



## communicating **with** students

Blackboard Learn 9.1

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# 1.0 Workshop Overview

Researchers have found when instructors use communication tools in online courses, student motivation and participation increase<sup>1</sup>. Each student can view other students' comments and learn through the exposure to different perspectives. Students benefit because they can combine new opinions with their own, and develop a solid foundation for learning. Frequent communication and information from the instructor can also enhance student success and retention.

Blackboard Learn™ offers a wide variety of communication tools allowing students and faculty to share information and communicate, either synchronously—in real-time—or asynchronously—not at the same time. This workshop provides a hands-on introduction to many of these tools, offering instructors ways to extend a sense of community beyond the traditional classroom.

In this workshop, you will learn how to use the Syllabus, Announcements, Calendar, and Tasks tools to provide students with critical course information. Instructors can share information about themselves using the Contacts page. You will also learn to use the Email and Messages tools to send messages to course members. For times when real-time communication is required, such as a brainstorming session, you will learn to use the Chat tool.

First, you will experience the tools as a student to familiarize yourself with how they will appear to your students. Then, you will move to the instructor perspective and learn how to create and manage content in each tool.

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<sup>1</sup>Schmieder, Eric J. "Communication: The tool to interact with and control your online classroom environment." *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning* 5.3. (March 2008). Web. 29 Jul. 2009.

# ROADMAP

## 2.0 Student Experience:

### **View course information**

The Syllabus and Announcements tools provide critical course information, updates, and due dates.

### **Stay informed and on track**

Access the Calendar tool for important dates and reminders, and the Tasks tool for a prioritized list of tasks to be completed.

### **Get to know each other**

Use the Contacts page to learn about the instructor and access the Roster to view course members.

### **Communicate with each other**

Learn to use the Email and Messages tools.

### **Access information for all courses**

From the My Institution tab, students can access tools for all their courses, as well as create personal calendar and task entries.

## 3.0 Real-time Communication

### **Participate in a chat session**

Send messages, view and manage chat recordings, and learn about the participant roles.

### **Create and manage chat sessions**

Learn to create new sessions, edit roles, record and end sessions, and explore tips for using chat for academic purposes.

## 4.0 Keeping Students Informed

### **Provide news and reminders**

Learn how to create announcements, as well as how to order announcements.

### **Syllabus basics**

Upload or build a syllabus and customize it to fit the online environment.

### **Add calendar events and course tasks**

Keep students on track by posting due dates and reminders.

### **Provide instructor information**

Learn how to add your instructor profile and folders for guest lecturers.

## 2.0 Student Experience

In this section, you will explore course information and communication tools from the student perspective.

Students need to keep track of a large amount of dates and information, including course requirements and resources, instructor information, group and class meeting times, and due dates. Blackboard Learn offers a number of tools to help students stay informed as the course progresses.

After we cover the course information tools, we will turn our focus to tools allowing asynchronous communication between student and instructor.

Experiencing each of these tools from the student perspective will provide some context for the decisions you make for your course and the discussions you have with your students. After the tools are presented from the student perspective, we will learn how to use them as an instructor.

### Learning Outcomes

After completing this section, you will be able to:

- View course announcements
- Access the course syllabus
- Consult the course calendar
- Access a list of prioritized tasks
- View the list of course members
- View information about the instructor
- Send messages to course members using the Email and Messages tools
- Identify the differences between the Email and Messages tools
- Use tools and access information for all courses from the My Institution tab



# Viewing Announcements

The **Announcements** tool is often used by instructors to communicate important, time-sensitive information. For instance, as an instructor, you can use announcements to provide the following:

- Corrections and clarifications of materials
- Assignment due dates or exam schedules
- Reminders or helpful tips for success

As a default module on the Home Page, announcements are typically one of the first things students see when accessing the course. When students click an announcement link on the Home Page, they are taken to the main **Announcements** page.

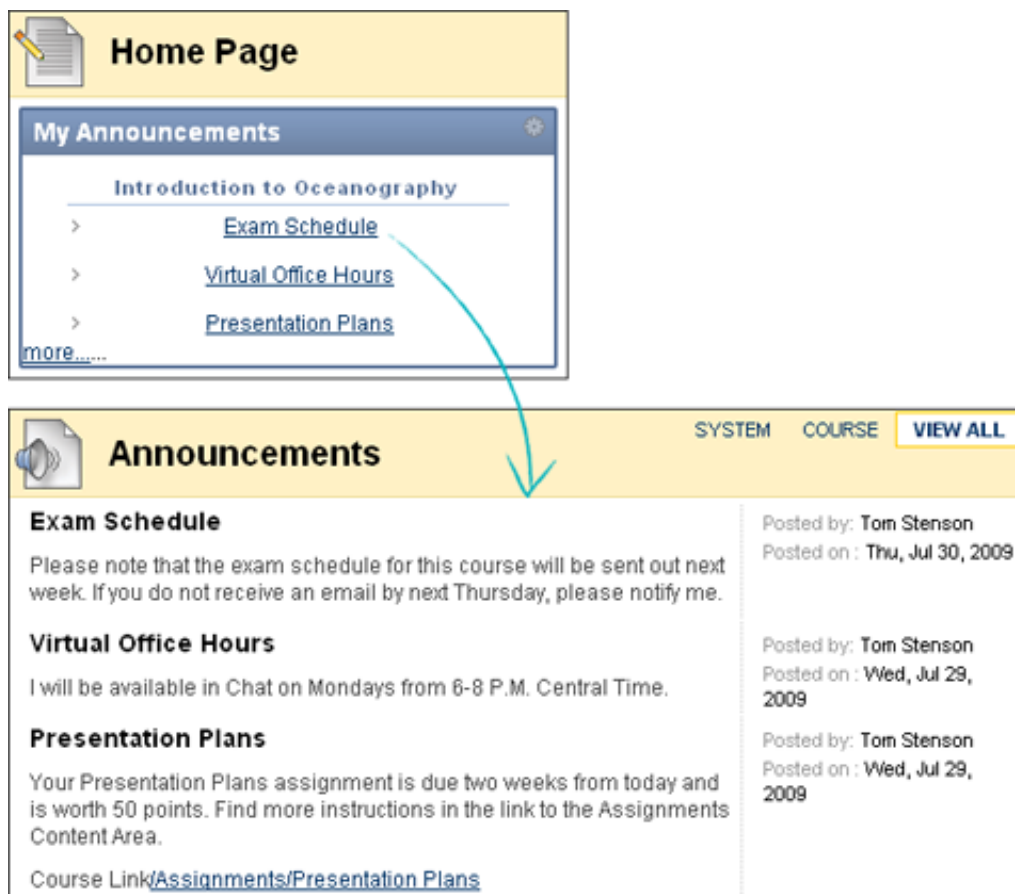


Figure 1

# Viewing the Syllabus

The online syllabus can be a one-stop spot for students to find the most important information they need to succeed in their courses.

The syllabus typically includes the following:

- Course description and learning objectives
- Instructor contact information and office hours
- A course outline, which may include important dates
- Course and institution policies
- A list of required texts and recommended readings
- Class participation requirements and grading criteria

Students access the syllabus from a course area, such as a Content Area created by the instructor. The syllabus can be added in two ways:

- Uploaded to the course, such as a PDF or Microsoft® Word file
- Created within Blackboard Learn, as shown in the following image

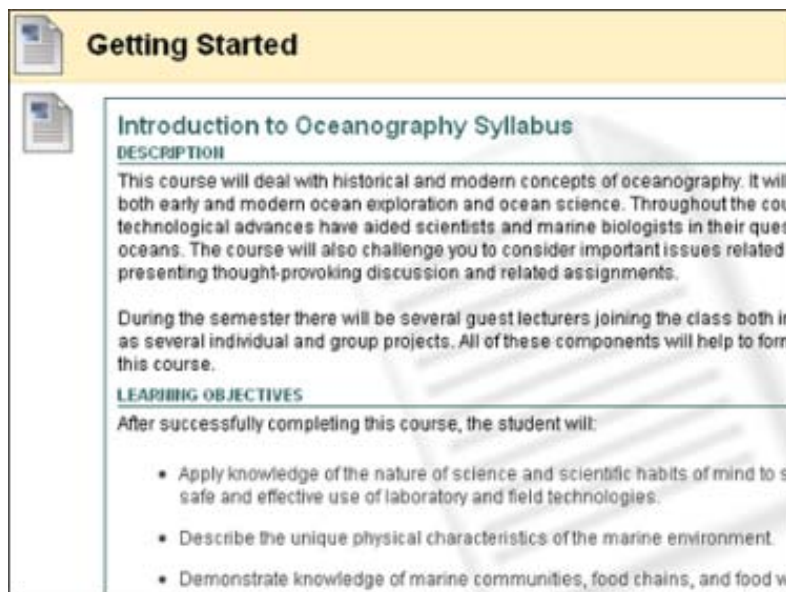


Figure 2

# Viewing the Calendar

Students can consult the Calendar to see events the instructor has added, such as:

- Reminders of course meetings and chat sessions
- Due dates for assignments and projects
- Suggested milestones to help keep students on track

By default, students access the Calendar from the course Home Page. The Calendar can also be accessed by clicking the Tools link on the Course Menu.

**NOTE:** The instructor can rename links on the Course Menu.

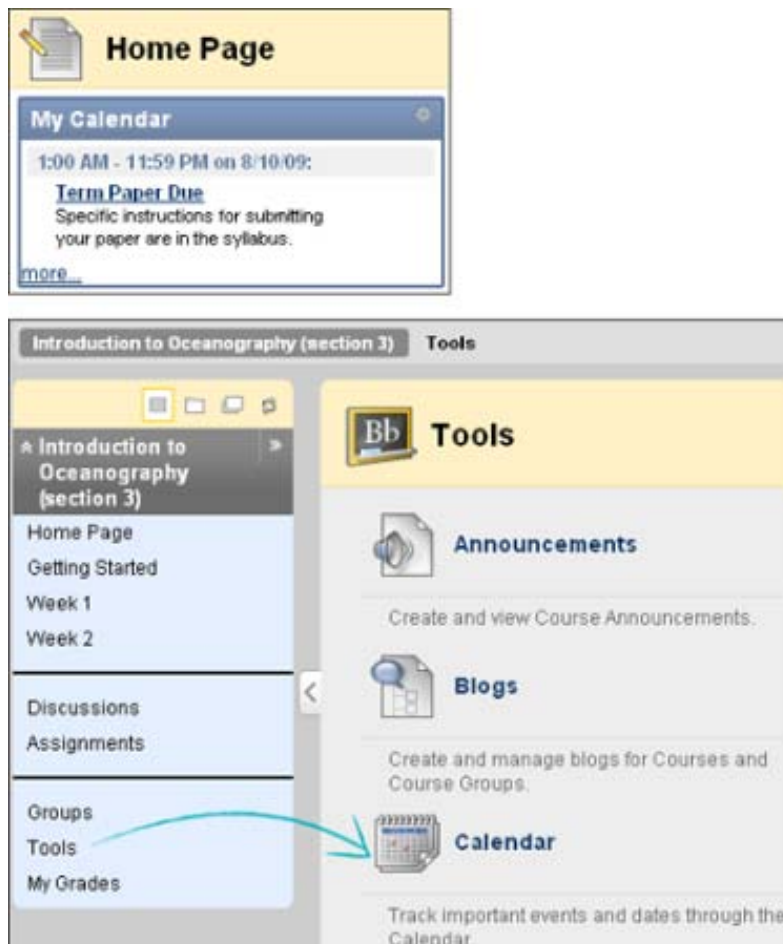


Figure 3.1

## Student Experience: Viewing the Calendar

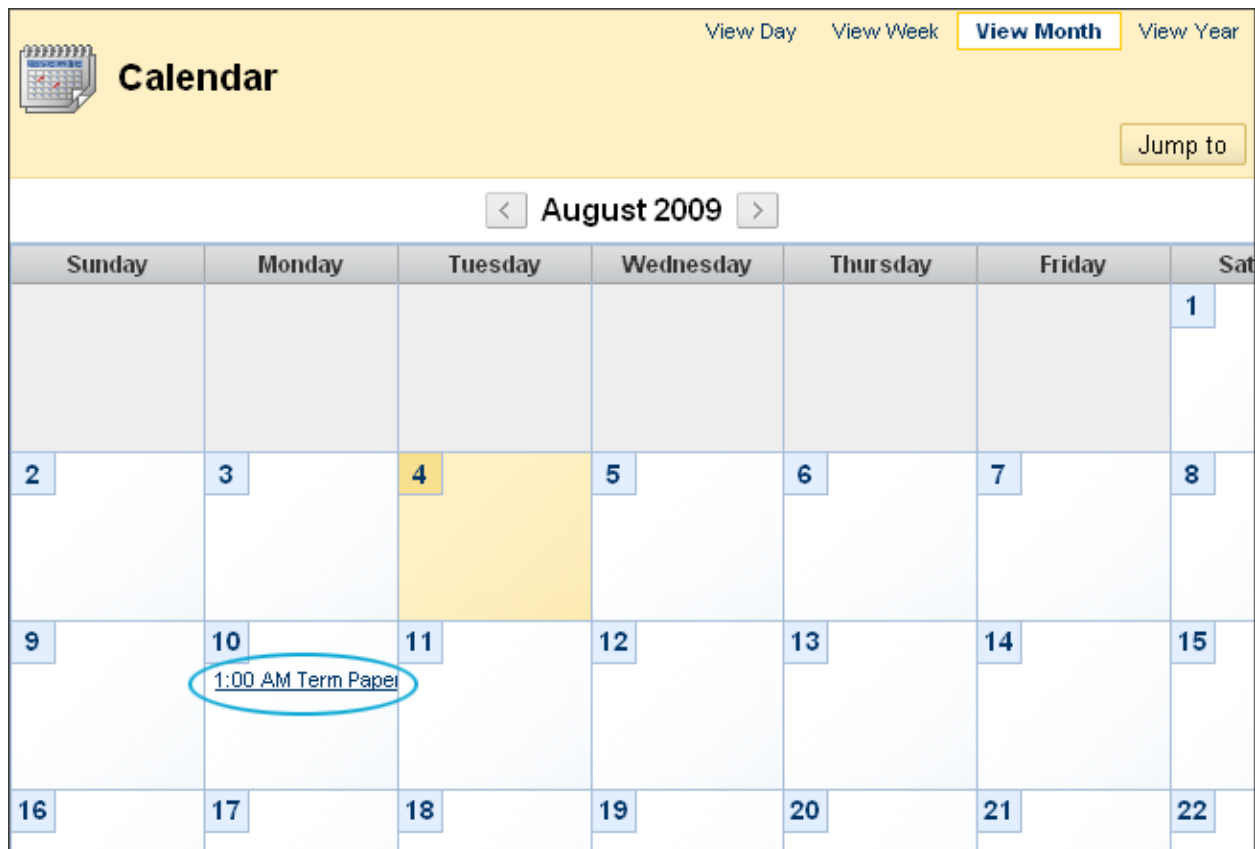


Figure 3.2

Students can view the Calendar by day, week, month, or year. If viewed by month, only the first few characters of the event title appear on the Calendar. Click the link for details.

