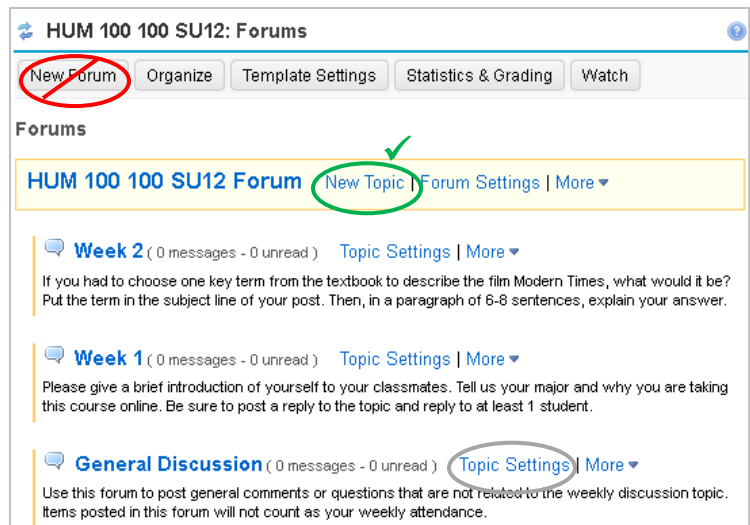


Sakai Forums vs. Blackboard Discussion Boards

In Blackboard, many instructors (especially those who teach online) are accustomed to creating a new "Forum" for each week of the course. To accomplish this in Sakai, we recommend that you create a new **"TOPIC"** for each week instead.

Another difference between Sakai and Blackboard involves grading discussions. To use the grading feature in Sakai's Forums tool, you have to go to the Gradebook and add an item for each discussion you'll be grading. Then you will be able to associate your weekly "Topics" with those Gradebook items (under **"Topic Settings"**).



Set up your Gradebook

Before setting up your Forum Topics in your course, it's a good idea to set up your Sakai Gradebook before adding items to your Gradebook. For more info about setting up your Gradebook, see the Gradebook handout

<http://courses.durhamtech.edu/wiki/images/4/45/Gradebook.pdf>

Tips for using the Forums tool in Sakai:

- To enable the Forums tool:
Go to Site Info > Edit Tools, select the Forums tool, click Continue, then Finish
- On the main course menu, click the Forums button to go into the Forums area.
- In the Forums area, you'll see that Sakai has created an initial course forum based on your course name (such as "ENG 111 190 SU12 Forum").
- The initial course forum already has one **TOPIC** in it called General Discussion. This is a place for students to ask general questions about the course or engage in discussion not related to specific course content. Instructors can delete or hide the General Discussion topic if you don't want students to use it.
- Within the initial course forum, we recommend that you add a new **TOPIC** for each week (or for each major class discussion).

- Choose your **Forum Topic Settings**
 1. **Topic Title** (required)
 2. **Short Description**
The short description must be 255 characters or less and is shown under the topic title.
 3. **Description**
The description can be longer than the short description. Be sure to click **View Full Description** to see the description.
 4. **Add attachments**
 5. **Topic Posting settings:**
 - **Lock Topic** (Disable topic postings)
Select this option after the due date has passed if you would like to allow students to read posts after the due date. Students will not be able to post when the topic is locked.
 - **Moderate Topic** (not recommended)
Posts must be approved by a moderator before they will display.
 - **Require user to post before reading**
Students must post to the topic first before viewing any other posts.
 6. **Availability**
 - **Show immediately**
 - **Specify dates to open (show) and/or close (hide)**
 7. **Mark All Messages in Conversation Read** (not recommended)
 8. **Grading settings**
 - **Gradebook Item (select a gradebook item from the drop down list)**
Select this option if you would like to record your forum topic grades in the Gradebook. Be sure to set up your manual forum topic Gradebook items first. For more info about setting up your Gradebook, see the Gradebook handout <http://courses.durhamtech.edu/wiki/images/4/45/Gradebook.pdf>
 9. Click **Save** when you are ready to post your topic.

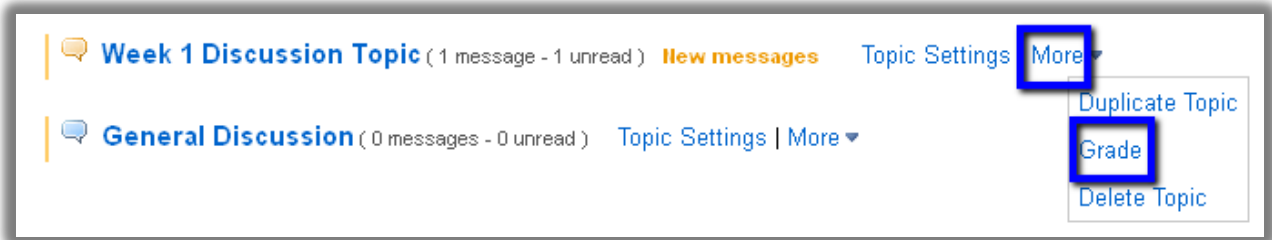
- When you go into a **TOPIC**, you'll see a button that says "Start a new conversation." This is the equivalent of "Add new thread" in Blackboard.

Blackboard	Sakai
Discussion Board	Forum
Instructor had to add a Forum	Forum provided (Ex: <i>ENG 111 190 SU12 Forum</i>) Topic provided: General Discussion Instructors add topics for each major discussion
Users added threads within forums	Users add conversations within topics
Users reply to threads	Users reply to conversations
Users can reply to replies	Users can reply to replies

Sakai Forum Grading

Grade your Student Topic postings

After the Discussion Topic due date and time, you can grade your student Topic postings and replies.



Step 1: In your course site, click on **Forums**.

Step 2: To the right of your Topic title, click on the **More** link, then click on **Grade**

Step 3: You'll see the Topic Grading area, such as the sample below.

- 1) Click on a **Student Name** that has authored (submitted) a posting. **A pop-up box will display** the student's postings and replies, with dates and time stamps.
- 2) You'll also see the number of posts the student Read and didn't read (Unread), and the Percent of the Topic postings the student read.
- 3) You'll see a box for adding your **grades** for each student. Note: You'll see N/A beside the instructors or TAs names.
- 4) To add comments, click on the column title **Show Comments**. Text boxes will appear to type instructor comments into.
- 5) Click on **Submit Grades** regularly-they are not saved automatically!

Name	Authored	Read	Unread	Percent Read	Week 1 Discussion Posting	Show Comments	
Durham, SampleStudent (dtccstudent_s)	Details	0	0	1	0%	<input type="text"/>	--Hidden--
Roehrs, Rebekah (roehrsr2365)	Details	0	0	1	0%	N/A	N/A
Roehrs, SampleStudent (roehrsr2365_s)	Details	1	1	0	100%	<input type="text"/>	--Hidden--

After students click on the Gradebook link on the course site main menu, they can see their Discussion posting grade and instructor comments.

Week 1 Discussion Posting	-	100/100	Excellent job!
---------------------------	---	---------	----------------