

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)
- An empty course in Blackboard (we have already created this for you.)
- 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 grade book)
- ☒ Groups

You can sign up for "in person" workshops on these and other topics at this web site:

<http://courses.durhamtech.edu/training/>

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

<http://courses.durhamtech.edu/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.

Note: The steps marked with an asterisk (*) are **required** in order to receive credit for completing this workshop. We recommend that you complete all the other steps as well!

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| * STEP 1: Learn how to navigate in your course shell
(estimated time: 15 minutes) | pages 3 - 4 |
| * STEP 2: Post a syllabus
(estimated time: 30 minutes) | pages 5 - 7 |
| STEP 3: Post a handout or PowerPoint presentation
(estimated time: 15 minutes) | pages 8 - 9 |
| STEP 4: Post a web link
(estimated time: 15 minutes) | pages 10 - 11 |
| * STEP 5: Post instructor contact information
(estimated time: 10 minutes) | page 12 |
| STEP 6: Make folders and put content inside them
(estimated time: 30 minutes) | pages 13 - 16 |
| * STEP 7: Post an announcement
(estimated time: 10 minutes) | pages 17 - 18 |
| * STEP 8: Customize your course menu
(estimated time: 20 minutes) | pages 19 - 21 |
| * STEP 9: Prepare a course for student use
(estimated time: 30 minutes) | page 22 - 24 |
| * STEP 10: Email us to let us know you're done!
(estimated time: 5 minutes) | page 25 |

If you have questions:

You can contact the workshop facilitator, Susan Horton, at hortons@durhamtech.edu or 919-686-3752.

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

STEP 1: Learn how to navigate in your course shell (REQUIRED)

First, **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 Instructional Computing 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 empty 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.

Content Areas Course Information Course Documents External Links	Assignments Books	User Management List / Modify Users Create User Batch Create Users for Course	Enroll User Remove Users from the Course Manage Groups
Course Tools Announcements Course Calendar Staff Information Tasks Discussion Boards	Send E-mail Collaboration Digital Drop Box Link Checker	Assessment Test Manager Survey Manager Pool Manager	Gradebook Course Statistics
Course Options Manage Course Menu Archive Course Recycle Course Manage Tools Settings	Import Course Cartridge Import Package Resources Course Copy Export Course	Support Support Manual Contact System Administrator	

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.

Support: This area offers a link to an online instructor's manual.

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:



COURSES > YOUR COURSE TITLE > CONTROL PANEL

Don't click here or you'll go back too far (to a listing of all of your courses on Bb).

About the Bread Crumb Trail

- The "bread crumb trail" is a tiny horizontal menu (in a thin yellow 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 (REQUIRED)

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: # \$ @ * & ? and so on). The file name CAN contain letters, numbers, spaces, hyphens and underscore marks.

- ***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 empty 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.

(continued on next page)

4. Enter a name for the item. I recommend that you NOT choose a title from the drop-down list but that you type your own descriptive title in the blank box provided:

Name	<input type="text" value="Syllabus"/>	← leave this alone
or enter name	<input type="text" value="BIO168-030 Syllabus"/>	← type your title here!

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

Text
<input type="text" value="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: <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/>

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".

[COURSES](#) > [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 (8-17-05)
- 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.

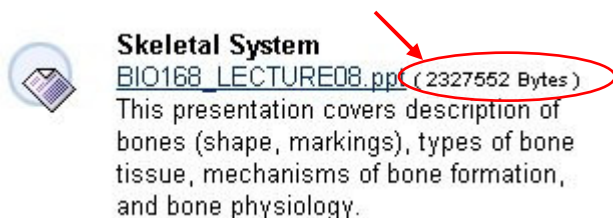
Please see the next page for important notes about PowerPoint and Blackboard

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:



- As a general guideline, I would consider files over 2 MB (2 million or 2000000 Bytes) to be "too large" for students with slow connections to access.
- Consider breaking large PowerPoint presentations into several smaller presentations before posting in Blackboard. (You might also consider learning to use a graphics editor to optimize graphics for online viewing.)

Note: If you need to make a change to a handout or PowerPoint presentation after attaching it in Blackboard, follow the steps on page 7.