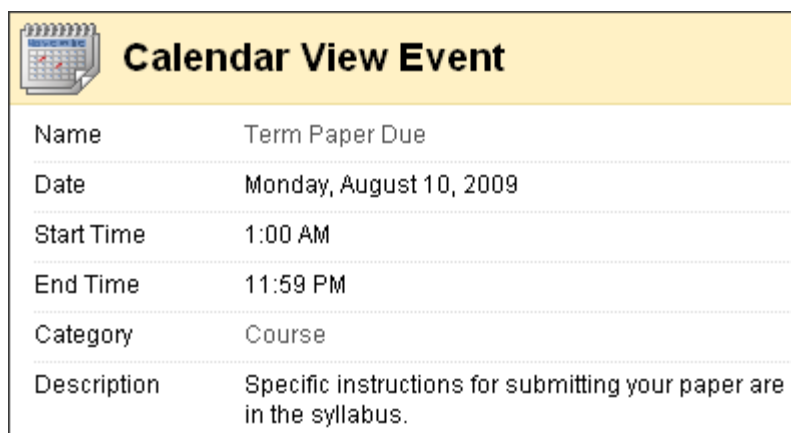


Figure 3.3

# Viewing Course Tasks

The **Tasks** tool is used to keep track of work that must be completed. Each task has a status and a due date. The instructor identifies the course tasks and adds them to the list. The instructor can create a list of tasks for the entire term or just for a project.

Students can use this list to keep themselves on track and may be required to report their status for each task.

By default, students access **Tasks** from the course Home Page. Tasks can also be accessed by clicking the **Tools** link on the Course Menu.

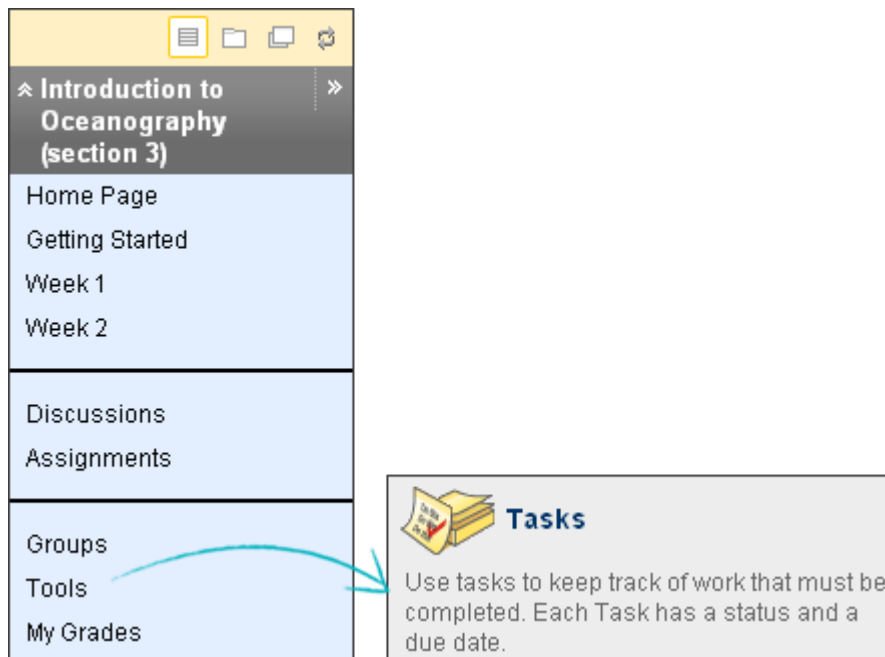


Figure 4.1

The screenshot shows the 'Tasks' page in Blackboard. At the top is a yellow header with a folder icon and the word 'Tasks'. Below this is a table with columns: Title, Priority, Due Date, and Status. The table contains three tasks: 'Chapter 3 Worksheet Due' (priority icon: exclamation mark), 'Term Paper Topic' (priority icon: none), and 'Optional Chat Review Session' (priority icon: green arrow pointing down). The third task is highlighted in yellow. A contextual menu is open for the third task, showing options: 'Set Not Started', 'Set In Progress', and 'Set Completed'. Annotations A through E point to specific elements: A points to the 'Chapter 3 Worksheet Due' link; B points to the 'Priority' column header; C points to the 'Due Date' column header; D points to the dropdown arrow of the 'Optional Chat Review Session' task; and E points to the 'Set In Progress' option in the contextual menu.

Status	Title	Priority	Due Date	Status
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Chapter 3 Worksheet Due</a>	!	Tuesday, August 18, 2009	Not Started
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Term Paper Topic</a>		Sunday, August 9, 2009	Not Started
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Optional Chat Review Session</a>	↓	Thursday, August 20, 2009	Not Started

Contextual menu for 'Optional Chat Review Session':

- > Set Not Started
- > Set In Progress
- > Set Completed


Figure 4.2

► Take Note

- A. Click a task link to view the description.
- B. The instructor can assign a level of priority for tasks:
  - High priority icon – exclamation mark
  - Normal priority – no icon
  - Low priority icon – an arrow pointing down
- C. Sort any column by clicking the heading title.
- D. Click a task's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
- E. A student can select the status of the task:
  - Not Started
  - In Progress
  - Completed

## Student Experience: Viewing Course Tasks

On the main **Tasks** page, students can click a task link to access the **View Task** page for the task's description and other information.

**View Task**

1. Task Information	
Task Name	Chapter 3 Worksheet Due
Description	Worksheets and instructions are available in the <i>Assignm</i>
Due Date	Tuesday, August 18, 2009
Priority	High

Figure 4.3

# Accessing the Roster

Students can use the **Roster** tool to view a list of the students enrolled in the course.

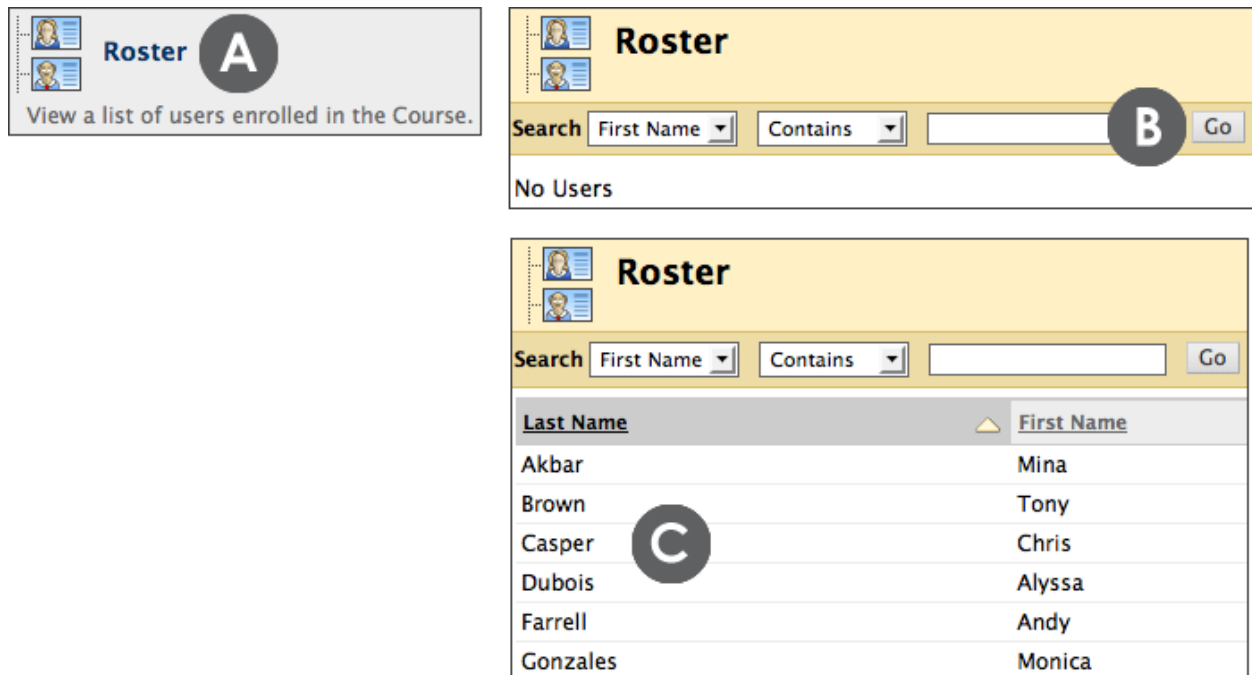


Figure 5

## ► Take Note

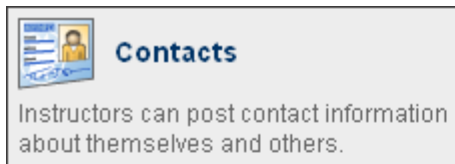
- A. Click the **Tools** link on the Course Menu to access the **Roster**.
- B. Click **Go** on the Action Bar to display all students or use the drop-down lists to narrow your search to specific students.
- C. A list of students appears after clicking **Go**. Click the column heading to sort the contents. For example, to sort messages by Last Name, click the Last Name title or the caret beside it.




# Finding Staff Information


On the **Contacts** page, students can view the instructor's contact details, office hours, photo, and other personal data. They can also learn about teaching assistants and upcoming guest speakers.

Students access this information by clicking the **Tools** link on the Course Menu and selecting **Contacts**.







## Contacts



**Instructor Hannah Arlt**  
Email [harlt@myschool.edu](mailto:harlt@myschool.edu)  
Work Phone 555-555-2323  
Office Location Strand Hall Office 718  
Office Hours M and W 5-10 P.M. CT  
Personal Link <http://www.myhomepage.com>  
**Notes**  
There are no stupid questions. We learn by asking. You may lead us down quite an interesting path with your curiosity.





**Guest Lecturers**  
As we start Chapter 2, I will be joined by some of my friends who are teaching oceanography across the country.

Figure 6

## Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Student Course.

### Use the tools

- Access **Announcements** and note how you can choose to view **System**, **Course**, or **All** announcements. System announcements will include any institution-wide information posted by the system administrator.
- Access the **Calendar** and view an event's description.
- Review the **Tasks** list and change the status of two tasks to **Completed**. **TIP:** You can change the status of more than one task by selecting multiple check boxes and pointing to **Status** on the Action Bar.
- Access the **Roster** and view the list of students.
- Access the **Contacts** page and review the contents of the **Guest Lecturers** folder.

# Sending Email

In your Blackboard Learn course, you can send email messages to other course members' external email addresses.

## ► QUICK STEPS: sending an email

1. Access **Tools** and select **Send Email**.
2. On the **Send Email** page, select the link for the intended recipient group. A new page appears.
3. For **Select Users** or **Select Groups**, select the recipients in the **Items to Select** box and click the right-pointing arrow to move them into the **Selected Items** box.
4. Type the **Subject** and **Message**.
5. Optionally, browse for a file from your local computer. Multiple files can be attached.
6. Click **Submit**.

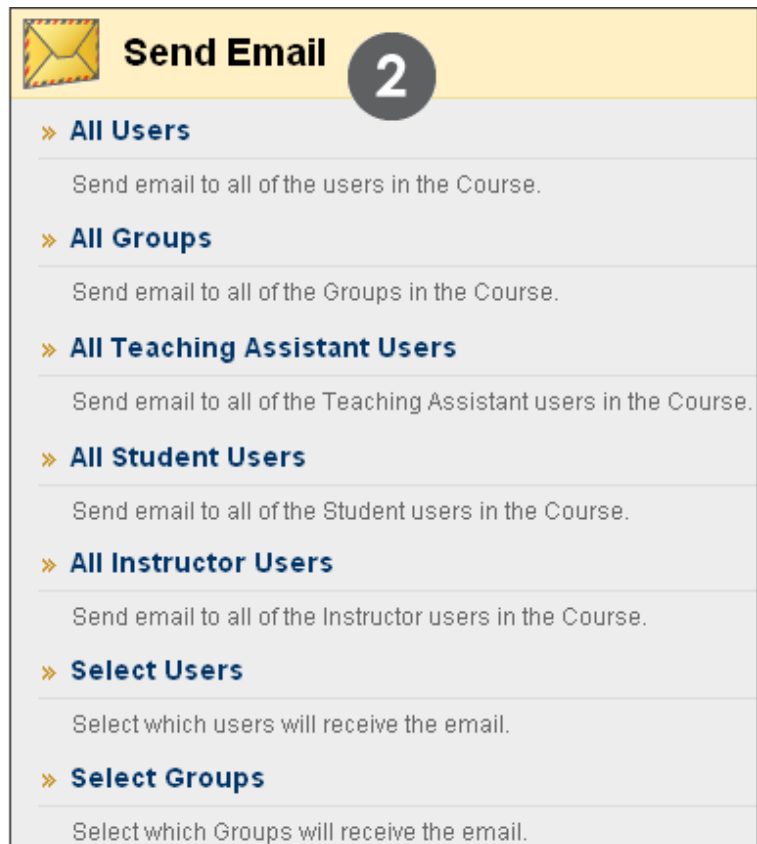
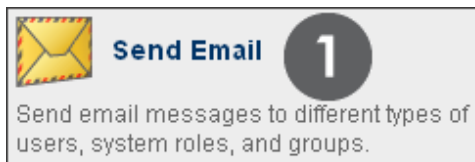


Figure 7.1

## Student Experience: Sending Email

From a Blackboard Learn course, you cannot send email to anyone who is not a member of the course.

**Select Users** 6

\* Indicates a required field. Cancel Submit

**1. Email Information**

\* To

Items to Select

- Brown, Tony
- Casper, Chris
- Dubois, Alyssa
- Farrell, Andy
- Paul, Doug
- Spooner, Sarah
- Stenson, Tom

Selected Items

- Lopez, Bruce
- Gonzales, Monica
- Cooper, Ashby

Invert Selection Select All Invert Selection Select All

From Tony Brown (tbrown@myschool.edu)

Subject Interested in a study group?

