDBACK Class 10 11/15/21	Environmental scans Prepare for self and team peer evaluations	Individual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings on how to give feedback
Class 11 11/22/21	Data analysis and Report formatting	Individual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self and team peer evaluations • Flawless Consulting, chapter 14
Class 12 11/29/21	Team and individual meetings to discuss feedback	Individual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and reflect on evaluations
Class 13 12/6/21	Team and individual meetings to discuss evaluations	Individual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and reflect on evaluations

Class 14 12/13/21/	Team and individual meetings to discuss evaluations	Individual <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read and reflect on evaluations
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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 Day). If team members are planning to travel, just make sure to work things out among yourselves.

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
Phase 4: PROJECT WORK Class 1 1/24/22	Team updates Discuss spring schedule Team check-ins	Team <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be prepared to give team update• Revised work plan and team charter (using track changes)
Class 2 1/31/22	Report writing	
Class 3 2/7/22	NO CLASS	
Phase 5: PROJECT WORK AND REPORT WRITING Class 4 2/14/21	Discuss outlines	Team <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report outlines due 2/12
NO CLASS PRESIDENTS DAY 2/21/22		

Class 5 2/28/22	NO CLASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule final presentation for client. I must be present and will provide availability. (The reason to schedule early is to allow time for the client to invite a variety of stakeholders.)
Class 6 3/7/22	NO CLASS	<p>Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First draft final report
NO CLASS SPRING BREAK 3/14/21		
Class 7 3/22/22	Team updates Discuss first drafts Discuss client presentation	<p>Individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flawless Consulting, ch 15 <p>Team</p> <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 3/28/22	NO CLASS	
Phase 6: WRITING AND PRESENTING Class 9 4/4/22	Rehearsals of client presentations	<p>Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft powerpoint presentation Second draft of final report
Class 10 4/11/22	Rehearsals of client presentations Prepare Capstone Expo	<p>Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft powerpoint presentation

Class 11 4/18/22	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 4/25/22	NO CLASS	
Phase 8: CONCLUSION! EVALUATION, REFLECTION, CELEBRATION Class 13 5/2/22	Self and peer evaluations	Individual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and reflect on evaluations
Class 14 5/9/22	Reflect and Celebrate	Team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams should send final version of final report to me and Wagner Capstone alias (wagner.capstone@nyu.edu)
5/10 & 5/11	CAPSTONE EXPO	Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final posterboard or slideshow

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.