STEP 4: Post a link to a web site


In Blackboard, it's easy to create a list of links to other web sites. You can put the links all together in one section of the course ("External Links"). Or, you can add a link almost anywhere in the course.

This tutorial will walk you through creating one link in the External Links area of your course. You can then add more if you want, or create links in other areas of your course.

Before you get started:

- Think of a web site that would be a useful reference for your students. You'll need the full and exact address of the web site for this tutorial.
- If you can't think of a web site you want to use, you can make a link to the web site for Durham Tech's Library: <http://www.durhamtech.edu/library.htm>

Follow these steps to create a link in your Blackboard course to another web site:

1. In the Control Panel, click on "External Links" (in the upper left area).
2. In the tool bar, click "External Link"  External Link
3. Type in a name for the item. This can be any name that identifies the site, such as:
Durham Tech Library
4. In the "URL" box, type in the **full and exact** address of the web site you want to create a link to. Be sure to include `http://` at the beginning.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE:

Instead of typing the address (and risking a typo), follow these steps to copy/paste the web address accurately into Blackboard:

- a. Minimize the Blackboard window so you can see the desktop. (Don't exit Blackboard---you'll be coming back soon.)
- b. Start a second web browser (by double-clicking the Internet Explorer icon on your desktop or selecting a browser from Start menu > Programs)
- c. In this browser window, navigate to the web page you want to create a link to. (Use your bookmarks/favorites, search through google, type the address---however you normally access the site).
- d. Once you are viewing the web page that you want to create a link to, click your mouse one time in the address bar to highlight the entire address.
- e. Copy the address (by choosing Edit > Copy or pressing Ctrl-C)
- f. In the task bar at the very bottom of the screen, click on tab that represents the Bb window.
- g. Click your mouse in the "URL" box, then paste the web address there (by choosing Edit > Paste or pressing Ctrl-V).

(continued on next page)

5. In the "Description" box, you can type a brief annotation that describes the site (optional).
6. In section 2, you could attach a document. (The need for this is rare.)
7. **RECOMMENDED:** Scroll down to section 3 and choose YES beside the second question:

Open in new window ☒ Yes ☐ No

8. Scroll down to the bottom and click SUBMIT.
9. You will see a "receipt" that lets you know the link was added. Click OK.

In the bread crumb trail, click on your course title to go to the "student view". Then click on "External Links" to see how the link displays to students. Then click the link to make sure it works!

If you followed the recommendation in item 8 above, you will notice that the link will open in a separate window. You (or your students) can then maximize this window (if needed) and surf around as much as you want. When you are ready to return to Bb, simply exit this window (click X in the upper right corner) and you are back in Blackboard, right where you left off!

STEP 5: Post instructor contact information (REQUIRED)

The easiest part yet...

Follow these steps to post your contact information in Blackboard:

1. In the Control Panel, click on "Staff Information" (which is on the left, down towards the middle).
2. In the tool bar, click "Add Profile" (NOT "Add Folder")
3. In section 1, simply fill in the blanks! (You can skip any that do not apply to you.)
4. At the bottom of section 1, in the "Notes" area, you can include a note to your students (optional).

Posting a note here is can be a good way to add a personal touch to your course. You can include something about your background, experience or training; your interest in the subject matter; your hobbies; etc. Some instructors have been quite creative with this!

5. In section 2, you can attach a photo or include a link to a personal web site (optional).

Note: If you choose to attach a photo, be sure to resize it first in a photo editing program and save it. Recommended size is 150 x 150 pixels, but a similar or slightly larger size is OK too.

6. Scroll down to the bottom and click SUBMIT, then click OK.

In the bread crumb trail, click on your course title to go to the "student view". Then click on "Faculty Information" to see how it displays to students.

STEP 6: Make folders and put content inside (Strongly recommended for online and hybrid)

If you're teaching an online or hybrid class, it is especially important to learn how to make folders in Blackboard to organize course content. (This can be good to know if you are teaching a "traditional" course as well.)

Under the "Assignments" menu area in online and hybrid courses, most instructors make a separate folder for each week of the course. For example:



Announcements
Course Info
Faculty Info
Assignments
Tests & Projects
Communication
Discussion Board
Tools

Week 15 - Dec 1 - 7
 Topic: Begin your web project!