Message

I have appreciated all the posts made on the Discussion Board and wondered if anyone would like to have a few study sessions in Chat?

Tony

abc

A copy of this email will be sent to the sender.

Attachments [Attach a file](#)

Figure 7.2

To select multiple users in a row, hold down Shift and click. To select users out of sequence, hold down the Control Key and select individual users. You can also select all course members with the Select All function.

### **Important Tips**

- Blackboard Learn keeps no record of sent emails. You will receive a copy of your email in the Inbox of your external email account. Keep a copy of important messages in case you need them at a later date.
- Blackboard Learn will NOT recognize files or email addresses with spaces or special characters, such as #, &, %, and \$. In general, use only alphanumeric file names and addresses in Blackboard Learn.
- Do not send email through Blackboard Learn without content in the subject line. Leaving the subject line blank can prevent the message from being delivered.

## Ask Dr. C



In the following table, Dr. C discusses the Email tool. Dr. C is our Blackboard Learn expert.

▼ Your question	▼ Dr. C's reply
When I send someone an email using the Email tool, I cannot see the other person's actual email address. Why?	Email addresses are not visible unless participants choose to make them visible to course members. Find this setting in the page header above the tabs at: <b>My Places &gt; Personal Information &gt; Set Privacy Options</b> . From this page, students choose the information they want course members to see.  <b>NOTE:</b> <b>Personal Information</b> is also listed on the <b>My Institution</b> tab under Tools.
Am I able to change the external email address used in my course?	Yes. Change your email address by going to <b>My Places &gt; Personal Information &gt; Edit Personal Information</b> . Type your preferred email address and click Submit.
Why am I not receiving any emails? Other students have received several from the instructor and I have not.	Many popular email clients, such as Hotmail, Yahoo, and AOL may identify email from Blackboard Learn as junk mail and either automatically delete the email or move it to a junk mail folder. If you have problems, check your user preferences or options for settings regarding the handling of junk email. You can also change your email address.

## Hands-on Activity

For this activity, use your Student Course.

### Use the Email tool

- First, add your email address to your **Personal Information** record: **My Places > Personal Information > Edit Personal Information**.
- Send an email to **All Users**.
- Send an email to three members of the course.

# Sending Messages

You can also send messages to course members using the **Messages** tool. The Messages tool sends secure electronic messages within the course, without relying on external email addresses or clients, so external factors will not affect course communication.

Students are not notified if they receive a new message, so advise them to make routine checks for new messages. Both incoming and outgoing messages are saved in the Messages tool.

## ► QUICK STEPS: sending messages

1. Access **Tools** and select **Messages**.
2. On the **Messages** page, click **Create Message** on the Action Bar.
3. On the **Compose Message** page, click **To**, and a list of course members appears.
4. In the **Items to Select** box, select the recipients and click the right-pointing arrow to move them to the **Selected Items** box.
5. Type a **Subject** and **Body**. Use the Text Editor to format the **Body** text, if you want.
6. Optionally, add an attachment. You may not see this function. The system administrator must enable this function.
7. Click **Submit**.



## Student Experience: Sending Messages

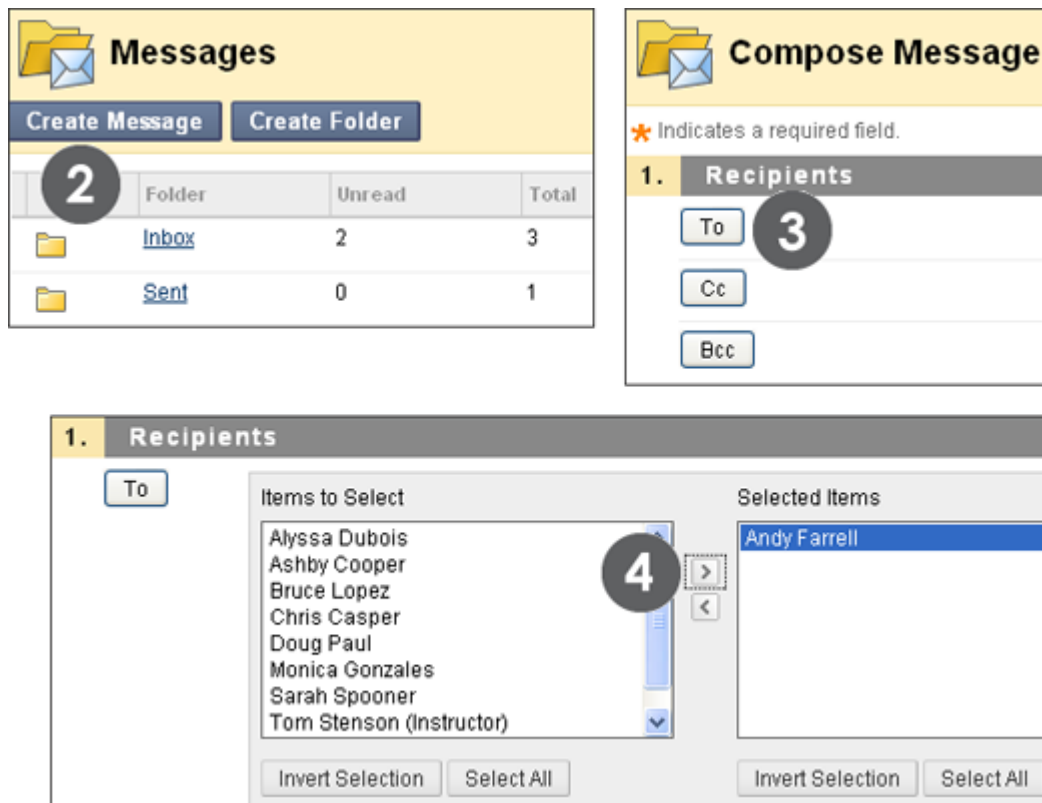


Figure 8.1

**NOTE:** You may not see a **Create Folder** function. The system administrator must enable this function.

## Viewing Messages

Click the **Inbox** link to view received messages.

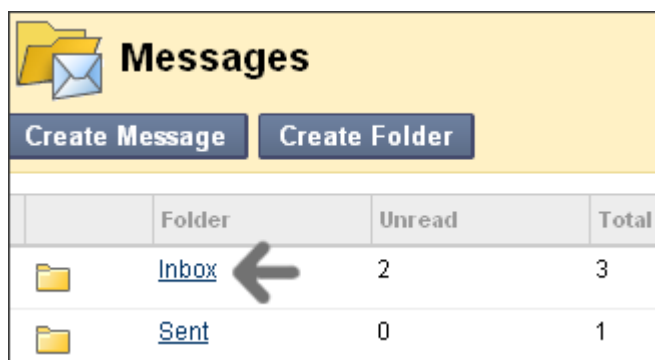


Figure 8.2

## Student Experience: Sending Messages

Click the **Subject** link to read the message.

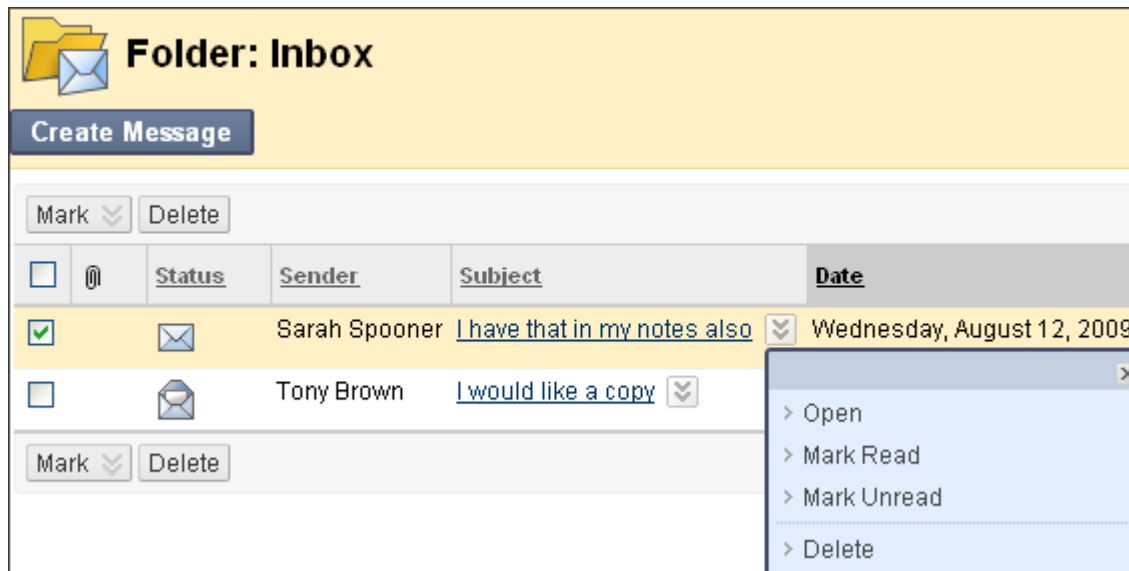


Figure 8.3

The **Status** column icons represent if the message has been read. An opened envelope means read and a sealed envelope means unread.

Use a message's contextual menu to mark a message read or unread, or delete it.

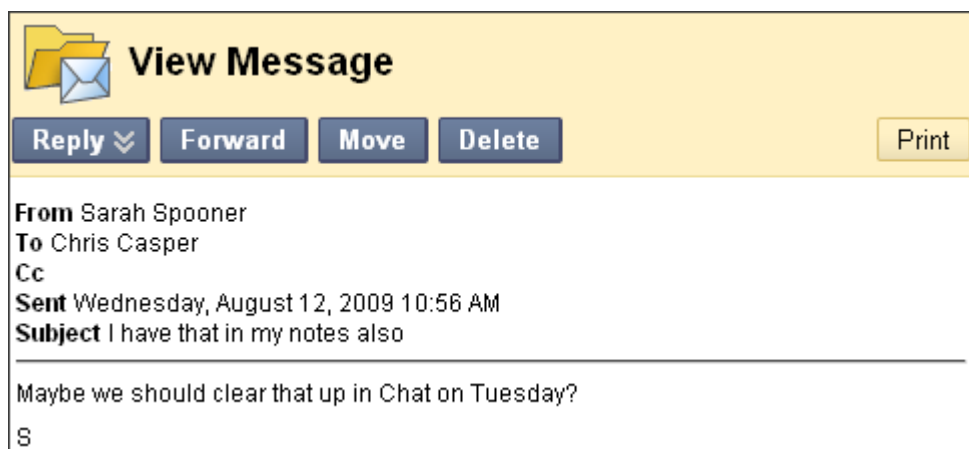


Figure 8.4

## Student Experience: Sending Messages

When you have finished reading the message, you can do any of the following:

- Reply to the sender or reply to all recipients
- Forward the message to another user
- Move the message to a different folder
- Delete the message
- Print the message

**NOTE:** The **Move** function will not appear on the Action Bar as an option until a folder is created by the user.

### Sorting Messages

Click the column heading to sort the contents in that column. For example, to sort messages by read and unread, click the **Status** title or the caret beside it.






Mark ▾		Delete			
<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Status</b> ▲	<u>Sender</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Date</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>			Bruce Lopez	<a href="#">Project Resource</a> ▾	Wednesd
<input type="checkbox"/>			Alyssa Dubois	<a href="#">Chat on Tuesday</a> ▾	Wednesd
<input type="checkbox"/>			Tony Brown	<a href="#">I would like a copy</a> ▾	Wednesd
<input type="checkbox"/>			Sarah Spooner	<a href="#">I have that in my notes also</a> ▾	Wednesd

Figure 8.5

## Ask Dr. C



In the following table, Dr. C discusses the Messages tool.

▼ Your question	▼ Dr. C's reply
What are the advantages of using the Messages tool rather than the Email tool?	<p>The Blackboard Learn Messages tool provides a familiar, email-like environment that can be used for course communication. Accounts are automatically created for each member of the course, and messages are sent and received using that account. This provides additional privacy because external email addresses are not used.</p> <p>Using the Messages tool instead of the Email tool can also be more reliable. Problems with incorrect or out-of-date student email addresses will not affect course communication.</p> <p>Using the Messages tool also encourages students to log in to their courses frequently.</p> <p>On the other hand, some students and instructors prefer the convenience of checking their course email along with their personal email messages in one location.</p> <p>Many institutions have policies on the use of the Email and Messages tools; check with your Blackboard Learn trainer for more information about your institution's approach.</p>

## Hands-on Activity

For this activity, use your Student Course.

### **Read and send messages**

- Read a message in your **Inbox**.
- Reply to the message or create a new message.
- View the sent message.

# Using Tools Across Courses

Up to this point, we have focused on the student experience within the course itself. Many of the tools we have covered can also be accessed from the **My Institution** tab. Since you are not logged in to a course, you can access information for all your courses. The modules shown can be rearranged using the drag-and-drop function or can be deleted.

