#### **NYU Wagner logo**

# CAPSTONE: CAP-GP 3801-002

**Fall 2023 - Spring 2024**

## Instructor Information

* Sophie Pauze
* [Sjp544@nyu.edu](mailto:Sjp544@nyu.edu)
* Office Hours: Mondays 5:30-6:30 PM, by appointment

## Course Information

* Class Meeting Times: Mondays, 6:45 pm - 8:25 pm
* Classroom: 60 Fifth Ave Room C14 Loc
  + Capstone will meet in person unless otherwise noted.

## 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.

Specifically, the Capstone sessions will cover topics related to consulting, team dynamics, project management, presentation skills and equity, diversity and inclusion to support the execution of high-quality projects.

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 work plan;
* meet deadlines and monitor their progress against the contract and workplan;
* revise contract and work plan 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 work plan | Team work plan |
| Meet deadlines and monitor their progress against the contract and work plan | Signed contract and team work plan |
| 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

There will be three Capstone projects to choose from:

1. PHS Community Services
2. National Blood Disorder Foundation
3. Bristol Meyers Squibb

Please review the Capstone project briefings provided in Brightspace ahead of our first class session. The clients will come to present their organization, the challenge they’d like you to help address and project goals in our first two meetings on 9/11 and 9/18 – come prepared with questions.

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. 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 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

This course will use a Slack channel (linked here) to host our discussion board. You’ll use this message board to post your required weekly pre-class posts, to ask general questions about the course, to share relevant articles, and to create community with us all. To use Slack, I recommend downloading the desktop version (https://slack.com/downloads/).

## 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. Preliminary grades will be assigned at the end of the first semester. 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. 60% **is based on work products** such as interim and final deliverables as well as other assignments. 40% **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.

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.

## Required Readings and Other Resources (in order of assignments)

All course readings and videos will be available on the Brightspace website for this course.

* Block, Peter. 2011. Flawless Consulting, 3rd edition. Pfeiffer. *Flawless Consulting* is available online (and downloadable) through NYU’s Bobst Library.
* Bregman, “Don’t be Nice, Be Helpful” is available online
* Capstone Consulting Video Series is available online
* “Chapter 3, Scoping the Project” is available online
* Edmonson, “Teamwork on the Fly” is available online
* Leadership Compass is available online and Self-Assessment
* Mulvey, When teammates raise a White Flag is available online
* NPR, Why Scholar Loretta Ross Is 'Calling In' Callout Culture is available online
* Porter, “How to Give Feedback People can Actually Use” is available online
* Rothwell, In Mixed Company is available online
* Sverdup, “Cut Me Some Slack”: The Psychological Contracts as a Foundation for Understanding Team Charters is available online
* *“*Understanding the Dynamics Between Consulting Teams and Client Systems” is available online

Note: Additional readings will be added throughout the year.

## 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:

* September
  + Client presentations
  + Team formation
  + “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
* October/November
  + Preliminary client-team contract or work agreement
  + Negotiations with client to finalize contract
  + Final, signed client-team contract and detailed team workplan
  + Team charter
* December
  + End-of-first semester self, team/peer, and course evaluations; discussion of team process and progress
* January term: Continue project work (January)
* February/March
  + First draft of final project report to faculty
  + Second draft of final project report to faculty
* April/May
  + Rehearsal of client presentation before class/faculty for feedback before presentation to client
  + Final report and presentation to client
  + End-of-second semester reflection and celebration
  + End-of-course self, team /peer, client and course evaluations

## Class Schedule Overview

The following class schedule charts the course for our work together through May, with the caveat that there may be changes along the way. **The sequence of classes, and due dates for assignments, could change** depending on your meetings with clients and the substance of your projects.

Students should expect to meet weekly as a class or team unless agreed in class.