Week 13 - Nov 10 - 16
 Topic: Downloading software / Uploading web pages
 Key terms: download, FTP, public_html, index.html

Week 12 - Nov 3 - 9
 Topic: Links and tables
 Key terms: absolute URL (or link), relative URL (or link), named anchor, link label, link destination, table row, table cell

Week 11 - Oct 27 - Nov 2
 Topic: Web graphics and color
 Key terms: GIF, JPEG (or JPG), inline image, alt attribute, hexadecimal color codes
 We will cover the tag and also various "attributes" that can be added inside the tag: bgcolor, text, link, alink, vlink

Inside each folder, the instructor puts details about that week's assignments, along with resources students will need to complete them.

For example, on the right is the list of assignments students see when they click on the "Week 12" folder above.

Required textbook reading
 Pages 199 - 204 (section 4.5)
 This week's assigned reading is the shortest yet! But it's important, so please read it! The reading explains how to create different kinds of links.

Required online readings
 And now, back to Webmonkey for a few articles on how to create HTML tables...

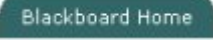
Visit <http://hotwired.lycos.com/webmonkey/authoring/tables/> and read the following articles:

- ♦ [The Basic, Basic Table](#)
- ♦ [The Not-So-Basic Table](#)
- ♦ [Table Cell Color](#)

Activity 12
 In this week's activity, you'll create a NEW web page with a table on it, and you will also add some things to the web page you've been working on for the last couple of weeks.
 >> [View/Complete](#)

Quiz 12
 Click on the link above when you are ready to take the quiz.

Visit a "real" course to learn more about the way folders are used:

1. Click on  to go to the "Welcome" screen.
2. Under "Courses in which you are enrolled," you should see several sample courses listed. Click on either the online or hybrid sample course to go inside.
3. Once you're in the course, click on the "Assignments" menu item to see the list of folders for each week of the course.
 - Notice that the instructor usually lists the folders in reverse chronological order, so students will find the current week's folder at the TOP.
 - Notice also that sometimes the instructor puts a *brief* description on the outside of the folder to give students an idea of what's inside.
4. Click on the **title** of one of the folders to see its contents, which consists of detailed information on that week's assignments.
5. Feel free to visit other areas of the course (e.g. "Course Info" or "Syllabus") to see other ways folders are used to organize content.
6. When you are done, and ready to resume working on YOUR course, click on the green "Blackboard Home" tab again, then click on the title of YOUR course.

Creating folders in Blackboard requires some advance planning in order to decide what folders you'll need and what to put in them. For now, we'll create one folder in the "Assignments" area of your course.

To create a folder:

1. In the Control Panel, click on "Assignments" (in the upper left area).
2. In the "Add" tool bar at the top, click on "Folder".
3. Enter a title (or name) for the folder. I recommend that you NOT choose a name from the drop-down list but that you type in your own, something like "Week One":

Name	<input type="text" value="Essays"/>	← leave this alone
or enter name	<input type="text" value="Week One"/>	← type your title here!

4. In the text box, you can type in a VERY brief note about what can be found inside the folder, if you want (optional). This is NOT where you put the content that goes inside the folder (that comes later).

Text
<input type="text" value="In this folder are all of the tasks you need to complete for next week."/>

5. For now, skip over all other options on this page. (More on that later.) Scroll down to the bottom and click SUBMIT. Then click OK.

Now that you've created a folder, you need to put some "items" of content inside it. These "items" could provide details about...

- Reading assignments for this week
- Worksheets or problem sets for the student to complete
- Description of an essay or report the student must write
- Links to web sites relevant to the week's topic
- Handouts or PowerPoint presentations that relate to the week's lesson
- And so on... the possibilities are almost endless.

For now, we will add one content item inside the folder about a reading assignment. (Feel free to add something different if you want.)

To add a content item **INSIDE** the folder:

1. Click on the **folder title** to go inside the folder.

IMPORTANT: This is a critical step, and many people mess up here!!

To verify that you are inside the folder, look at the "bread crumb trail" at the top of the screen. Reading from the right, it shows that you are in the "Week One" folder, which is in the "Assignments" area, which is in the "Control Panel", etc.


