

Building a Basic Course in Blackboard

An online workshop for Durham Tech faculty

Purpose of this workshop:

To walk you through the steps of posting course materials in Blackboard (Bb) and readying your course site for student use.

Estimated time to complete:

2 to 3 hours (You can stop and start whenever you want, and spend as much or as little time as you like!)

What you will need:

- Access to the Internet
- Your Blackboard login information (provided in the "Intro to Bb" workshop)
- A blank practice course in Blackboard. A blank practice course has been created for you and you are enrolled as the instructor.
- Documents for your course--such as a syllabus, handouts, PowerPoint presentations, etc.--that you have previously prepared and saved.

Note: If you haven't prepared these documents for your course yet, you should probably do that before beginning this workshop. Otherwise, you can use this workshop to practice and become familiar with Bb but not to build a "real" course.

What this online workshop covers:

- ✓ Accessing the instructor's "Control Panel" and moving around in it
- ✓ Posting documents in your course (such as syllabus, handouts, or PowerPoint presentations)
- ✓ Posting links to web sites
- ✓ Posting instructor contact information
- ✓ Making folders and adding content inside them
- ✓ Posting announcements
- ✓ Customizing the course menu

Blackboard has dozens of features that allow you to put course materials on the web and to interact online with your students. You can select which features you want to use (and how you want to use them) to build a course site that is as unique as your teaching style and that supports your instructional goals.

What this workshop does NOT cover:

There are many Blackboard features and tools that will NOT be covered here. For example, this workshop will not cover...

- Using the Discussion Board
- Sending email to students through Bb
- Creating online tests
- Posting grades (or using the gradebook)
- Groups

For more info about Blackboard training, visit:

http://courses.durhamtech.edu/wiki/index.php/Blackboard_Training

Or, if you are the "self-study" type, you can access step-by-step instructions on many topics here:

<http://courses.durhamtech.edu/wiki/index.php/Handouts>

How to get started:

Follow the instructions on the pages that follow. Below is an overview of the steps you will need to complete in order to receive credit for completing this workshop.

STEP 1: Learn how to navigate in your course shell <i>(estimated time: 15 minutes)</i>	pages 3 - 4
STEP 2: Post a syllabus <i>(estimated time: 30 minutes)</i>	pages 5 - 7
STEP 3: Post a handout or PowerPoint presentation <i>(estimated time: 15 minutes)</i>	pages 8 - 9
STEP 4: Post a web link <i>(estimated time: 15 minutes)</i>	pages 10 - 11
STEP 5: Post instructor contact information <i>(estimated time: 10 minutes)</i>	page 12
STEP 6: Make folders and put content inside them <i>(estimated time: 30 minutes)</i>	pages 13 - 16
STEP 7: Post an announcement <i>(estimated time: 10 minutes)</i>	pages 17 - 18
STEP 8: Customize your course menu <i>(estimated time: 20 minutes)</i>	pages 19 - 21
STEP 9: Prepare a course for student use <i>(estimated time: 30 minutes)</i>	page 22 - 23
STEP 10: Email us to let us know you're done! <i>(estimated time: 5 minutes)</i>	page 24

Now, continue on to page 3 and let's get started...

STEP 1: Learn how to navigate in your course shell

Log in to Blackboard (at <http://blackboard.durhamtech.edu/>).

You should know how to do this from the "Intro to Blackboard" workshop. (If you have problems logging in, please refer to your documents from that workshop. If you still can't log in, contact Blackboard administrator at bbadmin@courses.durhamtech.edu)

A course has been created for your use in this workshop. Once you log in, you should see this course listed under "Courses you are teaching". (We will refer to this course as "your course" from now on.)

Click on your course title to enter the course.

Now you are in your blank course. You are seeing the course from the "student view". The first thing a student sees when entering your course is the Course Menu on the left (green panel) and the Announcements section on the right (which is empty at the moment).

Your course has a "Control Panel" that only the instructor can access. The Control Panel is where the instructor adds materials and manages the course. I think of it as the "back stage" area, where the instructor sets things up.

Click on the link to the "Control Panel" (the last menu item on the left).

Take a moment to look over the options in the Control Panel.

Notice how the Control Panel is organized into six sections. One section you will use often is "Content Areas" (upper left). You will learn more about these options as you proceed through this workshop.

Content Areas: This area provides tools to add text, handouts, PowerPoint presentations and other information into your course.

User Management: This area provides tools for the instructor to manage users.

Assessment: This area provides tools for building online tests, recording grades, and tracking user activity.

Course Tools: This area contains communication tools for instructors to post announcements, send email, create and manage discussion boards, etc.

