

**CAPSTONE: CAP-GP 3301.002 – SI3**

**Fall 2023 – Spring 2024**

**Instructor Information**

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* Office hours by appointment

# Course Information

* Class Meeting Times: Mondays, 6:45 pm - 8:25 pm
* Class Location: 238 Thompson St (GCASL) Room 384 Loc: Washington Square

# 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

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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 |

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

A set of potential projects have been identified for our section. You will see the client applications on Brightspace. Client presentations will be available during the first week of September before class. **You should submit questions you have about the specific projects by Friday, September 8 before class.** During our first class, we will have a chance to discuss the projects. Students will be asked for project preferences immediately following our first class.

You will fill out a form which gives me your project rankings and other information. This form is **due on Tuesday, September 12**. I will take your preferences into account along with the needs of the project, students’ previous coursework, work and life experience, other expertise, 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 each.

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;
* **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; and
* completion of all evaluations.

Though Capstone classes are in-person, your team and client meetings do not have to be. Teams can work this out with each other and their client. (We do encourage the first and last meetings with the client to be in person if at all possible.)

# 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. You will be graded at the end of each semester. The grade at the end of the first semester will reflect your work, participation and learning to date. I will assign final grades at the end of the second semester. Your final grade will override your fall grade (that is, your fall grade will be changed to reflect your final grade.)

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 (see above).

* 60% **is based on teamwork products and activities** 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 and performance** during the course through active participation in the team’s work (including as indicated by team-member evaluations), class activities, meetings with faculty, and the 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 source 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 as a Google doc**, as they can be easily shared and edited amongst a group of people.

***Note on use of generative AI:*** Use of ChatGPT and related tools is allowed in this class as a research collaborator. (Taking credit for writing you did not create is a violation of NYU’s Academic Integrity policy.) As with all assignments, learning from the work is your responsibility. These tools can be used to help your group research and solve problems. You must comply with your client’s policies on the use of generative AI tools.

For every deliverable, you must document all of the sources used. When using generative AI, you must also include:

* Which tools and techniques you used (include your prompts, any plugins used, etc.);
* Which parts of the deliverable you used them for;
* You should also highlight any concerns with the output.

# Required Readings and Other Resources

Course readings will be available on the Brightspace website for this course. Additional readings may be added as the course progresses.

# 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:

* Prospective client presentations (recorded) (September);
* Team formation (September);
* Kickoff meeting 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);
* Preliminary client-team contract or work agreement (October);
* Negotiations with client to finalize contract (October);
* Final, signed client-team contract (October);
* Team charter (October)
* Detailed team workplan (October);

# First set of client deliverables (by 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);
* 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); and
* End-of-course self, team /peer, client and course evaluations (mid-March).

# 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. **The class meeting schedule is subject to change, as Capstone remains a fluid learning experience**. The tentative fall class schedule is provided below.

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

Please take note of the NYU academic [calendar](https://www.nyu.edu/students/student-information-and-resources/registration-records-and-graduation/academic-calendar.html) for 2023-24.

# Classroom Norms

**When we are in the classroom, I request that you do not use laptops, tablets or phones unless you are working in your project teams. Please bring notebooks for taking notes.** Any slides used will also be made available in Brightspace. It is rare we get a break from our screens. My hope is that you are fully present and will actively participate during class discussions.

When we meet on Zoom, you are expected to participate in each class with your Zoom audio and video on. Please review Wagner’s [Zoom in the Classroom](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/student/zoom) series about classroom etiquette, participation, and more.

# Fall Semester

The schedule and topics below may vary based on individual project needs. The intent is to use class time in a way that enables teams to produce the highest quality projects on a timely basis and achieve the learning objectives of the course. A greater number of class-based presentations

and discussions are likely early on in the course in order for Capstone faculty to provide guidance on project management and direction. The second semester schedule (to be distributed at a later date) allows for greater time for team working sessions.

**Note**: Though some class time is allotted for team meetings/work, it is anticipated that students and their teams will need to devote additional non-class time on a weekly basis to complete the work necessary on their Capstone projects.