[COURSES](#) > [YOUR COURSE TITLE](#) > [CONTROL PANEL](#) > [ASSIGNMENTS](#) > [WEEK ONE](#)

 **Week One**

Also, just below the bread crumb trail, the name of the folder you are in is displayed.

2. In the "Add" tool bar, click on "Item". Then enter a name and detailed description for a particular assignment. For example:

Name
or enter name

Essays  ← leave this alone!

Required reading assignments

Text

Read the following sections in the textbooks before class on Tuesday:

Muller pages 2-61--Preparing to Read; Critical Reading; Beyond Content; Paraphrasing, Summarizing, and Quoting

Troyka 13-50--Getting Started; Drafting; Revising, Editing, and Proofreading; Composing Paragraphs; Writing

3. Scroll to the bottom and click SUBMIT, then click OK.
4. In the bread crumb trail, click on the title of your course to return to the "student view" of things. Then click on "Assignments" to see the folder you made, and click on that folder's title to see the item you made inside it.

You can continue creating additional items, for additional assignments, inside the "Week One" folder. To do this, remember to...

- Go to the Control Panel.
- Click on Assignments.
- **IMPORTANT:** Click on the "Week One" folder to go inside it.
- On the "Add" tool bar, click "Item" and begin entering the next assignment...

Also, you can continue creating folders, one for each week of the course, and fill each folder with assignment items.



FOLDER TIPS:

- After you have created more than one folder, you can change the number to the left of the folder name to select the order in which the folder is displayed.



By default, when you create a new folder (or item), Blackboard places it at the bottom--below any existing folders or items. We recommend that you change the number beside the current week's folder to "1", so it will be listed at the top of the "Assignments" area (so students can't miss it!).

- If you want, you can create folders in advance but make them "not available" to students for now.

When a folder is "not available", the folder AND its contents are invisible to students, but still visible to instructors in the Control Panel. When the time comes, you can make the folder available (or visible) to students.

To make a folder invisible/visible to students:

1. Locate the folder in the Control Panel.
2. Click on "Modify" to the right of the folder.
3. Scroll down to section 2.
4. There are two ways to hide/unhide the folder. Choose one:
 - Manually: Click NO beside the question "Make folder available" to hide it from students. Later, when you want to "unhide" it, return here and choose YES.
 - Automatically: You can select a date/time for a folder to automatically become visible to students. To do this...
 - **Be sure** to answer YES to the first question ("Make the folder available")
 - Then, check the box beside "Display After" and specify the date/time you want the folder (and its contents) to become visible to students. The folder will be hidden until then.
 - You can also set a date/time for the folder to disappear again ("Display until"), but this is generally NOT recommended.


After you've made a folder invisible, you will notice that its icon is "grayed out" in the Control Panel and that the folder is marked with this message: "Item is not available",

STEP 7: Post an announcement (REQUIRED)

The announcements page is the first thing your students see when they enter your course. Here, you can post lists of class activities for the week, reminders of upcoming tests or projects, changes to the syllabus, or info about campus events.

It is important for the instructor to post a new announcement at least once a week, so students will know that the instructor is alive and involved in the Blackboard course!

Follow these steps to post an announcement in Blackboard:

1. In the Control Panel, click on "Announcements" (on the left, in the "Course Tools" section).
2. Click "Add Announcement" 
3. Type in a subject and message (much like writing an email).
4. Skip over the options in sections 2 and 3 for now. (You almost never need to use these!)
5. Scroll down and click Submit, then click OK.

That's it! Your announcement is now posted!

In the bread crumb trail, click on your course title to go to the "student view" of the course. You should see your new announcement, front and center.

Notes about how announcements display to students

When students enter a Blackboard course, they see announcements that were posted within the last 7 days. The newest announcements are at the top, older ones below.

Example:

- If the student logs in on Oct 10, he will see announcements that were posted between Oct 3 and 10.
- If he logs in again on Oct 14, he will see announcements that were posted between Oct 7 and 14.

Students can view announcements that are more than 7 days old by clicking the tabs at the top of the Announcements screen.



If you want to know more about the options we skipped over (in item 5 above), continue on to the next page...

Announcement Options

Almost always, you'll just follow the 5 steps listed above to post an announcement.