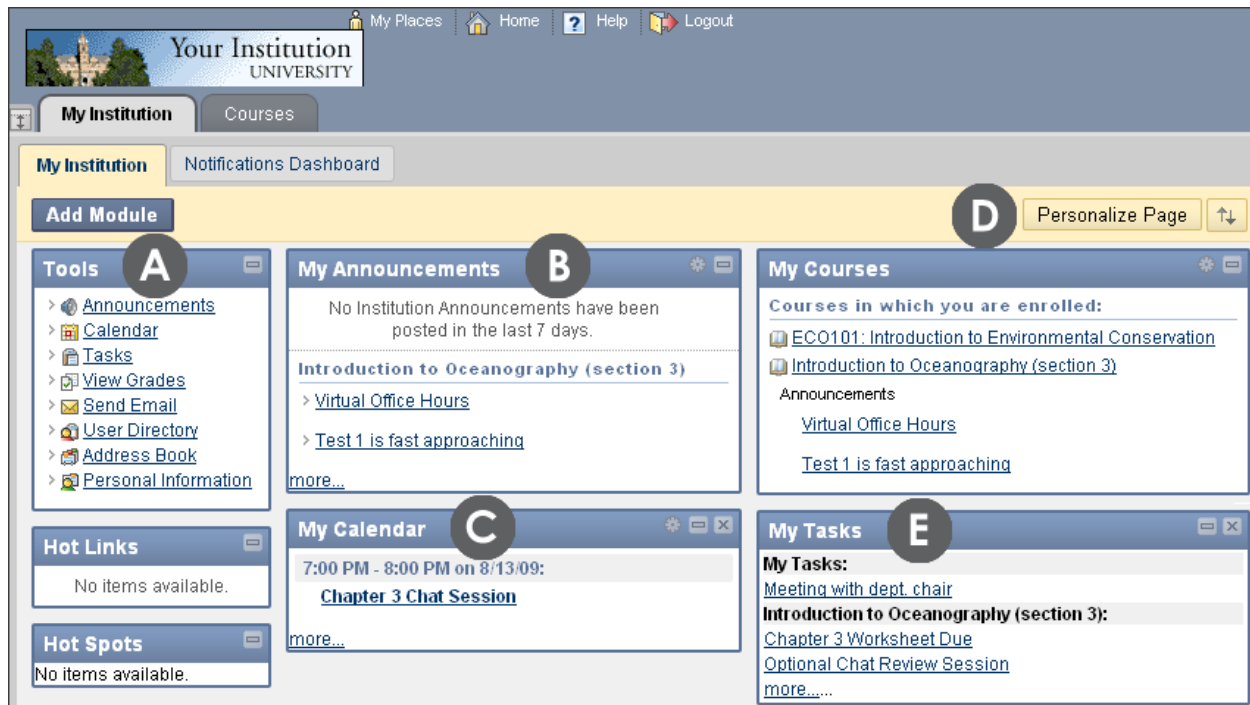


Figure 9

► **Take Note**

- A. The **Tool Panel** gives students access to several tools, such as Email. Students can send email to members of any of their courses from the Tool Panel.
- B. The **My Announcements** module lists announcements from all courses in which a student is enrolled, as well as institution-wide announcements.
- C. The **My Calendar** module lists all instructors' calendar entries for all courses in which a student is enrolled. Private events are added using the **Calendar** link in the Tool Panel.
- D. The **Personalize Page** function allows customization of the page's color theme.
- E. The **My Tasks** module list tasks for all courses in which a student is enrolled. Personal tasks are added using the **Tasks** link in the Tool Panel.

## 3.0 Real-time Communication

You have learned about some of the course information and communication tools you can use to keep students informed and exchange messages with them. Now we will look at how you can communicate with your students in real-time, using the Chat tool. We will first explore the Chat tool from the student perspective.

Chat is a virtual meeting space, where you and your students can gather to communicate with each other using instant messaging. Chat can be used for a variety of applications:

- Online office hours
- Exam reviews and study groups
- Guest speakers or question and answer sessions
- Small group collaboration and brainstorming sessions

Together, the Virtual Classroom tool and the Chat tool form the Blackboard Learn Collaboration tool. The Virtual Classroom tool includes a whiteboard, chat panel, Web browser, Course Map, and a question and answer area. It is ideal for course lectures, especially those in which you present visual material. We will not explore the Virtual Classroom tool in this workshop, but we will take a close look at the Chat tool.

### Learning Outcomes

After completing this section, you will be able to:

- Participate in a chat session
- Send private messages
- View session recordings
- Create new sessions
- Modify participant roles
- Manage sessions
- Create session recordings



# Participating in Chat Sessions

Chat within the Collaboration tool is a slimmed down version of the Virtual Classroom tool where only the chat room facility is available. This provides a large screen for the chat room.

Use the Chat tool when real-time discussion is required. Most students will be familiar with using some form of chat and will be comfortable using this form of communication.

The Chat tool was designed to be ideal for low bandwidth situations, such as when your students are connecting to the course using a dial-up connection.

After joining a chat session, students can send messages. The message will appear in the chat display panel of all participants who are currently in the room.

## ► QUICK STEPS: participating in a chat session

1. Access **Tools** and select **Collaboration**.
2. On the **Collaboration Sessions** page, click the **Session Name** link for the available Chat session you wish to join.
3. On the chat screen, compose a message.
4. Click **Send**.

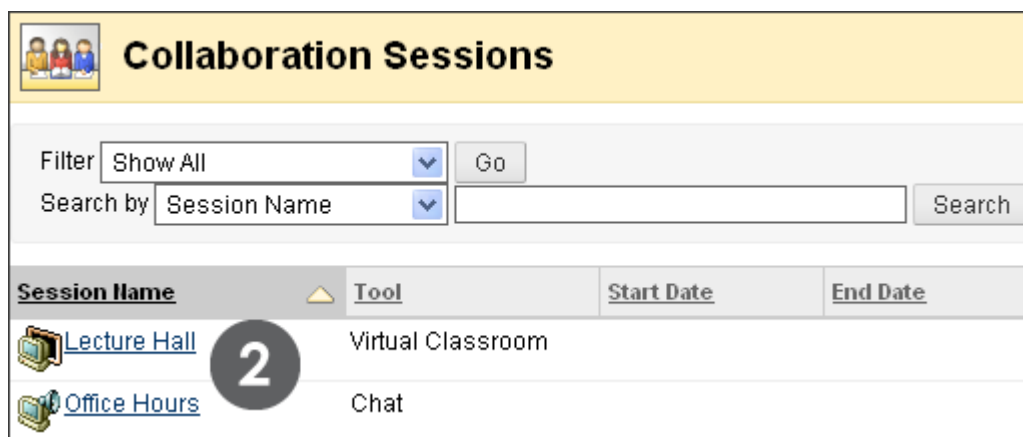


Figure 1.1 – The Collaboration Sessions page from the student perspective

**NOTE:** A Launching Chat Tool page appears. Do not leave this page until you are done chatting. The chat session will open in a new browser window and may take a moment to load. Chat will not work if pop-up blockers are enabled. Either turn off your pop-up blocker or make your course site a trusted site.

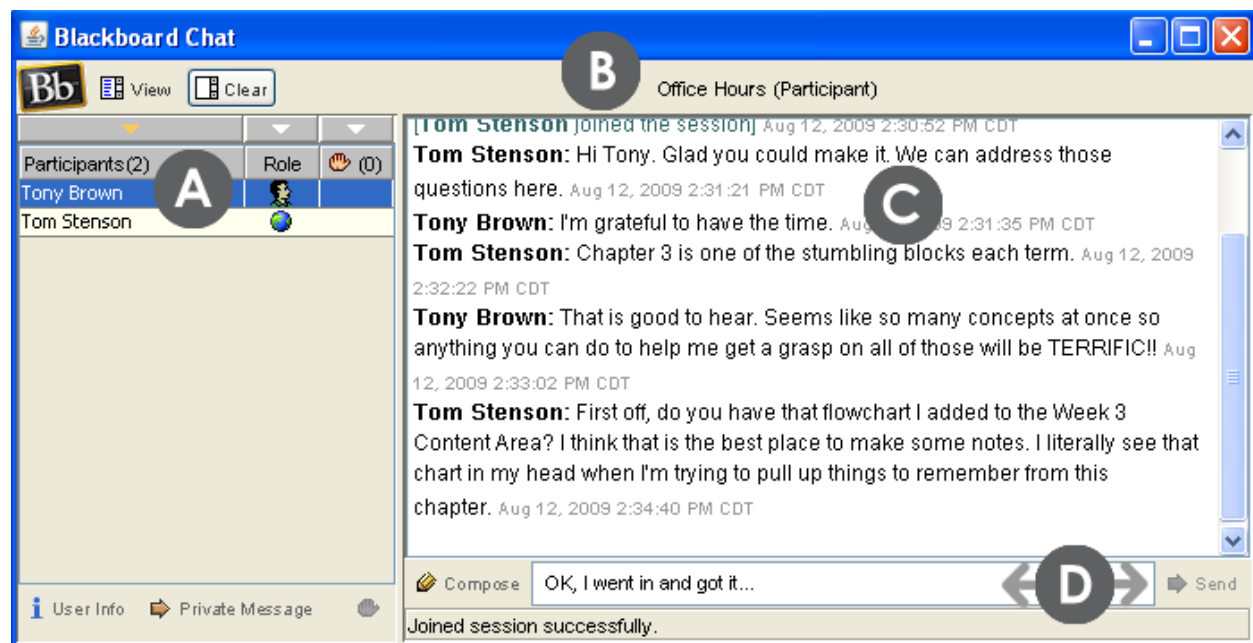





Figure 1.2 – Chat session from the student perspective

► Take Note

- A. A list of participants and their roles appear in the first column.
- B. The title of the Chat room appears at the top of the chat display panel.
- C. All messages are shown in the chat display panel.
- D. Type your message in the **Compose** text box and click Send. Alternatively, the **Compose** icon can be clicked to open a new window, allowing for a bigger area for typing.

## Real Time Communication: Participating in Chat Sessions

The following table describes the icons assigned to each participant role.

▼ Icon	▼ Role
	The Moderator is represented by a globe icon. The Moderator is typically the instructor. The Moderator can modify participant roles, grant passive users permission to participate, expel users, and record and end the session.
	The Active User is represented by a full color icon. An Active User is typically a student. By default, Active Users can send messages as often as they like during a chat session.
	The Passive User is represented by a gray toned icon. A Passive User is typically a student. Passive Users can observe the chat exchange, but must raise their hands to request permission to send messages. If more than one student raises their hands, numbers are assigned to the handraise icons to represent the order they raised their hands.

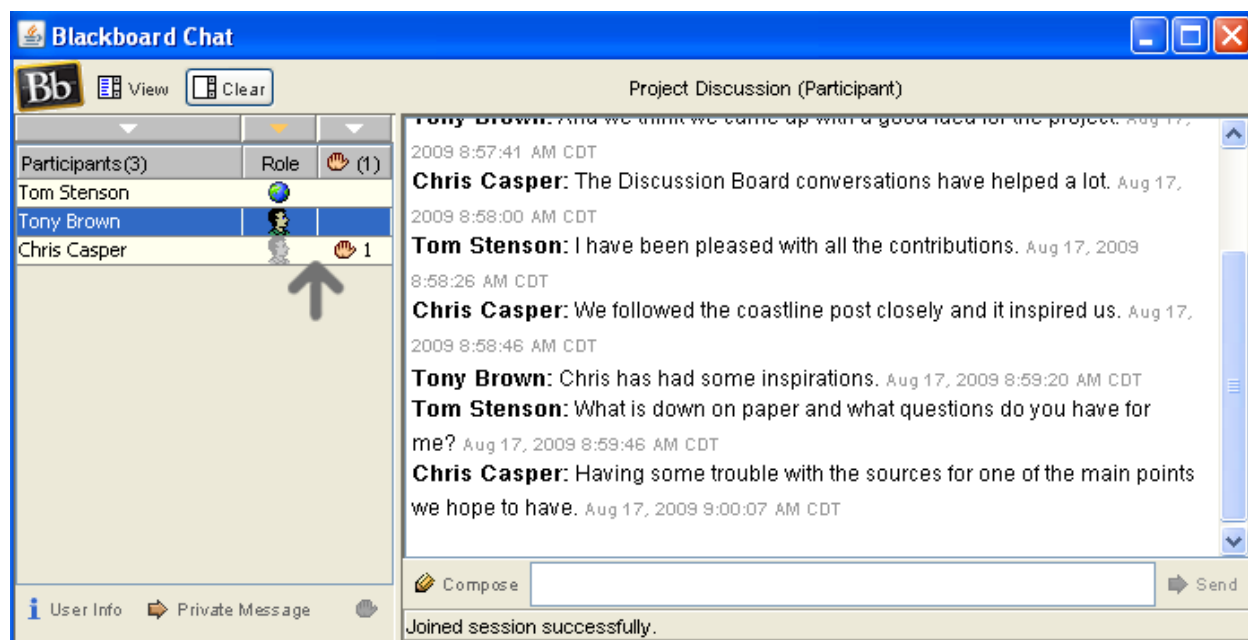


Figure 1.3

# Sending Private Messages

Private messages can be sent by chat participants, including the instructor, to one or more participants.

Private messages are not included in chat recordings and can be disallowed by the instructor.

## ► QUICK STEPS: sending private messages

1. On the **Participants** list, select the recipient or recipients of your private message.
2. Click **Private Message**.
3. In the **Compose Private Message** pop-up window, type your message.
4. Click **Send**.

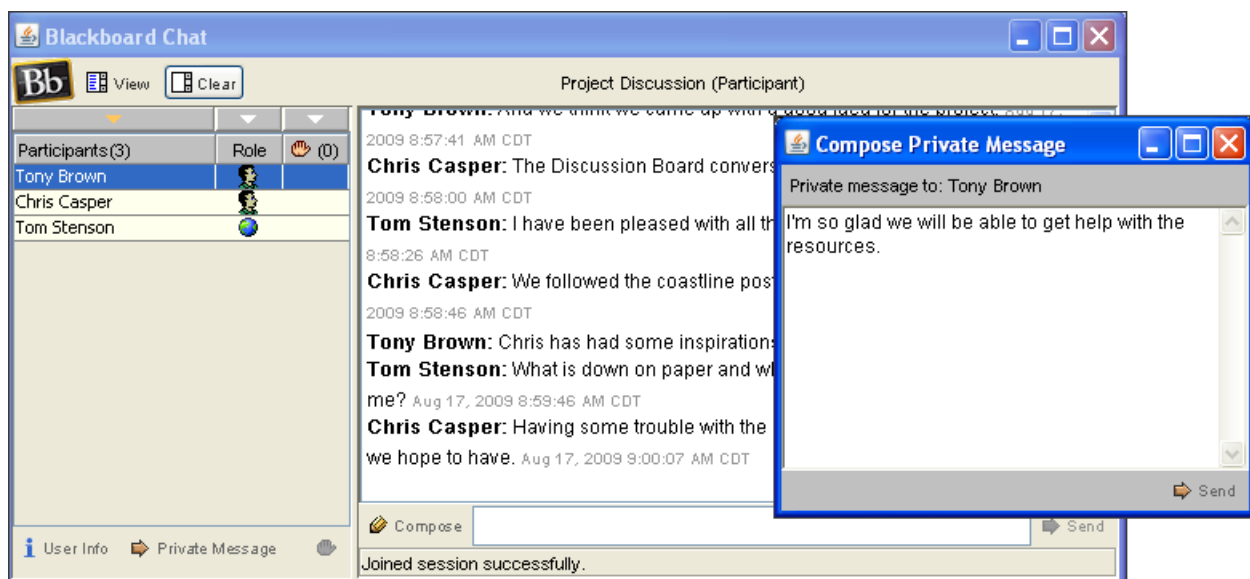


Figure 2.1

**TIP:** To send a private message to a single participant, double-click the participant's name.

Private messages can appear with all your other messages in the chat display panel or you can choose to display them in a separate panel. Private messages are always preceded by "Private Message from."

Click **View** on the Action Bar and select where private messages will appear.

## Real Time Communication: Sending Private Messages

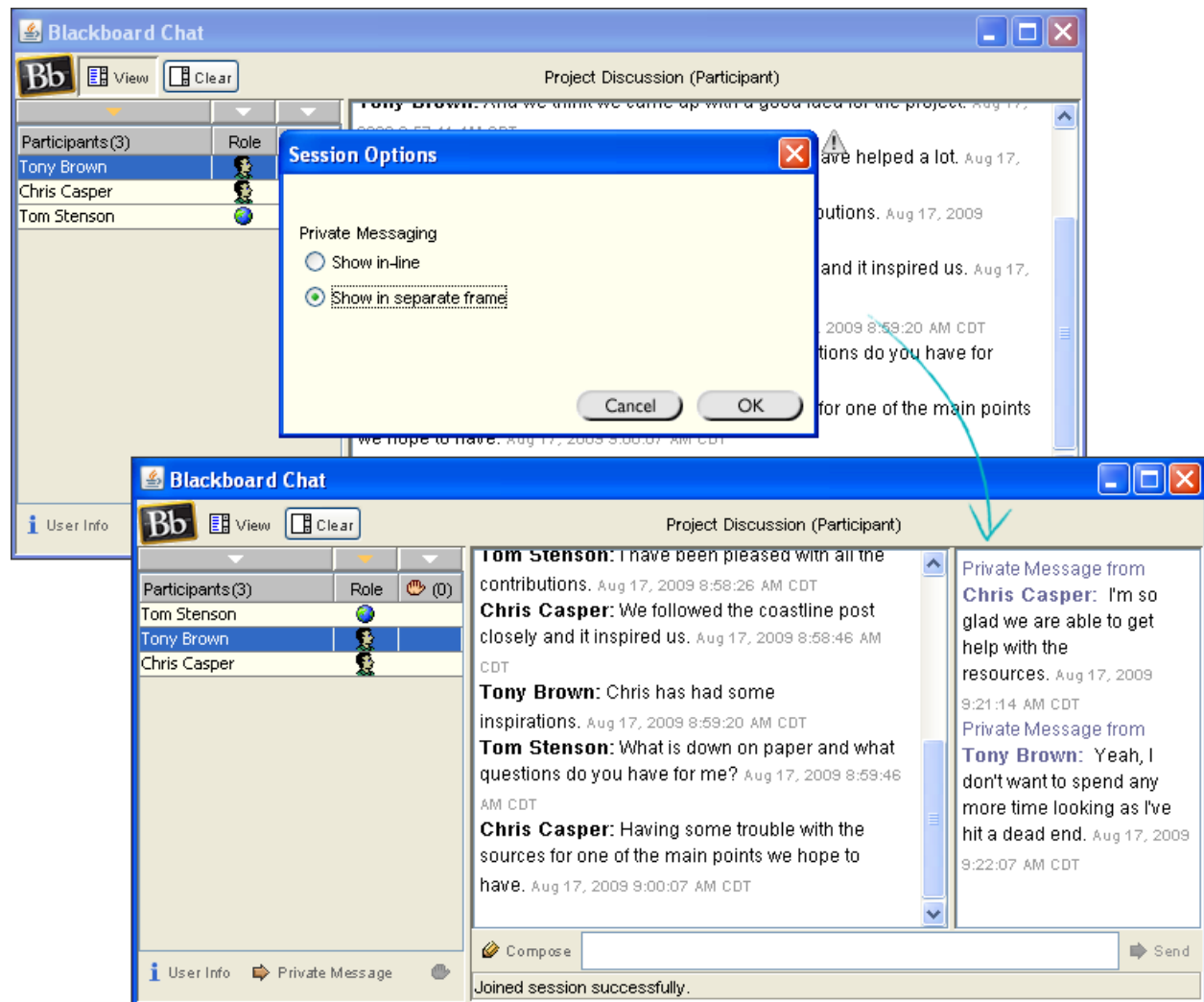


Figure 2.2

# Viewing Chat Recordings

If the instructor has recorded any portion of a chat session, students can access the recordings. For example, students can access recordings if they missed the session or if they want to review the ideas discussed.

Title recordings with meaningful names so students can locate them easily. For example, use either the topic discussed or the date of the session as the name. Multiple recordings can be made within one chat session.

## ► QUICK STEPS: viewing a recorded chat session

1. Access the **Collaboration Sessions** page.
2. Click a session's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
3. Select **Recordings**.
4. On the **Session Recordings** page, click the name of the recording.

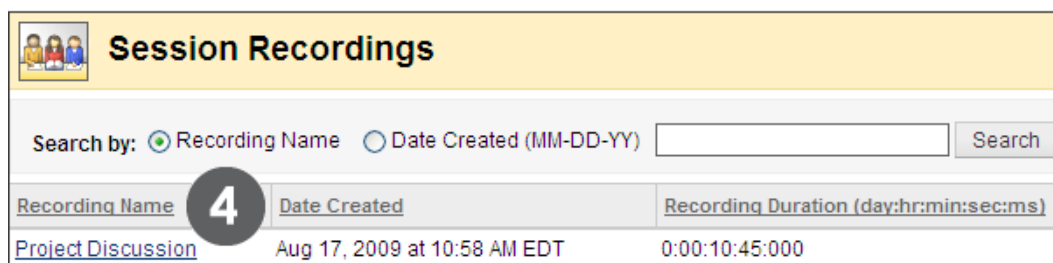
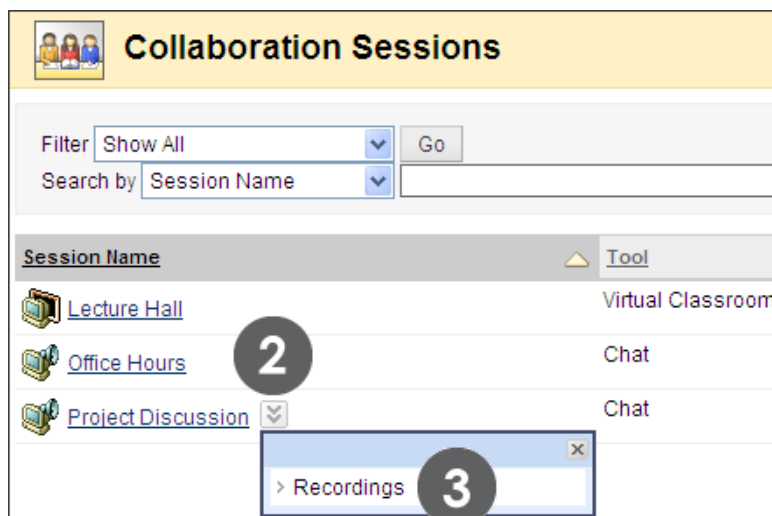


Figure 3

**NOTE:** In the **Recording Duration** column, the length of the session is listed. If several recordings exist, use the **Search** function on the Action Bar.

## Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Student Course.

### Send chat messages

- Join the **Student Lounge** session and send a message to the participants.
- Choose to view private messages in a separate frame.
- Choose a participant and send a private message.

### View a session recording

- View the **Culture and Identity** session recording. **NOTE:** You may see **anonymous** instead of the instructor name in the transcript, which can happen when a course is archived and restored.

# About the Instructor Interface

Now we will turn to the instructor perspective. In this section, you will be creating and managing chat sessions in the Practice Course. Ensure **Edit Mode** is **ON** to access the instructor functions.

As an instructor, you have access to the same features as students. In addition, you can do the following:

- Create sessions
- Modify participant roles
- Manage sessions
- Record sessions

**Collaboration Sessions**

Create Collaboration Session (A)

Filter: Show All (v) Go

Search by: Session Name (v) Search (C)

Session Name	Tool	Start Date	End Date
Lecture Hall (v)	Virtual Classroom		
Mysteries of the Oceans (v)	Chat	Aug 18, 2009 7:30:00 PM EDT	Aug 18, 2009 8:30:00 PM EDT
Office Hours (v)	Chat		
Project Discussion (v)	Chat		

(B) Edit, Recordings, Delete

Displaying 1 to 4 of 4 items Show All Edit Paging...

Figure 4 – The Collaboration Sessions page from the instructor perspective



► **Take Note**

- A. Click **Create Collaboration Session** on the Action Bar to create a chat session.
- B. Click a session's Action Link to edit session settings, delete a session, and view and manage session recordings, if they exist.
- C. Search for sessions using the **Search** function on the Action Bar.

Any session with a start date in the future will not be a link until the start date has arrived.

# Creating Chat Sessions

As an instructor, you can create chat sessions for real-time communication. You can create sessions that are available:

- For the duration of the course; students can schedule meetings and use the session at any time.
- At a specific time; student attendance at these sessions may be mandatory.
- To group members only; students in a group can schedule sessions to discuss projects, divide up tasks, and brainstorm.

## ► QUICK STEPS: creating a chat session

1. On the **Control Panel**, under **Course Tools**, select **Collaboration**.
2. On the **Collaboration Sessions** page, click **Create Collaboration Session** on the Action Bar.
3. On the **Create Collaboration Session** page, type a **Session Name**.
4. Under **Schedule Availability**, select the start and end time for the session, if you want.
5. Next to **Available**, select the **Yes** option.
6. Under **Collaboration Tool**, select **Chat** from the drop-down list.
7. Click **Submit**.

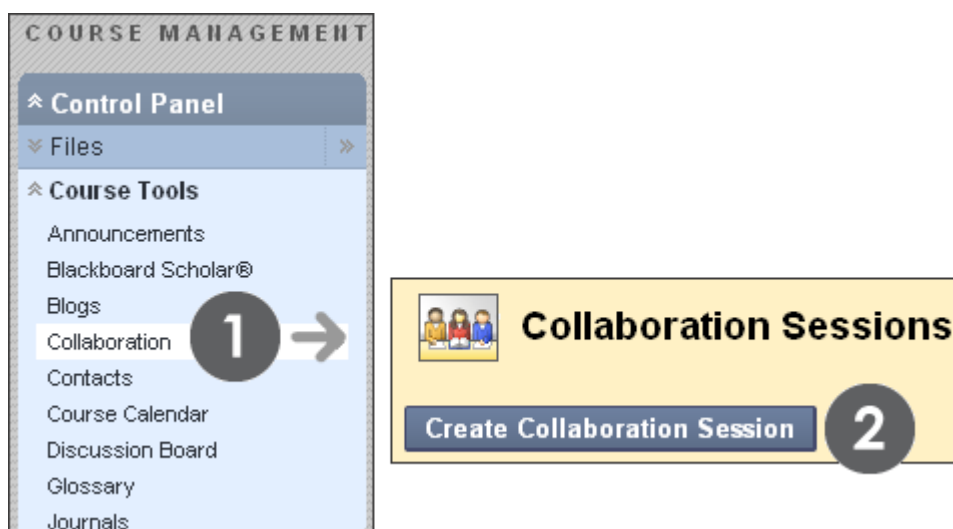


Figure 5.1

**Create Collaboration Session** 7

\* Indicates a required field. Cancel Submit

**1. Session Name**

\* Session Name Test 1 Review 3

**2. Schedule Availability**

Select Dates 4

Availability

☒ Start After 08/17/2009 07:30 PM

☒ End After 08/18/2009 08:30 PM

Available 5 ☒ Yes ☐ No

**3. Collaboration Tool**

Choose Tool for this Session

Chat 6

Chat

Virtual Classroom

Figure 5.2

Each course contains a default Chat session titled **Office Hours**. You can rename or delete this default session.

## Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course.

### Create chat sessions

- Create a chat session students can enter at any time to discuss questions and concerns, or socialize.
- Create a chat session where students will meet for a specific time period about a specific topic.

# Modifying Participant Roles

By default, participants are Active Users when they enter a chat session. At any time, you can change the role to Passive. Passive Users can view the chat exchange, but can only contribute if they raise their hands and are granted permission by the Moderator.

You control chat sessions to a greater degree when users are passive. For example, if each student must first ask for permission to participate, you are less likely to have 15 questions to respond to at once. You can also make only certain users passive if they are dominating the conversation or responding inappropriately.

## ► QUICK STEPS: modifying participant roles

1. From the chat session, click the participant's name to select it.
2. Click an icon to activate or deactivate a user's permission to chat. The icon in the Participants list is updated.

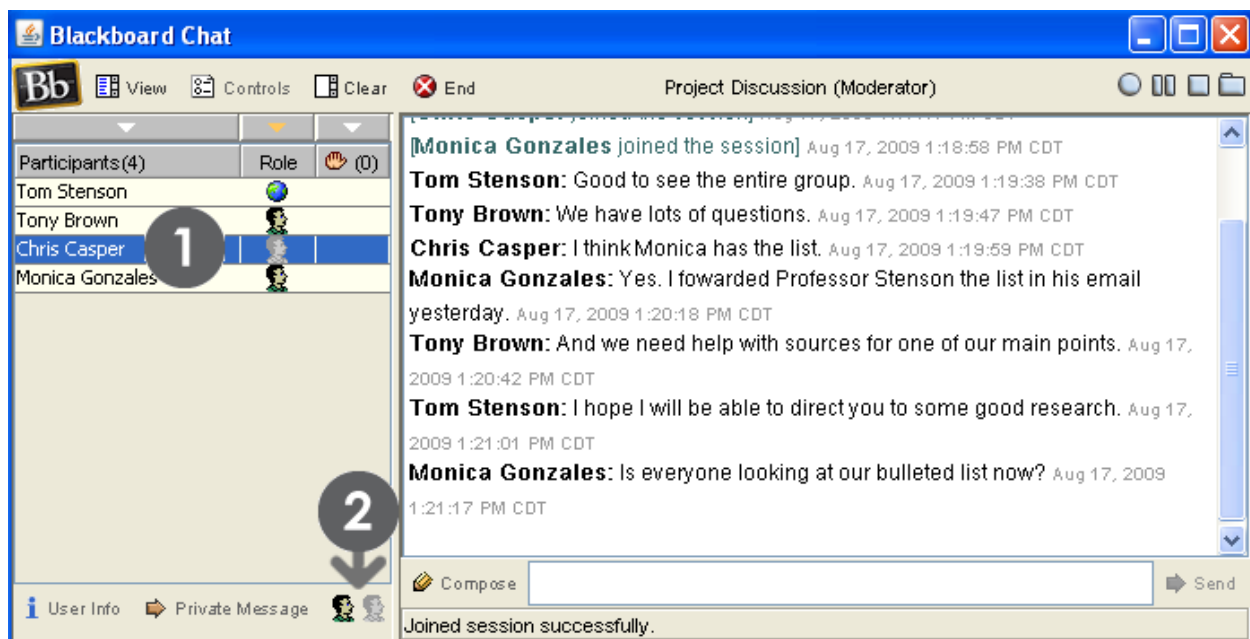


Figure 6 – In the Participants list, one participant has been changed to a passive user. This user can select the handraise icon to ask for permission to contribute to the chat.

