

**CAPSTONE: CAP-GP 3401-1-007**

**Fall 2022 – Spring 2023**

**Instructor Information**

* Erin M. Connell
* [econnell@nyu.edu](mailto:econnell@nyu.edu)
* Office hours by appointment

Course Information

* Class Meeting Times: Mondays, 6:45 pm - 8:25 pm ET
* Classroom: Academic Resource Center (ARC), Room LL04
  + *NOTE: Zoom will be used at times in lieu of in-person team or class meetings; please see syllabus and updates on Brightspace for more information*

**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**

1. 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.

1. 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.

* 1. 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.
  1. 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.
  1. 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.

1. 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.

1. 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**

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. **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 will be largely 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. If possible, we do encourage the first and last meetings with the client to be in-person.

Some teams may need to or have the option to travel domestically to conduct field work (note: only international development students may travel internationally.) Students may apply for supplementary travel funding for airfare costs, but funding does not cover accommodation, in- country travel, or meal costs. 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. **Sixty percent (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. **Forty percent (40%) 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.

***Note: Late Submission Policy***

1. Extensions on assignments will be granted only in case of emergency or special circumstances. This policy is adopted out of respect to those who abide by deadlines

despite equally demanding schedules. Late submissions without extensions will be penalized 15% per 24-hour period.

1. Assignments are due to the instructor via email by 11:59 pm ET on the date indicated on this syllabus, unless otherwise indicated (via Brightspace or email).

# Attendance Policy

Students will be expected to be present and engaged during class, unless they notify the instructor in advance. Students are asked to not have more than two absences per semester.

# Required Readings and Other Resources

The readings and resources required for this course include:

* + **Block, Peter. 2011. Flawless Consulting, 3rd edition. Pfeiffer.** However, this is not required. *Flawless Consulting* is also available [online](https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/lib/nyulibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=661497) (and downloadable) through NYU’s Bobst Library.
  + Other readings as assigned. Course readings will be available via the Brightspace class site, unless otherwise linked in syllabus.

**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)
* 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 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**.

**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.

Specific requirements for each class will be posted on Brightspace and emailed to you with enough lead time to prepare. **Instructions via email or Brightspace take precedence over what is written here**.

# Fall Semester

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PHASE and DATE** | **TOPIC(S)** | **ASSIGNMENTS DUE** |
| **Phase 1: CREATING TEAMS**  Class 1  9/12/22  ***NOTE: Meeting via Zoom*** | Introductions  Overview of Syllabus & Capstone Student Guide  Client Presentations | * Watch video “What is Capstone?” (on Brightspace) * Readings:   + Syllabus   + Student Capstone Guide   + Ethics Memo for Students   + Mutual Expectations document   + Read capstone proposals and come to class prepared with questions for client * **Due 9/12 before class:** Attach resume, writing sample and Wagner transcript. Make this one document. Post on Brightspace |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Class 2 9/19/22  ***NOTE: Meeting via Zoom*** | Client presentations  Discussion of projects  Discuss Team Building | * Review capstone proposals and come to class prepared with questions for client * **Due 9/21 by 11:59 pm:** Student Info and Preference Form completed * Readings:   + “Teamwork on the Fly”   + Wagner’s Top Ten Tips for Capstone Teams   + First Team Assignment – Getting to know you |
| **Phase 2: TEAM LAUNCH AND PLANNING**  Class 3  9/26/22 | Introduction to Consulting  Preparation for entry meeting with client | Note: Project Teams will be posted by 9/26, before class.  **Individual**   * Readings:   + Flawless Consulting, chapters 19, 1, 2, 3 (in this order)   + “How Consultants Project Expertise and Learn at the Same Time” * Watch: Capstone consulting videos: “Introduction to Capstone,” “What Consulting Is and Isn’t,” and “Technical and Interpersonal Skills in Consulting” on Brightspace   **Team**   * Exchange Contact Information * (During class) Schedule one get-together purely about getting to know each other * 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 (ideally by class on 10/11). I must be present and will provide my availability. |
|  |  | * (During class) Schedule one get-together purely about getting to know each other * 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 (ideally by class on 10/11). I must be present and will provide my availability. |
| Class 4 10/3/22 | Discuss Conflict and Leadership Styles | **Individual**   * Readings:   + “How Management Teams Can Have a Good Fight”   + “Accountability Pathway” |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | * “When Teammates Raise a White Flag” * “Using the Stages of Team Development” (https://hr.mit.edu/learning-topics/teams/articles/s tages-development) * Complete the Leadership Compass Self-Assessment   **Team**  In preparation of your client meeting, please share with me:   * 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: Meeting via Zoom***  ***NOTE: This is a TUESDAY****. Monday, October 11 is fall break. Classes on Tuesday 10/12 meet on a Monday schedule.* | Contracting and Project Management 1  Hear from previous Capstone students  Discussion of Client Contract assignment | **Individual**   * Reading:   + Flawless Consulting, Chapters 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9   + Review sample Client Contract   + Review sample Team Charters   + “Scoping the Project” * Watch: Consulting videos “The Project Management Triangle,” “Client Expectations Management,” “Risk Management,” and “Client Meeting Management” on Brightspace   **Team**   * Be prepared to report on initial client meeting |
| Class 6 10/17/22 | Team Dynamics and Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion 1  Discussion of Team Charter assignment | **Individual**   * Readings:   + “Creating Value with Diverse Teams”   + “Power, Safety, and Learning in Racially Diverse Groups”   + “Deadlines in cross-cultural teams”   + “Why Diverse Teams Are Smarter”   **Team**   * Draft Client Contract **due before class, by 11:59pm on 10/16** * Be prepared to report on initial client meeting |
| Class 7 | Contracting and Project | **Individual**  View Project Management tutorials (on Brightspace – Student |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 10/24/22 | Management 2 | Resources - Workplans). You can choose between these options:   * Project Management Foundations (about 3 hours)   + https://[www.linkedin.com/learning/project-](http://www.linkedin.com/learning/project-) management-foundations-2016/welcome? u=2131553 * Project Management Simplified (about 1.5 hours)   + https://[www.linkedin.com/learning/project-](http://www.linkedin.com/learning/project-) management-simplified/outlining-the-twelve- steps?u=2131553 * Readings:   + Review sample Workplans   **Team**   * Draft Team Charter **due before class, by 11:59pm on 10/23** |
| Class 8 10/31/22 | **NO CLASS** | **Team**   * Final Client Contract due by **11:59pm on 10/30** * Final Team Charter due by **11:59pm on 11/2** |
| **Phase 3: RESEARCH SKILLS AND PROJECT WORK**  Class 9 11/7/22  ***NOTE: Meeting via Zoom*** | Literature Reviews  Surveys, Interviews and Focus Groups  Discuss Meetings | **Individual**   * Review Wagner Capstone Library Guide   + Experiment with using Bobst Library databases to identify scholarly articles regarding your topic * Readings:   + Review examples of literature reviews and be prepared to discuss strengths and weaknesses   + “Run Meetings That Are Fair to Introverts, Women, and Remote Workers”   + “Stop the Meeting Madness”   + “Your Team is Brainstorming All Wrong”   **Team**   * Draft Workplan **due before class, by 11:59pm on 11/6** |
| Class 10 11/14/22 | Prepare for self and team peer evaluations  Team Dynamics and Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion | **Individual**   * Readings:   + Flawless Consulting, Ch 10 and 13   + On DEI:     - “Why Scholar Loretta Ross is calling-in Callout Culture”     - “What if Instead of Calling People Out, We Called Them In”     - “From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces” * On Feedback:   + “Giving Feedback: 5 Elements Of A More Inclusive Approach”   + “Feedback — the fear and the need”   + “A Better Way to Deliver Bad News” |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Phase 4: PROJECT WORK AND FEEDBACK**  Class 11 11/21/22 | Team reports Team check-ins | **Individual**   * Self and team peer evaluations   **Team**   * Final Workplan due by **11:59 pm on 11/20** * Be prepared to give project update to classmates |
| Class 12 11/28/22 | **NO CLASS** |  |
| Class 13 12/5/22 | **NO CLASS** –  Teams hold meetings to move work forward | **Individual**   * Read and reflect on evaluations   **Team**   * Continue to move work forward |
| Class 14 12/12/22  ***NOTE: Meeting via Zoom*** | Team meetings with instructor to discuss evaluations | **Individual**   * Read and reflect on evaluations |