Course Options: In this area, you can customize your course menu and make your course "available" to your students.

Content Areas	Assignments	User Management	Enroll User
Course Information	External Links	List / Modify Users	Remove Users from Course
Course Documents		Create User	Manage Groups
		Batch Create Users	
Course Tools	Discussion Board	Assessment	Gradebook
Announcements	Collaboration	Test Manager	Gradebook Views
Course Calendar	Digital Dropbox	Survey Manager	Performance Dashboard
Staff Information	Glossary Manager	Pool Manager	
Tasks	Messages	Course Statistics	
Send Email		Help	
Course Options	Course Copy	Support	Contact System Ad
Manage Course Menu	Import Course Cartridge	Manual	Quick Tutorials
Course Design	Import Package		
Manage Tools	Export Course		
Settings	Archive Cdu		
Recycle Course			

You will go into the Control Panel often to add new things to your course or to make changes. After adding something or making a change in the Control Panel, it is important to return to the "student view" to see how things will look to your students.

To return to the "student view" of your course:

Click on your course title in the "bread crumb trail" at the top of the Control Panel:



> YOUR COURSE TITLE > CONTROL PANEL

About the Bread Crumb Trail

- The "bread crumb trail" is a tiny horizontal menu (in a thin gray bar) above the Control Panel.
- As you move deeper into the Control Panel, the bread crumb trail grows and shows you where you are, along with a "trail" of how you got there.
- The bread crumb trail provides just about the only way to return to the "student view" (or front end) of your course.
- As you use the Control Panel more, you'll find that you can use the bread crumb trail to "leap frog" from one area to another quickly.

IMPORTANT: In Blackboard, it is generally NOT advisable to use the browser's "Back" button. (At times, you may get a nasty error message if you do.) Instead, learn to rely on the "bread crumb trail" and other links within Blackboard to move around.

HANDS-ON PRACTICE

Repeat the tasks listed below until you feel very comfortable doing them:

- Log in to Blackboard.
- Go into your course.
- Go into the Control Panel.
- Click on several items in the Control Panel to see what's there. Spend a few minutes exploring and becoming familiar with where things are located.
- Click on your course title in the bread crumb trail to return to the student view.

STEP 2: Post a syllabus in Blackboard

This tutorial assumes that you have already used a word processor to create and save a syllabus.

Before you get started:

- Open your syllabus in your word processor. Make sure it is complete and up-to-date. Save.
- Now save your syllabus in rich text format (RTF).

- **What is 'rich text format' (and why should I use it)?**

When you attach a document in Bb that was created in a word processor, your students will need a compatible word processor in order to open the document.

Since you can't predict what word processor your students will have, it is best to save your document in a format that can be opened by ANY word processor.

Saving in Rich Text Format (RTF) preserves formatting (such as bold, italics, bullets, numbering, tabs, tables, etc.) AND allows the document to be opened in any word processor.

- **How do I save my document in rich text format?**

In Microsoft Word, choose File > Save As. At the bottom of the dialog box, you will see the file name, and below it, "Save as type". From the drop-down menu, choose "Rich Text Format". The file ending will change from DOC to RTF. Click SAVE.

- **Important note about file names**

When saving a document that you plan to attach in Bb, do NOT use any special symbols in the file name (such as: # \$ @ * & ?). The file name CAN contain letters, numbers, spaces, hyphens and underscore marks. Limit your file names to 32 characters or less.

- **How do I set Windows to show file extensions (so I can see which files are RTF)?**

By default, Windows hides the file extensions (3 letter endings of file names). It is very helpful to see these file endings in order to distinguish documents saved in Word format (.doc ending) from documents saved in rich text format (.rtf ending).

Follow these steps to set Windows to show file endings:

1. In Windows, open "My Computer".
2. From the Tools menu, choose Folder Options. Click the View tab.
3. Un-check the box beside "Hide file extensions for known file types".
4. Click Apply, then click OK. Close the "My Computer" window.

In Blackboard, follow these steps to create an "item" and attach your syllabus:

1. Go into your blank course on Blackboard
2. Click on Control Panel, then click on "Course Information" (in the upper left area).
3. Click on "Add Item" in the tool bar.

4. Enter a name for the item. Type your own descriptive title in the blank box provided:

Name ← type your item name here!

5. In the text box, you can type in a brief description if you want (optional):

Text

Click the link above to see the course syllabus.
Students are responsible for reading the syllabus
and for following the policies explained there.

6. Scroll down to section 2 and click the BROWSE button. Locate the RTF version of your syllabus on your computer and open it.

2 Content

Files can be attached to the above information.