Below is information about additional options for announcements, in case you need to use them. We recommend that you use these options sparingly (if at all).

To view the announcement options again:

1. In the Control Panel, click "Announcements".
2. Click "Modify" to the right of any existing announcement. This will re-display the screen where you originally entered the announcement.
3. Scroll down to section 2. You will see these options:

2 Options

Always show this announcement. ☐ Yes ☒ No

Choose date restrictions

☒ Display After

Sep 30 2005 02:45 PM

☐ Display Until

Oct 01 2005 02:45 PM

If you choose **Yes** here, this announcement will **ALWAYS** show at the top of the announcements page—that is, it will not "age out" after 7 days (as described above).
If you choose this option, keep in mind that **NEWER** announcements you post will display **BELOW** this announcement.

If you check the "**Display After**" box, the announcement will not be visible to students until **AFTER** the date/time you select.

If you check the "**Display Until**" box, the announcement will disappear completely (from the students' view) on the date/time you select. The announcement will no longer be visible on the main announcements page **OR** under the "Show All" tab.

4. In section 3, you can create a link directly to an area of your course—for example, to the Discussion Board or to your Syllabus. The link will display just below the text of your announcement.

Example: If your announcement tells students to post a message in the Discussion Board, then you could use this feature to include a link to the Discussion Board in your announcement. (This feature is not often used!)

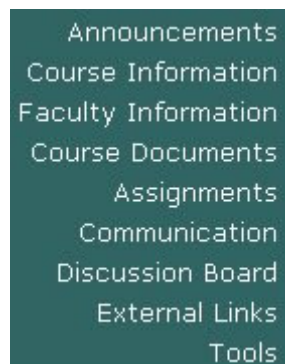
5. Click Submit to save any changes (or Cancel to exit without saving).

STEP 8: Customize your course menu (REQUIRED)

In a new Blackboard course, the course menu looks like this. →

The menu item names are very generic—for example: "Course Information" and "Course Documents" and "Assignments". These vague names can leave students confused about where to find what in the course.

It's a good idea to change the menu item names to something more specific and descriptive. For example, instead of "Course Documents", you might rename this area "Handouts", "Lecture Notes", "Presentations", "Labs"---or whatever best describes what you will be using it for.



In addition to changing the names of menu items, you can delete items you do not need and rearrange the order of items. (And later, you'll learn how to change colors too!)

Before you get started:

- Look at your course menu and think about what changes you want to make---names you want to change, menu items you don't need, etc.
- The steps below walk you through changing the name of the "External Links" area to "Web Sites".

Follow these steps to begin customizing your course menu:

1. In the Control Panel, click on "Manage Course Menu" (way down in the lower left area). You will see a listing of your current menu items.
2. Scroll down until you can see the "External Links" item. Click "Modify" to the right of this item to begin editing it.
3. You could use the drop-down menu to choose a different name. However, I usually just go straight to the box below and type in the name I want.
4. For this example, delete the text in the 2nd box and type in "Web Sites" (without quotes).

IMPORTANT: Avoid using LONG names!! If your menu item names are too long (for example: *Power Point Presentations*), the course menu may display in very oddly on some computers.

The recommended maximum length for a menu name is 18 characters. This is just a guideline, since all characters are not the same width. As a rule-of-thumb, I try to make sure my menu item names are no longer than the space it takes to display the words "Course Information".




5. Leave the "guest" and "availability" options as is. Scroll down and click Submit to save your change, then click OK.

Repeat the steps above to change the names of other menu items.

As always, when you finish making changes, be sure to look at your course from the "student view" to make sure it looks OK.

Notes about removing/adding menu items

- Under "Manage Course Menu", you can click REMOVE to the right of any menu item to get rid of it. We recommend that you remove menu items you don't plan to use. **But be careful!** If you remove an item that has content in it, you will lose that content and cannot get it back!
- At the top of the "Manage Course Menu" area is a tool bar that lets you add additional items to your course menu:

Add  Content Area  Tool Link  Course Link  External Link

- Content Area** – lets you add another menu item for posting documents, text, PowerPoints, and other similar content
- Tool Link** – lets you add a specialized tool to the menu, such as a tool that lets students check their grades ("My Grades")
- Course Link** – lets you add a link to a specific area of your course (you'll never use this!)
- External Link** – lets you add an item to your main course menu that links to an external web site. (Example: If your text book has a web site that students will need to visit often, you can add a link to it on your menu.)

For inspiration, below are a few examples of ways instructors have customized their course menus:

<i>Biology class</i>	<i>Computer class</i>	<i>Spanish class</i>	<i>Math class</i>
Announcements Faculty Information Course Information Study Guides Lectures Sample Questions Communication Discussion Board Assignments Tools	Announcements Faculty Info Course Info Weekly Lessons Tests & Projects Communication Discussion Board Student Tools	Anuncios Programa Documentos/Apuntes Foro Tareas semanales Tools Enlaces a sitios Web Quia E-mail	Announcements Syllabus Assignments Mr. Wessell's 411 Email a Classmate Tools Old Test File Check Your Grade

By now, I am sure you are wondering:

"How do I change the color and style of my course menu?"

Follow these steps to customize the style and color of your menu:

1. In the Control Panel, scroll all the way down, and click "Settings" (way down in the bottom left corner).
2. Click "Course Design" (2nd option from the bottom), then click "Course Design" again.
3. In section 1, select your menu style: **Buttons** or **Text**
 - If you choose **Text**, then in section 2, you can select the background color and text color you want (using the "pick" button beside each).
 - If you choose **Buttons**, then in section 2 you can select the following:
 - *Button type* – your buttons can be...
 - Solid (example:
 - Patterned
 - Striped
 - *Button shape* – choose from rectangular, rounded corners or rounded ends (a capsule shape)
 - *Button style* – Click "gallery of buttons" to display all color choices on one screen. Click any sample button to select that color, or change the options at the top to view other styles.
4. After you've selected your menu style and colors, click Submit to save the changes.

And finally, be sure to go to the "student view" to see how things look!

STEP 9: Prepare a course for student access (REQUIRED)

By completing steps 1 – 8, you've learned the basics of building a course site in Blackboard. However, your students cannot access the course you've built, because it is a "practice" course.

In this step, you will learn important procedures for setting up your "real" course sites on Blackboard and for making them visible and accessible to your students.

NOTE: It is VERY important that you read and understand the procedures described here. You will need to follow them each semester in order for your courses to be set up and for your students to have access to them!

How do I get my "real" courses set up on Blackboard?

Non-Credit Courses (Skip to Step 10 on Page 25)

For information about setting up **Non-Credit** courses in Blackboard, contact:

Becky Roehrs

Program Director, Online Continuing Education/Blackboard Continuing Education &
Off-Campus Programs

Northern Durham Center, room 106

roehrsb@durhamtech.edu

919-686-3516

Credit Courses

Each semester, you must submit a "Blackboard Course Creation Request" to have your course site(s) created on Blackboard.

You can do that now to set up your "real" courses. Please note that you will need to submit one course request form for each course site you want created on Blackboard.

Follow these steps request course sites on Blackboard:

1. Go to the online "Blackboard Course Creation Request" form at this address:

<http://courses.durhamtech.edu/tools/>

2. Choose the type of course you want created:

- ◆ Request a blank course on Blackboard
- ◆ Request a course with content copied from a previous course

Choose this if you want to copy content from your practice course into your "real course"

3. Fill out the form, providing the information requested and then submit.

Note: If you chose to copy content from your practice course, you will need to specify the following information under Step 3 on the form:

Step 3: Course to be copied

Select current year and semester

Year: Semester:

Select prefix and enter course number as shown here

Prefix: Course Number:

Section(s):

Once you submit your requests, your "real" courses will be created within 1-3 days, and you will receive notification via email when they are ready.

When and how are my students added to my courses on Blackboard?

A Blackboard administrator must upload students to your course site before they can access it.

- If the semester has already started, the administrator will upload students immediately after creating your course site.
- If the semester has not yet started, your students will be uploaded the day after General Registration ends. This means your students should be in Blackboard by the day classes begin.

Once your students have been uploaded, you should view the list of students in your course to make sure it is correct.

Follow these steps to view a list of students in your course:

1. In Control Panel, click "List/Modify Users" (upper right area).
2. In the dialog box that appears, simply click SEARCH to list ALL users.