**January Term**

While classes do not 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 Years). 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 are expected 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**.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PHASE and DATE** | **TOPIC(S)** | **ASSIGNMENTS DUE** |
| **Phase 5: PROJECT WORK**  Class 1 1/23/23 | Team updates  Discuss spring schedule  Data analysis | **Individual**   * Flawless Consulting, ch 14   **Team**   * Be prepared to give team update * Revised work plan and team charter (using track changes) |
| Class 2  1/30/23 | Formatting final reports |  |
| Class 3  2/6/23 | **NO CLASS** |  |
| Class 4  2/13/23 |  | **Team**   * Report outlines due 2/19 |
| **Phase 6: PROJECT WORK AND REPORT WRITING**  PRESIDENTS DAY 2/20/23 | **NO CLASS**  Discuss outlines Team updates | **Team**   * Schedule final presentation for client. I must be present and will provide availability. |
| Class 5 (2/27/23) | **NO CLASS** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Class 6  3/6/23 | **NO CLASS** | **Team:**   * First draft final report |
| SPRING BREAK 3/13/23 | **NO CLASS** |  |
| Class 7 3/20/23 | Team updates Discuss first drafts  Discuss client presentation & Presentation Skills | **Individual**   * Flawless Consulting, ch 15   **Team**   * 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  3/27/23 | **NO CLASS** |  |
| **Phase 7: WRITING AND PRESENTING**  Class 9 4/3/23 | Rehearsals of client presentations | **Team**   * Draft powerpoint presentation * Second draft of final report |
| Class 10 4/10/23 | Rehearsals of client presentations & Peer Feedback  Prepare Capstone Expo | **Team**   * Draft powerpoint presentation |
| Class 11 4/17/23 | Rehearsals of client presentations | **Individual**   * Self and team peer evaluations   **Team**   * Draft powerpoint presentation * Third and final draft of final report |
| Class 12 (4/24/23) | **NO CLASS** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Phase 8: *CONCLUSION!* EVALUATION, REFLECTION, CELEBRATION**  Class 13 5/1/23 | Self and peer evaluations | **Individual**   * Read and reflect on evaluations |
| Class 14 5/8/23 | Reflect and Celebrate | **Team**   * Teams should send final version of final report to me and Wagner Capstone alias (wagner.capstone@nyu.edu) |
| 5/9/2023 & 5/10/2023 | **CAPSTONE EXPO** | **Team**   * 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.