NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE

ADVANCED PROJECT IN HEALTH SERVICES MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

P11.3851 - Fall 2009

Instructors: Roger Kropf and Amy Goldman
Day, Time and Location: Tuesdays, 6:45-8:25 P.M., 701 Silver Building
Office Hours: Call or email for an appointment.

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Prerequisites: P11.1833, Health Services Management

COURSE SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES

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 integrating and enhancing student learning in several different arenas: a content or issue area, key process skills including project management and teamwork, and methods for gathering, analyzing and reporting data. 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 each student will be assigned to a team, the class will work as a learning community dedicated to the success of all the projects.

TEAM ASSIGNMENTS

Students are assigned to projects based on a number of criteria:

1. Student preferences. Each student will complete a form indicating their preferences after reading a description of all the projects available and hearing presentations from the project sponsors.

2. Team size is usually 3-5 students. The faculty and client will determine the size of the team required.

3. Some projects will require specific skills and experience. For example, a nurse may be needed to review medical records in a clinically oriented project whereas a finance project may require a background in financial modeling.

Assignments are made by the faculty. As in all professional assignments, this may not result in students getting their first or second choices. Student preferences are important and will be considered strongly in making decisions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Capstone integrates and enhances learning in several arenas: a content or issue area, process skills including project, client and team management, and research methods for gathering, analyzing and reporting data. Learning objectives are:

A. CONTENT

Students should:
- understand the policy context for their project;
- be familiar with specialized vocabularies required to perform the project successfully;
- be aware of critical research related to their content area;
- be capable of positioning and evaluating their project within its broader policy context.

B. PROCESS

Overall, students should demonstrate a capacity for flexibility and resilience, as shown by adapting to changing and complex circumstances, balancing competing demands and accepting uncertainty and lack of clarity when necessary.

1. Project Management

Students should demonstrate the ability to:
- assess the client organization and its environment;
- frame and refine the problem presented by the client;
- develop a work agreement with the client for the project
- develop a project work plan with timelines and deliverables;
- monitor their progress against the work agreement and workplan;
- revise the workplan as necessary;
- develop well supported and realistic recommendations.

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2. *Client Management*

Students should demonstrate the ability to:

- develop and sustain their relationship with the client;
- negotiate a project work plan with timelines and deliverables (the contract");
- maintain regular and productive contact with the client;
- solicit and integrate feedback on progress against the contract and modify as necessary;
- deliver a final product to client's satisfaction.

3. Team Management

Students should demonstrate the ability to:

- understand group formation and development;
- understand the importance of interpersonal dynamics and team norms;
- create and periodically review their team charter;
- develop clear role descriptions for team members;
- manage team assignments and accountability;
- advocate points of view and negotiate differences of opinion;
- solicit and offer feedback;
- appreciate and learn from cultural differences.

C. RESEARCH

Students should demonstrate the ability to:

- identify and carry out data collection methods appropriate for their particular project, potentially including surveys and questionnaires, individual interviews, focus groups, and access to already existing datasets;
- follow established sampling procedures to create appropriate samples for their particular project;
- identify and implement appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative data gathering and analysis methods for their particular project;
- situate their findings in the broader related literature;
- draw conclusions based on their findings;
- communicate their work effectively both orally and in writing.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The class will involve presentations from the instructor and guest speakers, class discussion and team meetings. Course requirements include:

- enrollment in both semesters

- attendance in a 3-hour Advanced Team Workshop scheduled for the end of August/beginning of September.
- attendance and participation in class activities and team meetings
- completion of assignments on time
- participation in field work
- participation in meetings with clients
- participation in preparation and presentation of findings

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Students will be given two credits for the fall semester and two for the spring semester. At the end of the first semester, students will receive a grade of "IP" to reflect the "work in progress" nature of the year long project. We will assign final grades at the end of the second semester.

GRADING CRITERIA

Students will be graded on both the products they deliver to their clients and individual performance. 70% is based on client and faculty evaluations of the work products identified in the agreement with the client. 30% is based on peer and faculty evaluations of individual performance in the team's work.

COURSE MILESTONES

The course has a series of milestones that will serve as interim work products. Students are encouraged to set learning goals for themselves at the beginning of the course. These can be modified at the beginning of the second semester based on feedback from faculty, peers and their own self-assessment.

In addition, there is a consistent set of milestones (activities and products) that are required of students. Some suggested time frames for selected milestones are found in parenthesis, though actual timing during the course of the year may vary depending on the specific situation of each team and client.

These milestones include:

- development of team norms/team charter (September);
- "entry conference" with client and faculty to explain the process of the course, establish relationship, assess the client organization, and gain data to clarify the presenting problem or issue and client's initial vision of a successful project (September/October);
- summary by team of first meeting with client and clear statement of the problem (October);
- development of preliminary work agreement and workplan; presentation to class/faculty for feedback prior to client presentation (October);

- meeting with client to finalize work agreement and workplan (October/November);
- end of first semester self, team/peer, and course evaluation; discussion of team process and progress (early December);
- submission to client of "Phase 1" work product (December)
- meeting with client to review progress (January/February)
- outline of final project report to faculty (February);
- oral presentation of final report to class/faculty for feedback before presentation to client (March/April);
- final report and presentation to client with faculty (March/April);
- end-of-semester reflection positioning project in larger issue context (end April)
- end of course self, team /peer and course evaluations (end April);
- presentation for end event (May)

COURSE WEBSITE

All students registered for this course can access the course website by going to your NYU home page (http://home.nyu.edu), where the course is listed if you are registered this semester. It is extremely important that you view the course website regularly, and especially on Friday of each week, to look for announcements.

TEAM BUDGETS

Each team has a $500 annual operating budget for their project expenses. In addition, Wagner will continue to offer supplemental travel funding for airfare/train travel for students who must travel outside of NYC for project research. While generous, the supplemental travel funding rarely covers all student expenses, and students who choose projects located outside of NYC should be made aware of this when making project choices. Further information is available in the Capstone Student Handbook on our Blackboard site.

READINGS

A Student Capstone Guide is available in the "Course Documents" section of our Blackboard website.

There are no required texts for this course that you need to purchase. All of you are expected to read the following monograph which can be found on the Internet at http://www.sec.gov/pdf/handbook.pdf. You will Adobe's Acrobat Reader to view it. It is available for free at http://www.adobe.com.

Office of Investor Education and Assistance, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, A Plain English Handbook: How to Create Clear SEC Disclosure Documents (Washington, D.C.: SEC, 1997).

The following books are recommended for those of you with a special interest in these subjects.

1. Sunny Baker & Kim Baker, On Time/On Budget: A Step-by-Step Guide for Managing Any Project (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1992).
2. Claudyne Wilder, The Presentations Kit, Second Edition (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1994).

CLASS SCHEDULE- FIRST SEMESTER

The list of weeks and topics that follows is preliminary and subject to change. 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. There will be more class based presentations and discussions early on in the course as well as time for team meetings and consultation with other class mates and faculty during class time. The second semester will allow for greater time for team working sessions. Students should expect to meet weekly as a class or team unless otherwise indicated here or agreed in class.

TEAM BUILDING SESSIONS

Sign up for one of the sessions being offered in late August and early September. See information you previously received from David Schachter, Wagner Assistant Dean for Student Affairs

WEEK 1: 9/8/2009

Review of syllabus. Project descriptions distributed. Discussion of projects with clients. Discussion of the time table, proposals, reports and presentations. Complete and submit student information form.

WEEK 2: 9/15/2009

Discussion of projects with clients.

WEEK 3: 9/22/2009

Discussion of projects with clients. Students submit project preferences. Team assignments posted on course website by September 25.

WEEK 4: 9/29/2009

Assignment: schedule and conduct initial client meeting during the period from September 28 to October 9. Teams should obtain the professor's date/time availability as part of the meeting scheduling process. The professor should be present at the meeting. Email agenda for client meeting to professor before meeting for feedback.

Class session will focus on preparation for initial client meeting as a class and in teams. Presentation on establishment of team norms. Initial team meeting to organize and develop list of norms and agree on approach to gathering initial information about the client. Teams create agenda for first client meeting.

WEEK 5: 10/6/2009

Class time for presentation of team charters, updates and team meetings. Time may be used as preparation for initial client meeting. Discussion of workplans.

Assignment for class: Team Charter due

WEEK 6: 10/13/2009

Using the client meeting as a source, this class and team meetings will focus on the elements of a client working agreement and work plan. Teams will work together in class on a draft working agreement and work plan for the client. Once completed and agreed on with the client, this will constitute the "contract" for the Capstone project. Discussion of confidentiality. Discussion of ethical issues.

WEEK 8: 10/20/2009

Assignment: submit in class a one to two page memo summarizing your team's findings from the initial client meeting, including a clear statement of the problem.

Assignment: submit draft working agreement and work plan to faculty by Monday, October 26

Teams will continue to work in class on the draft working agreement and workplan for the client.

WEEK 9: 10/27/2009

Meet with faculty to discuss draft working agreement and work plan.

WEEK 10: 11/3/2009

Team meetings**.**

Assignment: Working agreement sent to client by November 6.

WEEK 11: 11/10/2009

Short presentation by each team of their working agreement and work plan.

Class presentation on data gathering methods: interviewing, surveys, observation, focus groups and other methods and their application to specific projects. Team meetings.

Assignment: Final working agreement signed by client by 11/13.

WEEK 12: 11/17/2009

Progress review of initial stages of client work. Each team will present particular issues they face in working with clients so far, and their plans to develop and sustain relationship going forward.

WEEK 13: 11/24/2009

Discussion of writing skills.

Reading: Office of Investor Education and Assistance, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, A Plain English Handbook: How to Create Clear SEC Disclosure Documents (Washington, D.C.: SEC, 1997). This can be found at http://www.sec.gov/pdf/handbook.pdf. You can use Adobe's Acrobat Reader to view it. It is available for free at http://www.adobe.com.

WEEK 14: 12/1/2009

Progress review: working as a team. We will revisit team norms developed in initial session and discuss how well they have served the team. We will talk about strategies to manage the most common problems that arise within teams and identify any special needs that particular teams may have.

Team Assignment: Submit outline of Phase 1 report to faculty.

WEEK 15: 12/8/2009

Faculty will meet with each team individually to review semester progress, discuss any fieldwork that may be planned and highlight any issues for second semester. Other time for team meetings

Individual Assignment due for class 12/8: First written self assessment and first peer review of team members.

Assignment: Submit draft of Phase 1 report to professor by Friday, December 11.

In class assignment: complete end of semester course evaluation and submit to faculty

WEEK 16: No Class Meeting

Review Phase 1 report with professor. Revise and submit to client and professor by date indicated on work agreement with client.

CLASS SCHEDULE: SECOND SEMESTER

During this semester, much of the time will be set aside for teams to meet on their own or with us. The main emphasis is on time spent working with teams and final products, and we can be flexible about the need for formal class meeting times as the semester progresses. However, as needed, we will schedule problem-solving or skill-building sessions, <u>so you must be available every Tuesday night during class time</u>. Also, for planning purposes, we've listed some potential deadlines, but these are preliminary and could change.

Major milestones for the Spring semester (a detailed schedule will be provided at the first class in January).

1st class in January	Short presentation of Phase I report to class
January-February	Mid-project meeting with client. Follow/modify project work plan and submit reports as required by working agreement with client.
March	Outline of entire report due. Draft reports reviewed with faculty and, where appropriate, with client. Effective presentation session..
April	Oral presentation to client. Submission of final draft report to client. Submission of draft report and scheduling of the oral presentation requires faculty approval.
May	Final revised and approved report due. Capstone end event. Poster sessions on projects presented.

While two semesters appears to be a significant amount of time, we must impress upon you that this course requires weekly effort by each project team and team member in order to successfully complete the course.