# **NYU Wagner logo**

# **CAPSTONE: CAP-GP [CAP-GP 3401, Section 002]**

# **Fall 2022 – Spring 2023**

## Instructor Information

* Susan Misra
* sm11175@nyu.edu
* Office Hours: Weds evenings or mornings. Please see my calendar for specific times.

## Course Information

* Class Meeting Times: Mondays, 6:45 pm - 8:25 pm
* Where we will meet:
  + September & December: zoom
  + October & November: [Kimmel, Room 803](https://www.nyu.edu/life/campus-resources/kimmel-center/reservable-spaces/medium/kimmel-center-803.html) ([Washington Square](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Kimmel+Center+for+University+Life/@40.7299406,-74.0000162,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x89c25991aaf1649f:0x8e1fd6bc178ccfb8!8m2!3d40.7299366!4d-73.9978275))

## 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 Learning Objectives**

### 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.

### 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.

#### 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.

#### 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.

#### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

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### **Learning Assessment Table**

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| --- | --- |
| **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

We have a great set of clients and projects for our class to work on. They include a statewide network starting an advocacy training program for members, a grassroots organization identifying an organizing campaign based on strong fiscal analysis, a policy advocacy organization designing a system for participant engagement, a global arts education organization developing ways to engage youth in advocacy, and a civic engagement organization leveraging a user-interactive database for advocacy. **Prior to our first class, please review the project applications and video introductions.** Try not to fall in love with any one project, but rather see the potential for learning in all of them. Get curious about what success might look like for the clients and try to think of the many different ways to achieve success. During the first two classes, we will discuss the projects and meet the clients.

Once you are familiar with the projects, you will fill out a form which gives me your project rankings and other information. 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 myself, possible guest speakers, class discussion and team meetings. You should expect to work approximately 5-10 hours a week, including class time, team meetings and project work. 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 in-person this year, your team and client meetings do not have to be. Teams can work this out with each other and their client. However, I encourage the first and last meetings with the client, if they are located in New York, to be in person if at all possible.

Although it is unlikely, some teams may need to travel domestically to conduct field work. Students may apply for supplementary travel funding for airfare costs, but funding does not cover accommodation, in-country travel, or meal costs.  Also 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, 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. **75% is based on work products** identified in the milestones as well as any interim deliverables to the client or assigned by the faculty member. The ability to set and renegotiate realistic deadlines with clients is critical and so any client deliverables that are late (even by one day) will be graded lower. **25% 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**

Block, Peter. 2011. Flawless Consulting, 3rd edition. Pfeiffer. *Flawless Consulting*is available [online](https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/lib/nyulibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=661497) (and downloadable) through NYU’s Bobst Library. You will only be responsible for reading one chapter in this book; there is no need to purchase this book.

St. Onge, Patricia. 2009. Embracing Cultural Competency: A Roadmap for Nonprofit Capacity Builders.

Other course readings and videos 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 (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);
* 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)
* At least one interim client deliverable such as a landscape scan (December)
* 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/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/May);
* 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

Students should expect to meet weekly as a class unless agreed in class. In addition, you should plan to meet regularly with your team; I suggest scheduling weekly meetings and adjusting the frequency as needed. **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**.

**Ongoing team assignments:**

* Please include me <[sm11175@nyu.edu](mailto:sm11175@nyu.edu)> in calendar invites for any meetings you have with the client. I will not attend meetings, but can keep track of what’s upcoming.
* One person from your team should send me an update by Monday at 7 am ET that in one paragraph shares the following information.
  + What was accomplished the prior week?
  + What is upcoming this week?
  + What have you learned, and how will you shift client work or group dynamics?
  + What questions do you have for me?
* **Note that all interim and final deliverables must come to me first before they go to the client.** We may go through several rounds of revision before I feel the products are ready to be shared with the client.

**Preparation prior to our first class:**

* Complete student intake survey
* There is a significant amount to read and watch before the first class. Please see the assignments to complete for the first class below.