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| **PHASE and DATE** | **TOPIC(S)** | **ASSIGNMENTS DUE**  (all assignments are due in advance of class unless otherwise noted) |
| **Phase 1: CREATING TEAMS**  Class 1 9/11/23 | Introductions  Overview of Syllabus & Capstone Student Guide  Discussion of potential Client Projects | **Individual**   * Read: Syllabus and [Student Capstone Guide](https://nyu.app.box.com/s/i1fqr2ba6e20c8u6xyvdd9es3xtppjgr) * Read: Capstone proposals; come to class prepared with questions * Watch: Client presentations * Watch: [“What is Capstone?” video](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/academics/capstone)   **Due Tue 9/12 by 5pm**: [Student Info and Project](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdwrDAzk31c1QuuGIwiIPN2lD9ni1tiWgYzlgHzRpgeMj70Fw/viewform?usp=sf_link) [Preferences](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdwrDAzk31c1QuuGIwiIPN2lD9ni1tiWgYzlgHzRpgeMj70Fw/viewform?usp=sf_link) Form |
| **Phase 2: TEAM LAUNCH AND PLANNING**  Class 2 9/18/23 | Introduction to Consulting  Preparation for kickoff meeting with client; Knowing the Client  Teams Formed   * Team activity * Establish weekly meeting time * Set up shared Google Drive folder | **Individual**   * Read: Flawless Consulting (selected chapter) + post write up by **Fri 9/15** * Read: Capstone Reflections - Advice Letters * Watch: Capstone consulting videos: Intro, What Consulting Is and Isn’t and The Role of Technical and Interpersonal Skills   **Team**   * Exchange contact information * Schedule one get-together purely about getting to know each other. See handout under “Activities” on Brightspace for sample questions and topics (or feel free to ignore) * **Due Thu 9/21 by 3pm:** In preparation for your client meeting, please email me the following:   1. A draft of first client email   2. Multiple date/time options, to which I will provide my availability   3. Kickoff meeting objectives |

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| Class 3 9/25/23 | Team Dynamics 1: Leadership Styles  Group Activity: Leadership Compass debrief | **Individual**   * Read: The Culture Code Chapters 1, 4 * Activity: Leadership Compass, complete in advance of class and bring your results to share   **Team**   * **Send out first client email by Mon 9/25** to schedule kickoff meeting **between Wed 9/27 & Fri 10/6.** Send draft to me before sending to client. *Note: I must be present at kickoff meeting.*   **\*I must be copied on every client communication for the duration of Capstone.**   * **Due Tue 9/26 by 3pm:** In preparation for your client meeting, please email me the following:   1. Kickoff meeting agenda (tied to meeting objectives)   2. A set of questions for the client   3. Suggestions for project scope   4. Be prepared to report on your background research on your client (I don’t need to see anything written) |
| Class 4 10/2/23 | Contracting (Scope Agreement), Project Management**,** Timelines | **Individual**   * Watch: Capstone consulting videos: The Project Management Triangle, Client Expectations Mgmt, Risk Mgmt, Client Mtg Mgmt * Read: Ethics Memo for students * Review three (3) sample Client Contracts under “Student Resources” on Brightspace   **Team**   * Begin drafting contract (if have conducted client kickoff meeting) * Be prepared to report on client kickoff meeting |
| Class 5 10/10/23  NOTE: This is a TUESDAY, not a Monday. Monday, October 9 is fall break. Classes on Tuesday, October 10 meet on a Monday schedule. | Team Dynamics 2: Creating team cultures that honor everyone’s backgrounds and workstyles  Discussion of Team Charters; Teams will meet to draft  Scope questions | **Individual**   * Complete: Working Together worksheet (distributed in class) * Read: The Culture Code ch. 6, 10, 12 * Review two (2) sample Team Charters under “Student Resources” on Brightspace * Choose a Project Management tutorial (links will be shared on Brightspace)   **Team**   * Be prepared to report on client kickoff meeting * **Due Tue 10/10 by 3pm:** Draft contract; revisions due promptly as required; **to be sent to client by** |