# Managing Sessions

As an instructor, you can use the functions on the Action Bar to manage the chat session.

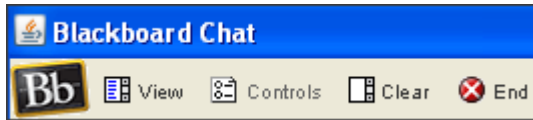


Figure 7

The following table explains the functions on the left side of the Action Bar.

If you want to	Function on Action Bar
Select which features each role can use	<b>Click Controls.</b>  By default, only active users can send messages and private messages.
Clear the screen	<b>Click Clear.</b>  You can choose to clear your chat panel or the chat panel of all session participants.
End a session	<b>Click End.</b>  The session is ended and all users are expelled. If you are recording the session, the recording is also ended and it is no longer possible to add bookmarks to the recording.

# Recording Sessions

Create a transcript of a chat session by recording a session using the recording functions on the right side of the Action Bar.

Session recordings can be beneficial if student participation is graded. Students can use the recordings for review purposes, or if a chat session was missed.

You can type a name for the recording or use the default name of the start date and time of the recording. You can create single or multiple recordings for a session.

## ► QUICK STEPS: recording a session

1. After joining a chat session, click the **Begins recording** function.
2. Type a name for the chat recording or use the default.
3. Click OK.

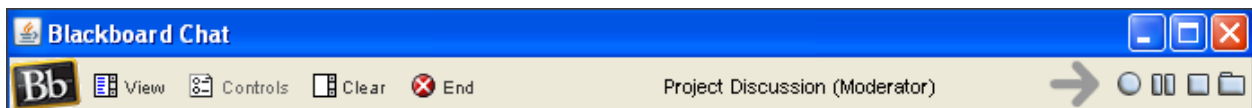







Figure 8

The following table explains the recording functions on the right side of the Action Bar.

▼ Icon	▼ Function on Action Bar
	<p>Click <b>Begins recording</b> to create the transcript. Information is recorded as participants exchange messages. More than one recording can be created per session.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Clicking the <b>Begins recording</b> function again when recording is already in progress will stop the recording.</p>
	<p>Click <b>Pauses Recording</b> to temporarily stop the recording. The chat display panel and the transcript will indicate the recording has been paused. Click it again to resume recording.</p>
	<p>Click <b>Stops Recording</b> to end the recording. Once a chat session has been stopped, it is not possible to add to the recording.</p> <p><b>TIP:</b> If you end a recording in error, simply click the <b>Begins recording</b> function to start another transcript. Title the next recording "Part Two" or "Continued."</p>
	<p>Click <b>Bookmark</b> to add comments to the recording. For instance, make a note that you are about to introduce a new topic. When adding bookmark comments, remember students can view recordings. Bookmarks will appear in a different color than the chat text.</p> <div>  <p><b>View Recording Project Discussion</b></p> <p><b>Tom Stenson:</b> I will record this part for future reference. Aug 17, 2009 2:57:59 PM</p> <p><b>Tony Brown:</b> Great. Less notes. Aug 17, 2009 2:58:11 PM EDT</p> <p><b>Monica Gonzales:</b> Look at bullet four. Aug 17, 2009 2:58:25 PM EDT</p> <p><b>[Tom Stenson inserted bookmark: BULLET FOUR]</b> Aug 17, 2009 2:58:34 PM EDT</p> <p><b>Monica Gonzales:</b> We only found one source we liked. Aug 17, 2009 2:58:59 PM EDT</p> <p><b>Chris Casper:</b> And it isn't that great. I searched and searched. Aug 17, 2009 2:59:11 PM EDT</p> <p><b>Tom Stenson:</b> Did you notice the bib at the end of that article? I'm familiar with the</p> </div>



## Ask Dr. C



In the following table, Dr. C discusses recording chat sessions.

▼ Your question	▼ Dr. C's reply
Why are chat logs important?	Making chat recordings available allow students to review the discussions that transpired and gives those who were not present a chance to find out what took place. It also means students become active participants in creating the course content. This personal contribution can create greater interest in the course, which may lead to more active participation and a greater sense of community among learners.
Can students record a group chat session? If so, how?	Yes, within group collaboration sessions, students have the same abilities to start and stop the recording of the session as the instructor does. All group members have the Moderator role. One of the group members can start recording the session at any time by clicking the <b>Begins recording</b> function.

## Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course.

### Chat recordings

- Access the **Group Saturn** recording, change the name of the recording, and permit participants to view it. **Reminder:** You will not be able to edit the recording properties if you did not access the **Collaboration** tool through the **Control Panel**. You may see **anonymous** instead of the instructor name in the transcript, which can happen when a course is archived and restored.
- Delete one of the recordings in the **Group Jupiter** session.

# Best Practice: Chat for Academic Purposes

Students are often familiar with real-time chat tools, such as AOL Instant Messenger and MSN Messenger, but are accustomed to using them for social correspondence. In the social setting, messages can be composed quickly and without reflection.

Using chat for academic purposes requires planning, structure, and moderation of the discussion. Here are some tips for effectively using chat for academic purposes:

- Decide what your objectives are for using chat. How can it assist learners in achieving the overall goals of the course?
- Inform learners of your expectations for how the tool will be used.
- Outline the rules in your syllabus, such as use of appropriate language, respect for their fellow classmates, and comments relevant to the topic.
- Consider the number of students who can be meaningfully involved in the chat session. The class can be broken into smaller groups to meet separately.
- Prepare a focused topic in advance for each chat session.
- Monitor the dialogue to keep it on topic.
- Establish a protocol so learners will know when another has completed a message. For example, ask learners to add an asterisk (\*) to the end of their last sentences.
- Be aware of users who tend not to participate. Is it due to a technological problem or lack of experience? Some learners can type quickly while others type quite slowly. This may affect the frequency of a learner's participation. Is there a way to draw a student into the discussion?
- Summarize the major points at the end of the chat session.

## 4.0 Keeping Students Informed

Now we will return to the course information tools. You will learn to add information to the tools students rely on to stay on track.

### Learning Outcomes

After completing this section, you will be able to:

- Create announcements
- Manage announcements
- Add a course syllabus
- Add lessons to the syllabus
- Add calendar events
- Add tasks
- Add staff information

# Adding Announcements

Use the **Announcements** tool to provide students with course reminders and updates. Announcements can contain text, images, and multimedia, as well as links to course content. For example, in an announcement reminding students of a chat session, you can provide a link to the session.

Announcements appear in the order posted with the most recent announcement appearing first. You can create permanent announcements, which will appear at the top of the list, before all dated announcements.

**NOTE:** When performing the instructor functions, ensure **Edit Mode** is **ON**.

## ► QUICK STEPS: adding an announcement

1. On the **Control Panel**, under **Course Tools**, select **Announcements**.
2. On the **Announcements** page, click **Create Announcement** on the Action Bar.
3. On the **Create Announcement** page, type a **Subject** and **Message**. Format the **Message** text using the Text Editor functions, if you want.
4. Under **Web Announcement Options**, select **Permanent** or **Date Restricted**.
5. If applicable, select the **Display After** and **Display Until** check boxes and type the dates and times.
6. Optionally, under **Course Link**, click **Browse** to create a link from the announcement to a course item. Select the course item from the pop-up Course Map.
7. Click **Submit**.

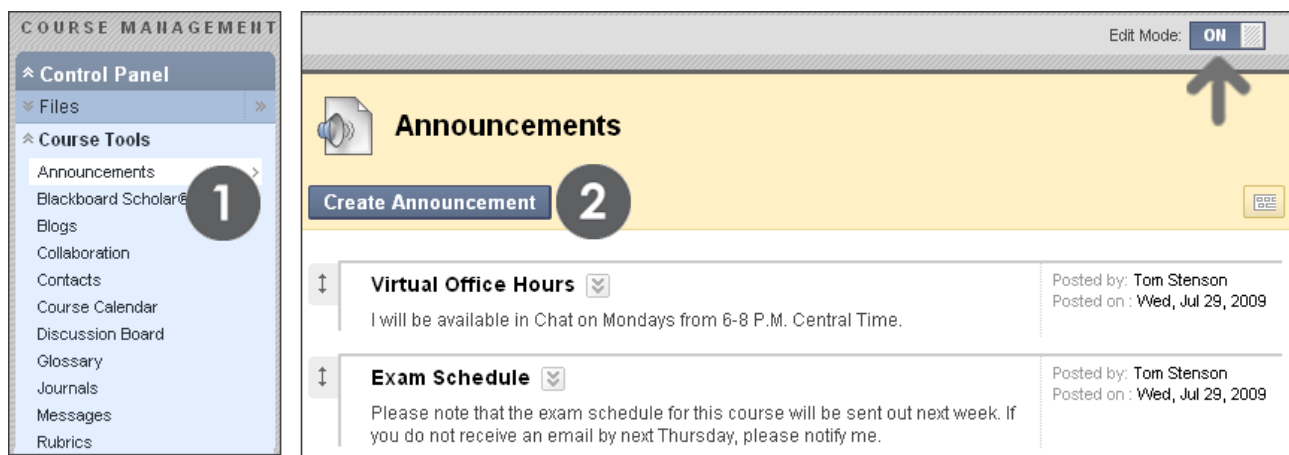


Figure 1.1 – Adding an announcement

**Create Announcement**
7

\* Indicates a required field.
Cancel
Submit

1. Announcement Information

\* Subject 3

Message

Presentation Plans ▼ Black

Visual Editor: ON

Normal
3
Times New Roman

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x<sup>2</sup>

abc
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Your Presentation Plans assignment is due two weeks from today and is worth 50 points. Find more instructions in the link to the Assignments Content Area.

Path: [body](#)

☐ Save as Reusable Object

2. Web Announcement Options

Duration 4

Select Date Restrictions

Override User Notification Settings

☐ Permanent
 5
☒ Date Restricted

☐ Display After
 

07/29/2009

06:39 PM

☐ Display Until
 

07/30/2009

06:39 PM

☐

3. Course Link

Click **Browse** to choose an item. 6

Location /Assignments/Presenta Browse...

Figure 1.2

The **Subject** becomes the title of the announcement on the Announcements page. In the **Message** text box, you can add text, images, multimedia, and links. Content cannot be uploaded directly into the Text Editor, but must be linked to a file in Course Files.

Select the **Override User Notification Settings** check box if you want to send students an email containing the announcement. The email will be sent to all students, even those who chose not to receive announcement notifications through email.

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Communicating with Students

## Student View of the Announcements Page

**Announcements**

SYSTEM COURSE **VIEW ALL**

**B**

**Virtual Office Hours**  
I will be available in Chat on Mondays from 6-8 P.M. Central Time.

**Exam Schedule**  
Please note that the exam schedule for this course will be sent out next week. If you do not receive an email by next Thursday, please notify me.

**Presentation Plans**  
Your Presentation Plans assignment is due two weeks from today and is worth 50 points. Find more instructions in the link to the Assignment Content Area.  
Course Link [Assignments/Presentation Plans](#)

Posted by: Tom Stenson  
Posted on: Wed, Jul 29, 2009

Posted by: Tom Stenson  
Posted on: Wed, Jul 29, 2009

Posted by: Tom Stenson  
Posted on: Wed, Jul 29, 2009

**A**

Figure 1.3

### ► Take Note

- A. A link to an assignment appears under the announcement. Deleting the content will delete the link to the content in the announcement, but the announcement itself will remain.
- B. The announcements appear in the order they were created.

# Managing the Announcements Page

There are three methods for managing announcements:

1. All announcements are visible all of the time, with the most recent on top.
2. Announcements are visible for a specified period of time.
3. Announcements are emailed to students in the course.

## **Option 1: All announcements are visible all of the time, with the most recent on top.**

While creating the announcement, select **Permanent** and make no changes to the display dates.

All announcements will show in the order created, with the most recent on top, for the duration of the course.

## **Option 2: Announcements are visible for a specified period of time.**

While creating the announcement, do not select **Permanent**. Select the **Display After** and **Display Until** check boxes and type the dates.

## **Option 3: Announcements are emailed to students in the course.**

While creating the announcement, select the **Override User Notification Settings** check box.

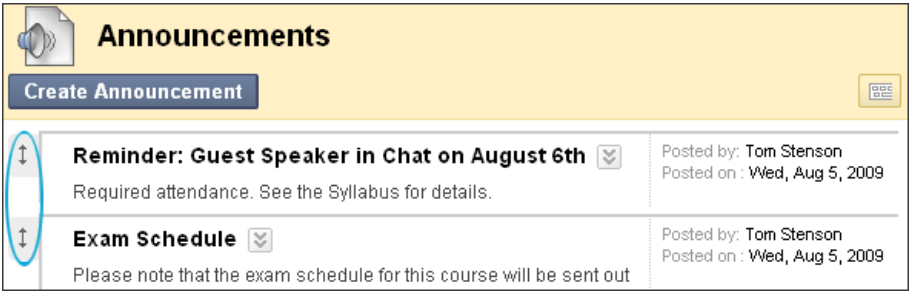
Students in the course will receive an email containing the announcement, ensuring they receive the information, even if they do not log in to the course.



## Ask Dr. C



In the following table, Dr. C answers questions about the Announcements tool.