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| **PHASE and DATE** | **TOPIC(S)** | **ASSIGNMENTS DUE** |
| **Phase 1: CREATING TEAMS**  Class 1  9/12/22 | Introductions  Overview of Syllabus & Capstone Student Guide  Discussion of projects | * In Brightspace, under “Syllabus & Introduction” in the “Course Intro” document, see the “Introduction to Consulting Video Series.”   + Watch “Introduction to Capstone” * Review Student Capstone Guide * Review syllabus * Review capstone proposals and videos under the project selection section of Brightspace. This includes scanning the three CCC documents that are example Capstone deliverables. * **Due 9/12:** Student Get-to-know-you Survey * **Due 9/12:** Bring 3 questions you would ask the clients to understand the project and how you could help them. |
| Class 2  9/19/22 | Client conversations  Discussion of projects | * Read and [summarize one Flawless Consulting chapter](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/13iGcu_0XmqEAnrobcBDNllAiB2Q-xzz6?usp=sharing) (to be assigned in class 9/12)   + 1, 2, 3   + 4, 5, 6   + 8,9, possibly 19   + 10,11,12,13   + 14,15 * **Due 9/21:** Summary of your Flawless Consulting chapter * **Due 9/21**: Student Info and Preference Form. * Attach resume, writing sample and Wagner transcript. Make this one document. Post on Brightspace. Teams will be posted by 9/26, before class. |
| **Phase 2: TEAM LAUNCH AND PLANNING**Class 39/26/22 | Introduction to consulting  Preparation for entry meeting with client  Contracting | **Individual**   * Scan summaries of [Flawless Consulting, Chapters](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1q7Cr6M-X11qR3v-mHppSML48NBvPQog_) 1, 2, 3 * In Brightspace, under “Syllabus & Introduction” in the “Course Intro” document, see the “Introduction to Consulting Video Series.”   + Watch: What Consulting Is and Isn’t   + Watch: The Role of Technical and Interpersonal Skills   **During class each team will:**   * Exchange contact information * Develop a plan to complete the work due this week * Schedule one meeting purely about getting to know each other and to schedule regular meetings. See handout (First Team Assignment) for sample questions and topics (or feel free to ignore). |
| Class 410/3/22 | Team dynamics 1: Leadership styles | **Individual**   * Read the Leadership Compass Self-Assessment, especially the last two pages * Read: Creating Value with Diverse Teams in Global Management * **Due 10/3:** Leadership Compass Self-Assessment (come to class with your direction)   **Team**   * Send out first client email by 9/29. (Send draft to me before sending to client.) * Schedule initial client meeting within the next 2 weeks. I must be present and will provide my availability. * **Due 10/3:** In preparation of your client meeting, please share with me the calendar invite and the following: * An agenda * A set of questions for the client * Suggestions for project scope * Be prepared to report on your background research on your client (I don’t need to see anything written) |
| Class 5  10/11/22  NOTE: This is a TUESDAY, not a Monday.  Monday, October 11 is fall break. Classes on Tuesday, October 12 meet on a Monday schedule. | Project management 1 | **Individual**   * Scan summaries of [Flawless Consulting, Chapters 4, 5, 6](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1q7Cr6M-X11qR3v-mHppSML48NBvPQog_). * In Brightspace, under “Syllabus & Introduction” in the “Course Intro” document, see the “Introduction to Consulting Video Series.”   + Watch: The Project Management Triangle   + Watch: Client Expectations Mgmt   + Watch: Risk Mgmt   + Watch: Client Mtg Mgmt. * Read Ethics Memo for students * Read: 4 Ways to Manage Deadlines on Cross-Cultural Teams - Saunders |
| Class 6  10/17/22 | Team Dynamics 2: Team cultures that honor backgrounds and workstyles    Team charters | **Individuals**   * Read Embracing Cultural Competency, Chapters 1,2,3,4,5   **Team**   * Draft contract (if have conducted client entry meeting) * Be prepared to report on client entry meeting |
| Class 710/24/22 | Project management 2 | **Individual**:   * View Project Management tutorials. You can choose one of these options:   + Project Management Foundations (about 3 hours)     - https://www.linkedin.com/learning/project-management-foundations-2016/welcome?u=2131553   + Project Management Simplified (about 1.5 hours)     - https://www.linkedin.com/learning/project-management-simplified-2019 * Read “Reflection-Advice Letters” from previous students   **Team**   * **Due 10/24:** Draft contract (if have conducted client entry meeting) * Draft team charter * Be prepared to report on client entry meeting |
| Class 810/31/22 | Tam Dynamics 3: Accountability  Prepare for self and team peer evaluations | **Individual**   * Read: Accountability Pathway * Read: Circle of Conflict Adaptation * Review [Wagner Capstone Library Guide](https://guides.nyu.edu/wagner/capstone) * Read: Reflective Practice: A Catalyst for Aligned Action   **Team**   * **Due 10/31:** Final team charter, including agreements around accountability and conflict resolution * Draft workplan |
| **Phase 3: RESEARCH SKILLS AND PROJECT WORK**Class 911/7/22 | Literature reviews and environmental scans | **Individual**   * Review the samples of literature reviews and be prepared to discuss strengths and weaknesses * Review case studies of environmental scans * Experiment with using Bobst Library databases to identify scholarly articles regarding your topic. Be ready to show results in class in class.   **Team**   * **Due 11/7:** Final contract (depending on team) * **Due 11/7:** Final workplan |
| Class 1011/14/22 | Interviews and focus groups; | **Individual**   * Scan summaries of [Flawless Consulting,](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1q7Cr6M-X11qR3v-mHppSML48NBvPQog_) Ch 10,11,12,13 |
| **Phase 4: PROJECT WORK AND FEEDBACK**Class 1111/21/22 | Power & Relationships  Team reports and check-ins | **Individual**   * Read Embracing Cultural Competency, Chapters 6,7,8,9 * Scan summaries of [Flawless Consulting,](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1q7Cr6M-X11qR3v-mHppSML48NBvPQog_) 8,9   **Team**   * Be prepared to give update to classmates * **Due 11/21:** Report on Reflective Practice |
| No Class11/28/22 | NO CLASS |  |
| Class 13 12/5/22 | Team and individual meetings to discuss evaluations | **Individual & Team**   * Additional materials to be assigned based on class needs * **Due 12/5:** Self and team peer evaluations |
| Class 1412/12/22 | Team and individual meetings to discuss evaluations | **Individual & Team**   * Additional materials to be assigned based on class needs * Read and reflect on evaluations |