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|  |  | **Fri 10/13**. *Note:* Scope may need to be revised after client feedback. |
| Class 6 10/16/23 | Project Management and discussion about Workplans; Begin drafting workplan with team during class  Internal Workplan Review draft contracts | **Individual**   * Review sample workplans   **Team**   * **Due Mon 10/16 by 3pm: Draft Team Charter**. Be prepared to talk about proposed team member roles in class * Start drafting workplan (align to contract) * Incorporate client feedback into contract |
| **Phase 3: RESEARCH SKILLS AND PROJECT WORK**  Class 7 10/23/23 | The art of feedback  Topics selected based on project needs (research design, literature reviews, environmental scans, etc.) | **Individual**   * Reading on feedback * Skim: [Capstone Cohort Research Guide](https://guides.nyu.edu/wagner/capstone) * Activity: Experiment with using Bobst Library databases to identify scholarly articles regarding your topic. Be ready to show results in class in class.   **Team**   * **Due Fri 10/20 by 3pm:** Draft workplan * **Due Mon 10/23 by 3pm: Final Contract** signed by client and countersigned by team members**.** Post to Brightspace when finalized. |
| Class 8 10/30/23 | Literature reviews, Market scans, etc. | **Individual**   * Review [Wagner Capstone Library Guide](https://guides.nyu.edu/wagner/capstone) * Experiment with using Bobst Library databases to identify scholarly articles regarding your topic. Be ready to show results in class in class.   **Team**   * **Due Tue 10/31 by 3pm:**   1. **Final Team Charter**   2. **Final Workplan** |
| Class 9  11/6/23 | TBD – Based on individual team project needs |  |
| Class 10  11/13/23 | TBD – Based on individual team project needs |  |

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| **Phase 4: FEEDBACK**  Class 11 11/20/23 | TBD – Based on individual team project needs | **Individual**   * Readings on how to give feedback |
| Class 12 11/27/23 | Continued discussion on self and team evaluations and the art of feedback | **Individual & Team**   * Self and team evaluations   **Team**   * **Due Fri 12/1**: 1st Draft Fall deliverable |
| Class 13 12/4/23 | Team and individual meetings to discuss evaluations; Feedback review | **Individual & Team**   * Read and reflect on evaluations * Be prepared to give update to classmates   **Team**   * **Due Thu 12/7**: 2nd Draft Fall deliverable |
| Class 14 12/11/23 | Semester reflection and goals setting for December/January | **Individual & Team**  Prepare goals and priorities for Dec/Jan  **Team**   * **Due Wed 12/13**:   1. Final Fall deliverable   2. Revised workplan |

# January Term

Teams will meet weekly with me from early January until the spring semester begins, at a

day/time of the team’s choosing. Students are expected to be available and working during this time (except for the holiday week between December 24 – January 1). If your team is planning to travel, just make sure to work things out among yourselves.

# Spring Semester

The class will meet weekly on Mondays beginning January 22, 2024 as needed during the spring semester. **You must continue to be available for our class time on Monday evenings through the end of March**. Much of the time will be set aside for teams to meet on their own or with me and covering presentation skills. Projects successfully completed by the scheduled outlined above will have a final class on March 25 or April 1 to debrief the capstone experience.

# SEE KEY DATES FOR DELIVERABLES ON BRIGHTSPACE.

**Letter Grades**

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

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| **Letter Grade** | **Points** |
| **A** | 4.0 points |
| **A-** | 3.7 points |
| **B+** | 3.3 points |
| **B** | 3.0 points |
| **B-** | 2.7 points |
| **C+** | 2.3 points |
| **C** | 2.0 points |
| **C-** | 1.7 points |
| **F** | 0.0 points |

# Student grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

**(A) Excellent**: Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.

**(A-) Very good**: Very strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.

**(B+) Good**: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the graduate student grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course.

**(B) Adequate**: Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some indication that understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical

approaches used are adequate but student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.

**(B-) Borderline**: Weak work for a graduate student; meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in “good standing.”

**(C/-/+) Deficient**: Inadequate work for a graduate student; does not meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.

**(F) Fail**: Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance has been consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with serious limits in many areas. Weaknesses or limits are pervasive.

# Technology Support

You have 24/7 support via NYU’s IT services. Explore the [NYU servicelink knowledgebase](https://nyu.service-now.com/servicelink/search_results.do?sysparm_search=student%2Bguides&x=0&y=0&sysparm_fa&sysparm_sp&sysparm_cat&sysparm_serv&sysparm_location=24e7c87598a074004c8c03063d84e2a6&sysparm_role&sysparm_base) for troubleshooting and student guides for all NYU-supported tools (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](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362003) [24/7 technical support](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362003) (includes a chat function), or review [Zoom’s support resources](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/categories/200101697-Getting-Started). Your peers are another source of support, so you could ask a friend or classmate for help or tips.

If you do not have the appropriate hardware technology nor financial resources to purchase the technology, consider applying for the NYU [Emergency Relief Grant](https://www.nyu.edu/admissions/financial-aid-and-scholarships/covid-relief-grant.html).

# 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](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/code). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/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](https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html) 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.