Note: This screen lists 25 users per page. If you have more than 25 students, use the tiny navigation links at the bottom to see additional pages.

How do I make my courses visible to my students? *VERY IMPORTANT!!*

In order for students to be able to see and access your course, the instructor **MUST** make the course "available".

Follow these steps to make your course available to students:

1. In Control Panel, click "Settings" (way down in the lower left corner).
2. Click on "Course Availability".
3. Click YES, then click Submit. (Then click OK two times.)

Where do my students get instructions about how to log in? *VERY IMPORTANT!*

From YOU! You must give ALL of your students a PRINTED copy of the Blackboard "student login" handout, so they will know how to log in (and who to contact for help).

Follow these steps to print handouts for your students:

1. Display the Blackboard student login handout by visiting this site:
http://courses.durhamtech.edu/wiki/images/f/fb/Student_login_credit.pdf
2. Print the handout (2 pages).
3. Make copies for each of your students. (We recommend double-sided.)
4. Please READ the handout very carefully yourself, so you understand how students determine their user names and passwords, how they login, and how they enter their email addresses into Bb.

NOTE: Students are responsible for putting their email addresses into Blackboard, the first time they log in. The student login handout that you will give them explains how they do this.

What if a student cannot log in?

Durham Tech's help site for Blackboard offers tips for resolving common log in (and other) problems. You can access the Blackboard help site at this address:

<http://courses.durhamtech.edu/wiki/>

Click on "Blackboard Help for Students" > then click on "Log-in Problems"

What if a student drops my course?

We upload students into your courses on Blackboard for you, but we do NOT take them out when they drop! That is up to you (the instructor).

Follow these steps to remove a student from your course:

1. In Control Panel, click "Remove Users" (upper right area).
2. Click SEARCH to show all users. Locate the student in the list. (You may need to advance to next page at bottom of screen.)
3. Click to place a check in the box to the left of the student's name.
4. Scroll to the bottom and type Yes (with capital Y) in the box, then click SUBMIT.

NOTE: Removing a student DELETES all of the student's info from the gradebook (including test scores and detailed test results).

How can I learn more about Blackboard?

There are several ways you can continue expanding your Blackboard knowledge and skills:

- **Online help site for Blackboard**

Our Blackboard help site contains numerous tips, questions and answers for instructors and students who are using Blackboard. Please visit the site at this address: <http://courses.durhamtech.edu/wiki/>

- **Training workshops**

Additional Blackboard workshops are offered on topics such as using the Blackboard's gradebook, building online tests, and using communication tools (including the Discussion Board). To see a list of upcoming workshops and to sign up, visit our training web site at this address: <http://courses.durhamtech.edu/training/>

Bb-announce mailing list

We have subscribed you to our "Bb-announce" email mailing list, which we use to distribute important announcements about our Blackboard system.

Please pay attention to any email messages you receive through this list! (Traffic is minimal.) You will also receive a monthly email message reminding you that you are on the list.

Thank you for reading! Now you are almost done with this workshop...

The last step is to email us to let us know you are finished, so we can give you credit for completing the workshop. **Move on to Step 10 for final instructions.**

The last step is to email us to let us know you are finished, so we can give you credit for completing the workshop. Move on to Step 10 for final instructions.

STEP 10: Email us! (REQUIRED)

Congratulations! You have finished the basic course building tutorials and should now have the skills to continue adding content to your Blackboard course.

To receive credit for completing this workshop...

You must email the workshop facilitator to tell us you're finished. We will look over your Blackboard course to verify that you've completed the required steps and then record your completion in our training database.

Send an email to: hortons@durhamtech.edu

Subject: Building a Basic Course in Blackboard Complete

Additional Blackboard Training

If you want to learn about other aspects of Blackboard (for example: creating online tests, using the grade book, or using communication tools such as the Discussion Board), you can sign up for "in person" workshops on these topics. Visit the training web site to browse the schedule and to sign up: <http://courses.durhamtech.edu/training/>

Blackboard Handouts

Also, if you are the self-study type, numerous handouts on using Blackboard (and all kinds of other computer topics) are available online at <http://courses.durhamtech.edu/handouts/>

Thank you for participating in this workshop and for persevering until the end!
We look forward to hearing from you soon.