▼ Your question	▼ Dr. C's reply
I want to change the display order for my announcements, but the newest addition always appears at the top. Can I reorder them?	<p>Permanent announcements always appear at the top of the list, with the most recent first. Dated announcements appear in the order created, following permanent announcements.</p> <p>Instructors can reorder announcements. Use the drag-and-drop function—the double-tipped arrows icon next to each announcement. The Keyboard Accessible Reordering tool on the Action Bar can also be used to reorder announcements. Permanent announcements can be moved below dated announcements and this change will show on the course Announcements page. On the <b>My Institution</b> tab, in the <b>My Announcements</b> module, permanent announcements will always appear first, regardless of the order you establish on the course <b>Announcements</b> page.</p> 
I added an announcement with a Course Link, but the link does not appear in my announcement.	<p>If the link points to a content item that is not available, for instance, the content has date restrictions, the link will not appear in the announcement until the content is available.</p> <p>Depending on the announcement, you can apply the same date restrictions to the announcement as are applied to the content item.</p>

## Hands-on Activity



For this activity, use your Practice Course.

### Use the Announcements tool

- Create an announcement to appear for the duration of the course.
- Create an announcement reminding students of the upcoming test this week.
- Edit an existing announcement's title and change an option.
- Create an announcement and select a date a few days in the future for the **Date After** setting. What happens to this announcement on the main **Announcements** page when viewing with **Edit Mode ON** and **OFF**?

# Adding the Syllabus

The syllabus is an important reference students routinely consult throughout a course.

You can add a syllabus in two ways. You can upload an existing file or use the Blackboard Learn Syllabus Builder. For both options, you add the syllabus to a course area, such as a Content Area, Learning Module, Lesson Plan, or folder.

## Uploading Syllabus Files

You can upload an existing file, such as a syllabus created in Microsoft® Word, PDF, or HTML format. For example, upload your own course syllabus file, as well as department or institution policy documents. The uploaded files appear as links in the course area. We will use a Content Area in our example.

### ► QUICK STEPS: adding an existing syllabus file

1. Access or create the Content Area.
2. On the Content Area's Action Bar, point to **Build Content** to access the drop-down list and select **Syllabus**.
3. On the **Add Syllabus** page, type a **Syllabus Name**.
4. Select the **Use Existing File** option.
5. Browse for the file on your local computer or in **Course Files**.
6. Click **Submit**.
7. On the **Edit Item** page, select a color for the **Syllabus Name**, if you want.
8. Optionally, in the **Text** box, type a description or instructions to appear with the syllabus file link.
9. Under **Attachments**, attach more files, if you want.
10. Optionally, type names for the attached files. If link names are not added, the file names will be used.
11. To make the syllabus available, select the **Yes** option for **Permit Users to View this Content**.
12. Click **Submit**.

**Getting Started** ▾

**Build Content** ▾ **Create Assessment** ▾ **Add Inter**

Create	New Page
> Item	> Content Folder
> File	> Module Page
> Audio	> Tools Area
> Image	
> Video	
> URL	
> Learning Module	
> Lesson Plan	
> Syllabus	
> Course Link	

**Add Syllabus**

\* Indicates a required field.

Cancel Submit

**1. Name**

\* Syllabus Name Introduction to Oceanography Syllabus

**2. Syllabus**

☐ Create New Syllabus


☒ Use Existing File

Attach File

Browse My Computer Browse Course Files

Figure 2.1

**TIP:** Additional files can be attached on the next syllabus page.



## Edit Item

\* Indicates a required field.

Cancel
Submit

**1. Content Information**

\* Name

Color of Name  ▼ Black

Text Visual Editor: ON

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 $x^2$ 

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☷
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📄
✅


The syllabus contains the instructor's contact information, university guidelines and procedures, due dates, instructions for all assignments, and information about group work. You are expected to refer to it for all submitted work.

Path: [body](#)

☐ Save as Reusable Object

**2. Attachments**

Attach File Browse My Computer Browse Course Files

Attached files	File Name	Link Title	File Action
 <a href="#">syllabus.doc</a>	<span style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">syllabus_Fall_2009.doc</span>	Create a link to this file	<a href="#">Mark for removal</a>

☐ Specify metadata for local files

**3. Options**

Permit Users to View this Content ☒ Yes ☐ No

Track Number of Views ☐ Yes ☒ No

Select Date and Time Restrictions

☐ Display After

📅

☐ Display Until

📅

Figure 2.2 – The Edit Item page

## Keeping Students Informed: Adding the Syllabus

If a description or instructions are typed in the Text box, the text will appear in the Content Area following the link to the syllabus file.

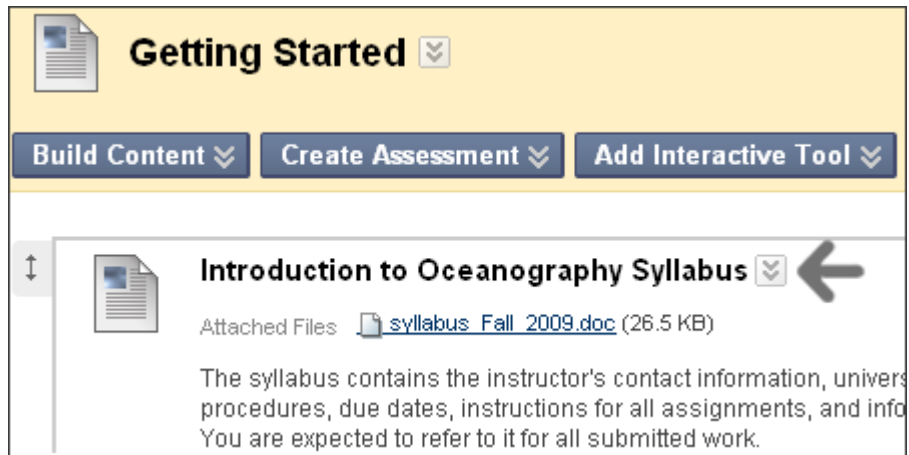


Figure 2.3 – Instructor view of the syllabus file added to the Content Area

Click the syllabus's Action Link to access the contextual menu to upload more files, make changes, or delete the syllabus item.

## Using the Syllabus Builder


You can use the Syllabus Builder to create a comprehensive syllabus in a modular format. The Syllabus Builder contains three sections by default: **Description**, **Learning Objectives**, and **Required Materials**. These section headings can be edited to fit your needs. Further customize the syllabus by adding lesson sections and specifying design information.

### ► QUICK STEPS: using the Syllabus Builder

1. Access or create the Content Area.
2. On the Content Area's Action Bar, point to **Build Content** to access the drop-down list and select **Syllabus**.
3. On the **Add Syllabus** page, type a **Syllabus Name**.
4. Select the **Create New Syllabus** option.
5. Click **Submit**.
6. On the **Syllabus Builder** page, type information in the default **Body** text boxes. Format the text using the Text Editor functions, if you want.
7. Optionally, under **Syllabus Design**, select the **Styles** and **Colors** for the syllabus.
8. Under **Build Lessons**, select the **Create Specified Number of Lesson Shells** option, and type a number.
9. Select the **Yes** option for **Make the Syllabus Available**.
10. Click **Submit**.

The screenshot shows the 'Add Syllabus' form. At the top, there is a yellow header bar with a pencil icon, the title 'Add Syllabus', and a large circle containing the number '5'. Below the header, a legend indicates that an orange asterisk (\*) denotes a required field. To the right of the legend are 'Cancel' and 'Submit' buttons. The form is divided into two main sections: '1. Name' and '2. Syllabus'. In the '1. Name' section, there is a text input field labeled with an orange asterisk and 'Syllabus Name' containing the text 'Introduction to Oceanography Syllabus', with a circle containing the number '3' next to it. The '2. Syllabus' section contains two radio button options: 'Create New Syllabus' (which is selected) and 'Use Existing File'. A circle containing the number '4' is placed next to the 'Create New Syllabus' option.

Figure 2.4


**Syllabus Builder: Introduction to Oceanography Syllabus**

\* Indicates a required field.

**1. Syllabus Information**

\* Syllabus Name

Heading 1

Body 1

6

Visual Editor: **ON**

Normal
3
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abc
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📄
✓

This course will deal with historical and modern concepts of oceanography. It will center upon the research of both early and modern ocean exploration and ocean science. Throughout the course we will investigate how technological advances have aided scientists and marine biologists in their quest to learn more about our oceans. The course will also challenge you to consider important issues related to oceanography by presenting thought-provoking discussion and related assignments.

Path: [body](#)

☐ Save as Reusable Object

Heading 2

Body 2

Visual Editor: **ON**

Normal
3
Arial
**B**
*I*
U
abc
 $x_2$ 
 $x^2$

abc
✓
✂
📄
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↔
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√x
<=>
<>
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✓

Path: [body](#)

☐ Save as Reusable Object

Heading 3

Body 3

Visual Editor: **ON**

Normal
3
Arial
**B**
*I*
U
abc
 $x_2$ 
 $x^2$

abc
✓
✂
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✓

Figure 2.5 – The Syllabus Builder page

You can edit the **Heading** titles to fit your requirements. You can paste information into the **Body** text boxes from an existing document.

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Communicating with Students



## Keeping Students Informed: Adding the Syllabus

The screenshot shows the Blackboard Syllabus Design interface, divided into five numbered sections:

- 2 Syllabus Design**: Contains options for Styles (Document image, Notepad, Modern, Classic, Contemporary, None), Colors (7), Headers and Borders (Dark Weak Cyan), and Text (Black).
- 3 Build Lessons**: Contains options for Create Specified Number of Lessons Shells (8) with a Number of Lessons to Create field set to 5, and Do Not Create Lessons Shells.
- 4 Options**: Contains options for Make the Syllabus Available (9) with Yes/No radio buttons, Track Number of Views (Yes/No), and Choose Date Restrictions (Display After/Until) with calendar icons.
- 5 Submit**: Contains Cancel and Submit buttons.

Figure 2.6

Lesson shells can be created later. You can also select not to create lesson shells.

# Adding Syllabus Lesson Details

When using the Syllabus Builder, you can add lesson details to the syllabus. For example, add information about each unit or each week's lesson. Lesson details appear at the end of the syllabus.

## ► QUICK STEPS: adding syllabus lesson details

1. Access the Content Area where the syllabus has been added.
2. Click the syllabus's Action Link to access the contextual menu.
3. Select **Edit**.
4. On the syllabus page, click a lesson's Action Link.
5. Select **Edit**.
6. On the **Edit Lesson** page, type the lesson title.
7. If applicable, select a date and time when the lesson will appear in the syllabus.
8. In the **Lesson Description** text box, type information. Format the text using the Text Editor functions, if you want.
9. Click **Submit**.

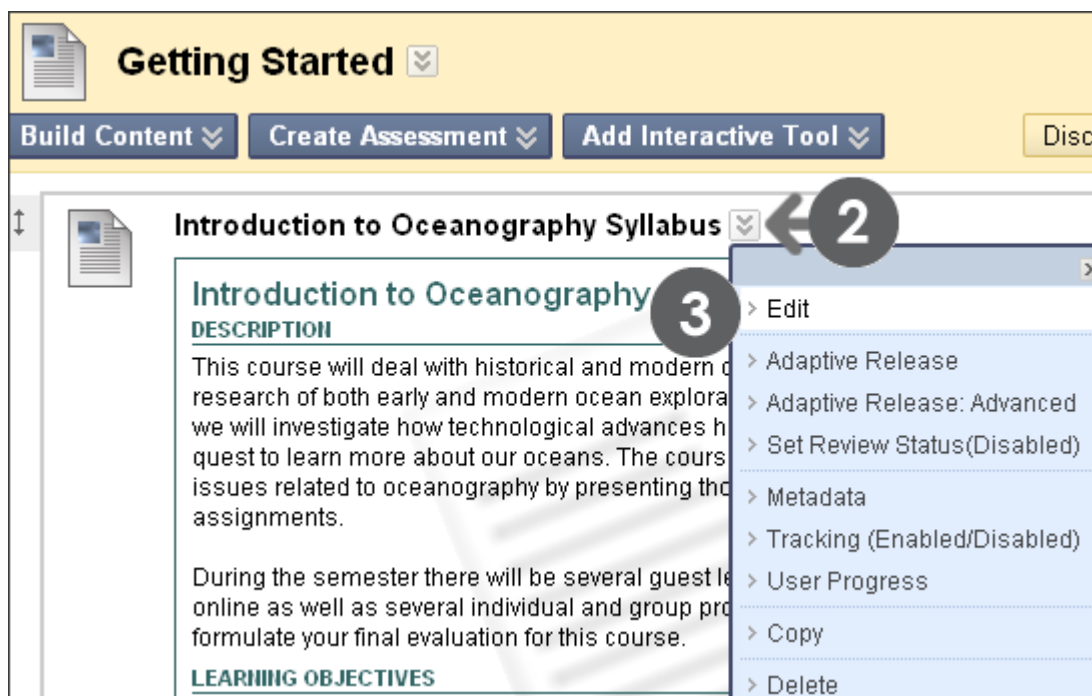


Figure 3.1



Figure 3.2

## Edit Lesson: Introduction to Oceanography Syllabus

9

\* Indicates a required field.

Cancel Submit

### 1. Lessons

\* Lesson Title

Lesson 1: Origin and Morphology of Ocea

6

Color of Name

Black

7

Lesson Date and Time

☒ No Lesson Date

☒ No Lesson Times

Start Time 06:50 PM

End Time 07:50 PM

Lesson Description

Visual Editor: ON

8

- Describe variations in deep ocean relief using proper terminology
- Recognize processes responsible for creating ocean basin features

Figure 3.3

## Editing the Syllabus and Adding Lessons

At any time, you can edit the syllabus information and add lessons.

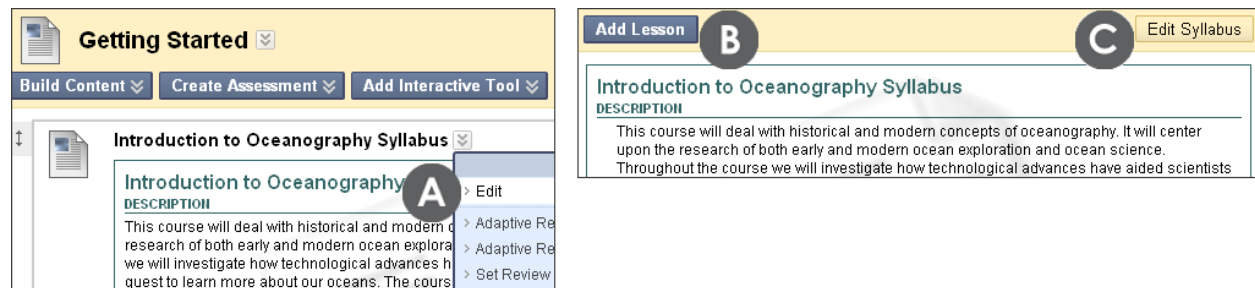


Figure 3.4

### ► Take Note

- A. To edit the syllabus or add lessons, select **Edit** from the syllabus's contextual menu.
- B. If you chose not to add lessons, or want to add more lessons, click the **Add Lesson** function on the Action Bar.
- C. Click the **Edit Syllabus** function on the Action Bar to edit the Syllabus Name, Headings, Body text, Syllabus Design, and Options, such as availability.