**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 in 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  9/11/23 | Introductions  Overview of Syllabus & Capstone Student Guide  Client presentations | * Watch video: What is Capstone? * Review syllabus and Student Capstone Guide * Review capstone proposals and come to class prepared with questions |
| Class 2  9/18/23 | Client presentations:  Discussion of projects | * Read capstone proposals and prepare questions for project liaison * **Due 9/22**   + Student Info and Preference Form.   + Attach resume and writing sample and make this one document. Post on Brightspace.   + Complete DiSC assessment * Teams will be posted by 9/25, before class |
| **Phase 2: TEAM LAUNCH AND PLANNING**  Class 3  9/25/23 | Introduction to consulting;  Preparation for entry meeting with client | **Individual**   * Read Flawless Consulting, chapters 19, 1, 2, 3 (in this order) * Watch: Capstone consulting videos: Intro, What Consulting Is and Isn’t, and The Role of Technical and Interpersonal Skills   **Team**   * Exchange contact information and schedule “Getting to Know you” meeting * Schedule one get-together purely about getting to know each other. See handout for sample questions and topics (or feel free to ignore). * Due by 10/1: Send out the first client email and send draft to me before sending it to the client * Schedule initial client meetings within the next 2 weeks. I must be present and will provide my availability. |
| Class 4  10/2/23 | Team dynamics 1: Leadership styles | **Individual**   * Readings related to team dynamics * Leadership Compass & Self-Assessment   **Team**  **Due 10/2:** 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  10/10/23  NOTE: This is a TUESDAY, not a Monday. Monday, October 9 is fall break. Classes on Tuesday, October 10 meet on a Monday schedule. | Contracting and project management 1 | **Individual**   * Reading: Flawless Consulting, Chapters 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9. * View: Consulting videos: The Project Management Triangle, Client Expectations Mgmt, Risk Mgmt, Client Mtg Mgmt. * Read Ethics Memo for students |
| Class 6  10/16/23 | Team Dynamics 2: Creating team cultures that honor everyone’s backgrounds and workstyles;  Discussion of team charter assignment | **Individual:**   * Edmonson, “Teamwork on the Fly” is available online * Mulvey, When teammates raise a White Flag is available online * NPR, Why Scholar Loretta Ross Is 'Calling In' Callout Culture is available online * Rothwell, In Mixed Company is available online   **Team**   * Due 10/6: Draft contract (if have conducted client entry meeting) * Be prepared to report on client entry meeting |
| Class 7  10/23/23 | Contracting and Project Management 2 | **Individual**:  View Project Management tutorials (will be posted on Brightspace. You can choose between these options:   * Project Management Foundations (about 3 hours)   https://[www.linkedin.com/learning/proj](http://www.linkedin.com/learning/proj)ect-management-foundations-2016/w elcome?u=2131553   * Project Management Simplified (about 1.5 hours)   https://[www.linkedin.com/learning/proj](http://www.linkedin.com/learning/proj)ect-management-simplified/outlining-t he-twelve-steps?u=2131553   * Read “Reflection-Advice Letters” from previous Capstone students * Sverdup, “Cut Me Some Slack”: The Psychological Contracts as a Foundation for Understanding Team Charters is available online   **Team**  **Due 10/23:**   * Draft contract * Draft team charter * Be prepared to report on client entry meeting |
| **Phase 3: RESEARCH SKILLS AND PROJECT WORK**  Class 8 10/30/23 | Literature reviews | **Individual**   * Review Wagner Capstone Library Guide * Experiment with using Bobst Library databases to identify scholarly articles regarding your topic. Be ready to show results in class. * *“*Understanding the Dynamics Between Consulting Teams and Client Systems” is available online   “Chapter 3, Scoping the Project” is available online |
| Class 9 11/6/23 | Surveys | **Individual**   * Review examples of literature reviews and be prepared to discuss strengths and weaknesses   **Team**   * Final contract (depending on team) * Draft work plan   Final team charter |
| Class 10 11/13/23 | Interviews and focus groups;  Prepare for self and team peer evaluations | **Individual**   * Flawless Consulting, Ch 10 and 13 * Bregman, “Don’t be NIce, Be Helpful” is available online * Porter, “How to Give Feedback People can Actually Use” is available online   **Team**  Final contract (depending on team) |
| **Phase 4: PROJECT WORK AND FEEDBACK**  Class 11 11/20/23 | Team reports Team check-ins | **Individual**   * Self and team peer evaluations   **Team**   * Be prepared to give update to classmates   Final work plan |
| Class 12 11/27/23 | Team and individual meetings to discuss evaluations | **Individual**  Read and reflect on evaluations |
| Class 13 12/4/23 | VIRTUAL CLASS | **Team**   * Present a work plan for the holidays and January   + Identify the milestones you will achieve before classes resume on 1/22   Describe your process for collaborating during the break |
| 12/11/23 | NO CLASS |  |

