

Parsons Syllabi: Frequently Asked Questions

Why create a syllabus?

The purpose of writing a syllabus is to define expectations, clearly and in writing at the start of each semester. A well designed syllabus provides specific information about what is expected of students and what students can expect from the course and the instructor(s). This includes, but is not limited to:

- What students can expect to learn from the class (learning outcomes).
- How much work will be given and when (course requirements and course outline).
- Policies (including attendance, grading, etc...) establish expectations between the department, instructors and students.
- The participation, effort and quality of work expected in order to receive a specific letter grade.

In addition to providing content specific to the course and faculty member, the syllabus should reference the existing Parsons resources, such as the Student Handbook, Course Description Booklets, University Student Handbook, Policies and Code of Conduct.

Ultimately a well designed syllabus improves communication and understanding between the School, department, students and instructors.

Do students really care if I have a syllabus?

Yes, students do have an appreciation for a well designed syllabus, as illustrated by this student email sent to the Office of the Provost in Fall 2002:

"I wanted to let you know that I think a syllabi requirement for faculty is a GREAT IDEA. Some of my professors this semester fall far below my high standards, and a simple request of them like a syllabus would force them to clarify their goals for the course. I can't believe, when I have asked them for one, they replied they didn't yet know what we would be doing for the class."

Is help writing my syllabus available?

Yes, support for faculty in creating syllabi and designing courses is provided through the University Writing Center. See <http://www.newschool.edu/admin/writingcenter> and click "Faculty" or email a request to writingcenter@newschool.edu.

Should I give my students a printed syllabus?

Yes, students will need a hard copy of the syllabus to take home with them the first day of class.

How should I file my syllabus with my department?

All faculty should provide their department with one printed copy and one digital copy of their syllabus for each class they are teaching, every semester. Check with your department for details.

How should I prepare the digital file(s)?

The syllabi should be saved as either Microsoft Word document or an Adobe Acrobat PDF. Adobe Acrobat is available on the computers in the Parsons Faculty Center.

Each file should be named as follows using an abbreviation for the semester, the subject code, master course number and section letter. Note: there should not be any spaces, use hyphens instead. Examples:

SP05-PLAH-1000-A.doc

SP05-PUPD-3000-A.pdf

Semesters should be abbreviated as follows: Fall 2004 = FA04, Spring 2005=SP05, Summer 2005=SU05, etc...

Can I still post my syllabus to the Portal?

Yes, you can post your syllabus to the Portal if you choose; however, you will also need to provide your department with a digital copy of your syllabus. Keep in mind that as of fall 2004 the requirement to post all syllabi to the Portal is suspended until further notice.

Is help posting my syllabus to the Portal still available?

Yes, Portal drop in clinics are available, see <http://faculty.parsons.edu> for dates and times.