## Hands-on Activity



### **Add a syllabus using the Syllabus Builder**

- Select an existing Content Area or create one for your syllabus.
- Create a new syllabus. Complete the default sections and select a design.
- Add three lesson shells.
- Make the syllabus available.
- View your completed syllabus from the Content Area.
- Edit the syllabus to change its availability and add lesson details.

# Best Practice: Customize the Online Syllabus

Students in online courses often feel disoriented without the familiar face-to-face introductory explanations during the first day of class. Besides including the basics in your syllabus about grading criteria, course objectives, and department policies, consider adding procedures distinctive to the online environment. For example, include sections for the schedule, an online map, and a participation contract.

## The Schedule

- List start and end times for units and provide a weekly overview.
- Specify due dates; consider repeating important due dates on the Calendar, in Announcements, or by making the Notification Modules available on the Home Page.
- Provide students with your real-time office hours in Chat.
- Make expectations clear about how often students are to attend class.

## The Map

- Help students use the syllabus as a map or guide to the course. Provide a description of the course layout and where to find each area of the course.
- List special online course procedures, such as where to access lesson material and how to label and submit assignments.
- List where tests are located, and offer practice tests to familiarize students with the interface.

## The Contract

Make participation expectations clear:

- Set a minimum number of postings in the Discussion Board or Chat.
- Let students know you intend to grade on quality, as well as quantity.

Let students know what they can expect from you:

- List your schedule for returning graded work and providing feedback for questions, emails, and discussion posts.
- Let students know how you handle technical difficulties.

## Adding Events to the Calendar

Use the Course Calendar to provide students with dates for important events. Course Calendar events appear to all members of the course. Common entries include upcoming tests, due dates for assignments, or special lectures. Alternatively, you can handle due date notifications through the Notification Modules on the course Home Page.

### ► QUICK STEPS: adding a calendar event

1. On the **Control Panel**, under **Course Tools**, select **Course Calendar**.
2. On the **Course Calendar** page, select a Calendar view: Day, Week, Month, or Year.
3. Click **Create Course Event**.
4. On the **Create Course Event** page, type the **Event Name** and **Event Description**. Format the **Event Description** text using the Text Editor, if you want.
5. Type the **Event Date**. Optionally, click the pop-up **Date Selection Calendar** to select the date.
6. Type the **Event Start Time** and **Event End Time**. Optionally, click the pop-up **Time Selection Menu** to select the times.
7. Click **Submit**.

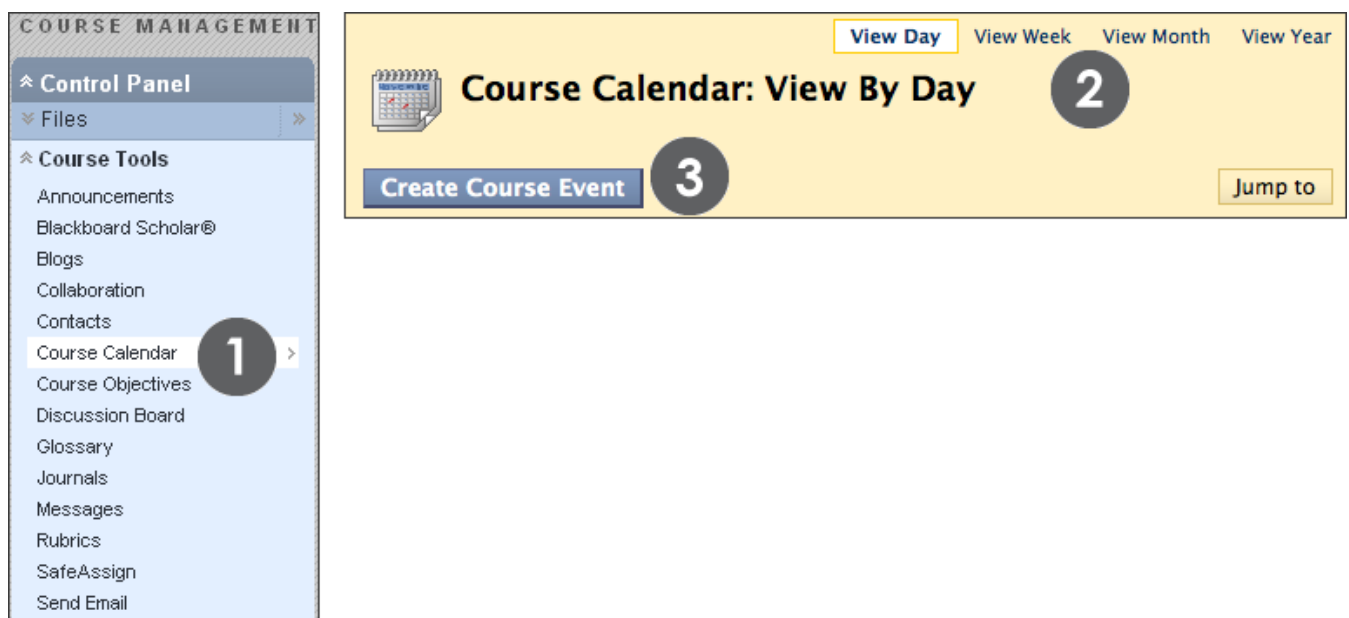



Figure 4.1



## Create Course Event

7

\* Indicates a required field.

Cancel
Submit

**1 Event Information**

**\* Event Name** Research Paper Topic Discussion in Chat

**Event Description** 4

Normal
3 Times New Roman
**B** *I* U abc  $x_2$   $x^2$

abc ✓ ✂ 📄 📁 ↔ ↺ ↻ 🌐 📅 ✎ 🚫 √x ↔ <> 🖨 ✓

📄 📷 📄 📄 📄 📄 📄 📄

If you would like help selecting your Research Paper topic, or need help narrowing down the topic, please attend the special Chat session.

Path: [body](#)

☐ Save as Reusable Object

**2 Event Time**

**Event Date** 10/26/2008 📅

**Event Time**

**Event Start Time** 10:00 AM 🕒

**Event End Time** 11:00 AM 🕒

12:30 AM
✕

01:00 AM  
01:30 AM  
02:00 AM  
02:30 AM  
03:00 AM  
03:30 AM  
04:00 AM  
04:30 AM

Figure 4.2

The Event Name will appear as the link on the Course Calendar. Click the link to display the Event Description. Event Descriptions can include formatted text, links, and images. There is a 4,000 character limit to Event Descriptions.



## Ask Dr. C



In the following table, Dr. C discusses students' personal calendars.

▼ Your question	▼ Dr. C's reply
<p>My students sometimes complain their personal calendar entries have disappeared. How can I help them with this problem?</p>	<p>If students access the calendar while in your course, they will only see the entries you have added. If they access the calendar from the <b>My Institution</b> tab, it includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their personal entries</li><li>• Entries for all courses in which they are enrolled</li><li>• Entries for any organizations in which they are enrolled</li><li>• Institution-wide events</li></ul>

## Hands-on Activity

For this activity, use your Practice Course.

### **Add the following events to the Calendar**

- Add one event to this month's Calendar. Include an **Event Description**.
- Add one event to next month's Calendar.
- View the Calendar by month and year.

# Adding Tasks

Use the **Tasks** tool to create a list of tasks students must complete. For example, for larger projects or assignments, create a task list to help keep students on track throughout the process.

Tasks can be assigned a priority of Low, Normal, or High.

## ► QUICK STEPS: adding a task

1. On the **Control Panel**, under **Course Tools**, select **Tasks**.
2. On the **Tasks** page, click **Create Course Task** on the Action Bar.
3. On the **Create Course Task** page, type the **Task Name** and **Description**. Format the **Description** text using the Text Editor, if you want.
4. Type the **Due Date**. Optionally, click the pop-up **Date Selection Calendar** to select the date.
5. Under **Task Options**, use the **Priority** drop-down list to select the task priority.
6. Click **Submit**.

The screenshot shows the 'Create Course Task' page in Blackboard. On the left, a 'Tasks' sidebar shows a 'Create Course Task' button (callout 2) and 'No items found.' The main area is titled 'Create Course Task' (callout 6) and includes 'Cancel' and 'Submit' buttons. The form is divided into sections: 1. Task Information, 2. Task Options, and 3. Submit. In the 'Task Information' section, the 'Task Name' field (callout 3) contains 'Term Paper Topic'. The 'Description' field (callout 4) contains 'Select your term paper topic. See the syllabus for the due date and specific instr'. Below the description is a 'Path' field with the value 'body' and a 'Save as Reusable Object' checkbox. In the 'Task Options' section, the 'Priority' dropdown menu (callout 5) is open, showing 'Low', 'Normal' (selected), and 'High'. The 'Due Date' field (callout 4) shows '08/09/2009'.

Figure 5.1

## Viewing Tasks

By default, tasks are listed from highest priority to lowest—not by date. To view tasks listed by due date, click the **Due Date** heading. Use the status columns to view how many students have reported their progress or completed a task.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Title	Priority	Due Date	Not Started	In Progress	Completed
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Chapter 3 Worksheet Due</a>	High	Tuesday, August 18, 2009	10	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Term Paper Topic</a>	Medium	Sunday, August 9, 2009	10	0	0
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Optional Chat Review Session</a>	Low	Thursday, August 20, 2009	10	0	0

Figure 5.2

Use a task's contextual menu to edit or delete the task.

## Viewing Task Progress

Click a task title to access the **View Task** page. The **View Task** page displays all students' progress for that task.

1. Task Information	
Task Name	Chapter 3 Worksheet Due
Description	Worksheets and instructions are available in the Assignment
Due Date	Tuesday, August 18, 2009
Priority	High

2. Status	
Alyssa Dubois	Not Started
Andy Farrell	Not Started
Ashby Cooper	Not Started

Figure 5.3

## Hands-on Activity

For this activity, use your Practice Course.

### Use the Tasks tool

- Add a task and assign it a **Priority of Normal**.
- Check student progress for the **Submit Planet Paper Ideas** task.

# Adding Staff Information

Use the **Contacts** tool to create a profile providing students with your contact information, as well as some personal details and a photo.

You can also create folders to organize profiles for your teaching assistants and guest lecturers. Their contact information is added following the same steps. You can organize the items on the **Contacts** page using the drag-and-drop function. Edit or delete information using each item's contextual menu.


**TIP:** The recommended image size is 150 by 150 pixels. If you submit a larger image, some distortion may occur.

## ► QUICK STEPS: adding a profile

1. On the **Control Panel**, under **Course Tools**, select **Contacts**.
2. On the **Contacts** page, click **Create Contact** on the Action Bar.
3. On the **Create Contact** page, type your **Profile Information**.
4. Under **Options**, select the **Yes** option for **Make the Profile Available**.
5. Optionally, attach an image and add a personal Web site.
6. Click **Submit**.



Figure 6.1



## Create Contact

6

\* Indicates a required field.

Cancel
Submit

### 1. Profile Information

Title	<input type="text" value="Instructor"/>
First Name	<input type="text" value="Hannah"/> 3
Last Name	<input type="text" value="Artt"/>
* Email	<input type="text" value="harlt@myschool.edu"/>
Work Phone	<input type="text" value="555-555-2323"/>
Office Location	<input type="text" value="Strand Hall"/> <input type="text" value="Office 718"/> <input type="text" value="abc"/>
Office Hours	<input type="text" value="M and W"/> <input type="text" value="5-10 P.M. CT"/> <input type="text" value="abc"/>
Notes	<input type="text" value="There are no stupid question. We learn by asking. You may lead us down quite an interesting path with your curiosity."/> <input type="text" value="abc"/>

### 2. Options

Make the Profile Available	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No                 4
Current Image	None
Attach Image	5 <input type="text" value="artt_head_shot.jpg"/> <span>Remove</span>
Personal Link	<input type="text" value="http://www.myhomepag"/>

Figure 6.2 – The Create Contact page

## Hands-on Activity

For this activity, use your Practice Course.

### **Use the Contacts tool**

- Create a profile for yourself.
- In the **Notes** section, include some personal information.
- Create a folder for Guest Lecturers.



## 5.0 Workshop Wrap Up

In the following table, the communication and course tools presented in this workshop are listed.

▼ Tool	▼ Use
Announcements	Provides students with course-related news, updates, and reminders
Syllabus	Provides a resource students can consult throughout the course for an outline, objectives, policies, participation, and grading criteria
Calendar	Provides students with course events and reminders
Tasks	Provides students with a list of tasks they must complete
Roster	View a list of course members
Contacts	Provides students with profiles of course staff
Email	Send email to course members' external email addresses
Messages	Send messages that students access within their courses, and ensure privacy for all course members
My Institution tab	Allows students to view information and use tools across courses
Chat	For real-time communication that is simple to use and ideal for students with slower connections

# Spotlight on YOUR Course

We have explored the course tools Blackboard Learn offers for course information and communication, either asynchronously or in real-time. Take a few moments to consider how you can use these tools in your course.

## **Which course information tools will you use?**

- Will you post regular, timely announcements to keep your students up-to-date?
- Will you use an existing syllabus or create one with the Syllabus Builder?
- Will you add all due dates to the Course Calendar? Have you considered making the Course Calendar the course timeline? Alternatively, will you use the Notification Modules to inform students of important dates and deadlines?
- Will you add tasks for your students to complete? Will you require students to report their progress?
- Will you add some personal information to your course Contacts page?

## **Which course communication tools will you use?**

- Will you use the Blackboard Learn Email tool?
- Or is the Messages tool and its additional privacy a better fit for your course?

## **Will you use the real-time communication tools to increase participation?**

- Will you offer real-time office hours in Chat?
- Will you use small group activities in your course and recommend that groups meet in chat sessions? Will you attend these sessions?
- Will you offer chat sessions for questions and concerns?
- Will you offer general chat sessions with no date restrictions so students can meet whenever they like?
- Will you record chat sessions?