### January Term

While classes don’t meet, this is generally an important time for group work. Students are expected to be available and working during this time (except for the holiday week between Christmas and New Year’s). If your team is 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 may cancel sessions based on team progress and deliverables, but **you must keep the time available every Monday night during class time**. Also, for planning purposes, I’ve noted here some potential deadlines, **but these are preliminary and will likely change.** Additional readings will also be added.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **DATE** | **TOPIC(S)** | **ASSIGNMENTS DUE** |
| **Phase 5: PROJECT WORK** | Team updates | **Individual**  Flawless Consulting, ch 14 |
| Class 1 1/22/24 | Discuss spring schedule  Data analysis | **Team**   * Be prepared to give team update   Revised work plan and team charter (using track changes) |
| Class 2  1/29/24 | Creating and formatting final reports |  |
| Class 3  2/4/24 | NO CLASS |  |
| Class 4 2/11/24 |  | **Team**  Report outlines due 2/19 |
| **Phase 6: PROJECT WORK AND REPORT WRITING**  NO CLASS PRESIDENTS DAY  2/19/24 | Discuss outlines Team updates | **Team**  Schedule final presentation for client. I must be present and will provide availability. |
| Class 5  2/26/24 | NO CLASS |  |
| Class 6  3/4/24 | NO CLASS | **Team:**  First draft final report |
| NO CLASS SPRING BREAK  3/11/24 |  |  |
| Class 7  3/18/24 | Team updates Discuss first drafts Discuss client presentation | **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  3/25/24 | NO CLASS |  |
| **Phase 7: WRITING AND PRESENTING**  Class 9  4/1/24 | Rehearsals of client presentations | **Team**   * Draft slides for your final presentation * Second draft of final report |
| Class 10 4/8/24 | Rehearsals of client presentations | **Team**  Draft slides |
| Class 11 4/15/24 | Rehearsals of client presentations | **Individual**   * Self and team peer evaluations   **Team**   * Draft slides   Third and final draft of final report |
| Class 12 4/22/24 | NO CLASS |  |
| **Phase 8: CONCLUSION! EVALUATION, REFLECTION, CELEBRATION**  Class 13 4/29/2 | Self and peer evaluations | **Individual**  Read and reflect on evaluations |
| Class 14 5/6/24 | Reflect and Celebrate | **Team:**  Teams should send final version of final report to me and Wagner Capstone alias (wagner.capstone@nyu.edu) |

## Letter Grades

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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.Wagner Academic

## 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.

The policies of Wagner require that you complete and submit your own work. If you use ChatGPT, Bard, and other generative AI tools in your work, you must cite them. If you don’t this violates the school’s norms, and you will be held to Wagner’s Academic Integrity Policy.

Using ChatGPT and related tools will reduce what you learn in this course. Consequently, the use of ChatGPT, Bard, and other generative AI tools is not allowed in this course. As a reminder, please review Wagner’s Academic Integrity Policy. Students in breach of this policy will face grade penalties and/or disciplinary action.

## Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Student Accessibility

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities.  Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website](https://www.nyu.edu/students/communities-and-groups/students-with-disabilities.html) and click the “Get Started” button. You can also call or email CSD(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. You must notify me in advance of religious holidays or observances that might coincide with exams, assignments, or class times to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives. Students may also contact [religiousaccommodations@nyu.edu](mailto:religiousaccommodations@nyu.edu) for assistance.

## NYU’s Wellness Exchange

[NYU’s Wellness Exchange](http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-wellness/wellness-exchange.html) has extensive student health and mental health resources. A private hotline (212-443-9999) is available 24/7 that connects students with a professional who can help them address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.