File to Attach:

7. For now, I recommend that you skip over all other options on this page. Scroll down to the bottom and click SUBMIT.
8. You will see a "receipt" that lets you know that your item was saved. Click OK.

Now your syllabus is posted in Blackboard!

After posting an item, it is a VERY good idea to see what it looks like to students:

1. In the bread crumb trail, click on your course title to return to the "student view".

> **YOUR COURSE TITLE** > CONTROL PANEL

2. Click on the "Course Information" link in the menu. On the right, you'll see the item you created, which contains a link to the syllabus.
- Students can click the link to view the syllabus.
 - Or they can right-click the link and choose "Save target as" (or "Save link as") to save a copy to their hard drive for later viewing.

***Please see the next page to learn how
to make changes to your syllabus AFTER posting it...***

After you have posted your syllabus in Blackboard, you may find later that you need to make changes to it (or make a correction).

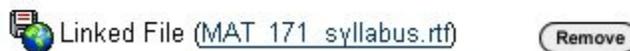
You cannot make changes to the syllabus in Blackboard. Instead, you have to make the changes to your original document using your word processor, save, and then post the corrected document in Blackboard.

Refer to the steps below whenever you need to make a change to your syllabus (or any document) you have posted in Blackboard.

To make changes to a document after it has been posted in Blackboard:

1. On your computer, open your word processor and then open your syllabus (or other document). Be sure to open the most recent copy---preferably, the RTF copy.
2. To avoid confusion, I usually choose File > Save As and then modify the file name to indicate that this is a revised copy.
3. Make any needed changes and save. (Be sure to save as file type RTF. This should happen automatically if you opened the RTF copy to begin with.) When finished, exit your word processor.
4. In Blackboard, go to the Control Panel and into the Content Area where the document is posted.
5. To the right of the item that contains the attached syllabus (or other document), click MODIFY.
6. Scroll down to section 2. Under "Currently Attached Files", you'll see your attached document:

Currently Attached Files:



7. Click on REMOVE (and then OK) to delete the attachment.
8. Now attach the revised document:
 - a. Under section 2, click on the Browse button
 - b. Locate and select ("open") the revised document
9. Scroll down and click SUBMIT, then click OK.

STEP 3: Post a handout or PowerPoint presentation

This tutorial assumes that you have already created and saved a course handout OR PowerPoint presentation.

Before you get started:

- If posting a handout, save it first in RTF format. (See Step 2)

Follow these steps to create a Blackboard item and to attach a handout or PowerPoint presentation:

Note: The steps listed below are very similar to the steps you followed for posting a syllabus in Step 2. If you need more detailed instructions, refer to Step 2.

1. Go into your course on Blackboard.
2. Click on Control Panel, then click on "Course Documents" (in the upper left area).
3. Click on "Add Item" in the tool bar.
4. Type in a name for the item. I recommend a descriptive title such as the following:
Circulatory System Presentation (2-17-07)
- or -
Aug 17 Lecture Notes
...or whatever you think is appropriate!
5. In the text box, you can type in a brief description if you want (optional).
6. Scroll down to section 2 and click the BROWSE button. Locate your handout (RTF version) or your PowerPoint presentation and open it.
7. Scroll down to the bottom and click SUBMIT.
8. You will see a "receipt" that lets you know that your item was saved. Click OK.

Now your handout or presentation is posted in Blackboard!

Note: If you want to post an additional handout or presentation on the same item, click "Modify" beside the item, scroll down to section 2, attach the document, and click Submit. (Alternatively, you can create a new item and attach the document there.)

Using the bread crumb trail, go to the "student view" and see what the handout or presentation will look like to students. Click the link to see how the handout or presentation displays.

Please see the next page for important notes about PowerPoint and Blackboard

Notes about PowerPoint and Blackboard

To view a presentation posted in Blackboard, the student must have PowerPoint ~OR~ the free PowerPoint viewer installed on his or her computer.

Instructors should try to avoid posting very large PowerPoint presentations in Blackboard.

- When a student clicks the link to your PowerPoint presentation in Blackboard, the entire presentation must download before the student can see it.
- If the presentation is large (filled with lots of photos, particularly ones that haven't been resized or compressed in a graphics editor), then the student may have to wait a very, very long time before anything happens. Many students will assume that their computers have locked up...
- After you have posted a PowerPoint presentation (or any attached document) in Blackboard, you can see the size displayed in Blackboard:

**Skeletal System**

[BIO168 LECTURE08.ppt](#) (2327552 Bytes)

This presentation covers description of bones (shape, markings), types of bone tissue, mechanisms of bone formation, and bone physiology.

ERROR: stackunderflow
OFFENDING COMMAND: ~

STACK: