Getting Started with Blackboard Learn

Distance Learning
Chapman 701B/C – Virtual Support
mxccdistance@mxcc.commnet.edu
http://mxcc.edu/distance
(860) 343-5756

Workshop Web Site – workshop schedule
https://mxcc.edu/techbootcamp or https://mxcc.edu/ett
Blackboard Basic Features

- An Internet-based course management system used for
  - Online classes
  - A supplemental tool for on campus classes

- Content Tools
  - Class materials: syllabus, lecture notes, key terms, summary, assignments, homework, etc.

- Communication Tools
  - Internal e-mail, discussion board, announcements, calendar, and collaboration.

- Assessment Tools
  - Online tests
  - Assignment drop boxes
  - Grade book
Logon to Blackboard Learn via myCommNet

- Go to my.commnet.edu and enter your NetID and password.
  - NetID: BannerID@mxcc.commnet.edu
    - Example of NetID: 09109109@mxcc.commnet.edu
    - Look up your NetID: http://supportcenter.ct.edu/netid
    - Password: 8-digit NetID password
  - The same password to access a campus computer and your e-mail at portal.microsoftonline.com.

- If you have never logged on to a campus computer or accessed your college email at portal.microsoft.com then use your initial password.
  - Initial Password:
    - 1st three letters of birth month with first letter capitalized
    - Ampersand character: &
    - Last 4 digits of SS#
    - Example:
      - John Brown was born in April of 1968 and the last four-digit of his SS# is 9583.
      - His initial password is Apr&9583

- Change password:
  - When you log on the first time, you will be prompted to change to a new password.
    - At least 8 characters in length
    - At least 3 of the 4 following criteria: 1. Upper case letters, 2. lower case letters, 3. numbers, or 4. special characters.

Having trouble logging on?
Contact IT service in Wheaton Hall or call (860) 343-5711.
Accessing Blackboard

• You must first log on to my.commnet.edu using your NetID and password.

• Click on the Blackboard icon at upper right corner.
After you have clicked on the Blackboard icon, you land on the “My Institution” page.

List of courses:
- Courses you teach or enrolled as a student at any of 12 CT community colleges.
- Course Design and Delivery Competencies: Instructions and tutorials of Blackboard features.

My Help/Training
- Help desk and tutorials for faculty and students.

Faculty and Staff please note!
The Faculty Blackboard Learn Faculty Resource Center course has been retired and replaced with a brand new course that faculty can use for just-in-time training!

Course Design and Delivery Competencies (self-paced course)
The course is redesigned and updated with the latest information. Check it out on the bottom of your Course List under - Courses where you are: Student
Hide/Show Course Titles in My Institution

- You may hide courses listed in “My Institution” page.
- Click on the setting icon.

Hide Courses
- Uncheck the courses you would like to hide. Click on Submit.

Show Courses
- Check the courses you would like to Show. Click on Submit.
MxCC Template for On Campus Classes

- The MxCC template
  - Announcement, Syllabus, Course Content, Messages, Discussions, My Grades
  - Help & Tech Support: Help contact, support services, tutorials, training, etc.
  - Academic Resources
  - Research Support
Blackboard Learn Layout

Expand or collapse the Course Menu.

View the course as Students

Expand or collapse the Course Menu.
Course Menu

- In Course Menu, there are tools and links.
  - Tools: announcements, discussions, my grades
  - Content Area: Getting Started, Syllabus, Course Content, Help & Tech Support, Academic Resources
- Icons next to a link
  - Hidden
  - No content
  - Action icon
    - Rename, show/hide, delete
  - Reorder
Content Areas (Folders)

- Add files and tools: Syllabus, Course Content, Help & Tech Support
Steps of Adding a MS Word Syllabus

If your syllabus is MS Word file with simple format and no images, the simplest way to add your syllabus is to copy and paste the text from the MS Word document to Blackboard Learn.

- Step 1, Navigate to the Syllabus link in the Course Menu and open the Text Editor in the Syllabus item.
- Step 2, Open the MS Word syllabus file and copy all text in the syllabus to a clipboard.
- Step 3, Paste the text into the Text Editor of Syllabus item and Submit.
- Step 4, Review and Edit the Syllabus in Blackboard Learn.
Add a MS Word Syllabus: Step 1

- Leave Edit mode as On.
- In Syllabus - Content Area
  - Click on the “Syllabus” link in Course Menu. Go to the Action icon next to the Syllabus Item and select “Edit”.

Minimize the Blackboard window by clicking on the Minimize icon at upper right corner of the page. By doing this, it helps you locate your syllabus file and open it in MS Word.
Add a MS Word Syllabus: Step 2

- Open the MS Word syllabus file and copy all text in the syllabus to a clipboard.
  - Locate your syllabus file and double click on it to open the file in MS Word.
  - To select all text, press **Ctrl and A** keys together. Or highlight all text in the syllabus file.
  - Click on “Copy” icon to copy the selected text to a Clipboard. Another way to copy the selected text is to press **Ctrl and C** keys together. The selected text is then copied to the Clipboard.
Add a MS Word Syllabus: Step 3

- Paste text into the Text Editor of Syllabus item and submit.
  - Click on the Blackboard Learn tab at the bottom of the window to bring the Blackboard page back.
  - Right-click on the Text Editor textbox and select “Paste”. Or you may point at an area in the textbox in Text Editor and press CTRL and V keys together to paste the text to the textbox.
Add a MS Word Syllabus: Step 4

- **Review and Edit the Syllabus in Blackboard Learn.**
  - To review the syllabus you just copied; go to Edit Mode and click On to turn it off. When Edit Mode is in Off, you will view your course in student’s perspective.
  - Click on the “Syllabus” link in Course Menu. You will see your syllabus. Examine the layout and formatting of your syllabus.
  - If you would like to make editing in your syllabus, turn Edit Mode back on by clicking on Off.
  - You will click on the Action icon next to the Syllabus Item and select “Edit”. Edit the text and click on “Submit” again.

![Syllabus interface in Blackboard Learn](image)
Files in Blackboard Learn

- You can upload files in Blackboard Learn. Before upload any files, you will:
  - Classify the files by function, learning units, or weeks. For examples:
    - Study Guides
    - Lecture Notes
    - Week1, Week 2, etc.
    - Unit 1, Unit 2, etc.
  - In Course Content, you may create file folders first and then add files to each associated folder.
    - .PPT files, two formats – printing friendly (.ppt) and reading friendly (.pdf)
    - Use short file names for mobile friendly reading.
  - You may add a content area in the Course Menu and upload files.
Create a Content Folder

- Click on Course Content to view the content area.
  - Go to Build Content and select Content Folder.
  - Type a name and click on Submit.
  - For mobile friendly, use a short title without a symbol for a content folder.

![Image of Build Content page showing how to create a content folder](image-url)
Add the Files to a Folder

- Click on the folder link “Study Guides” to enter the folder page.
- Go to “Build Content” and select “File”.
- At next page, click on “Browse My Computer”.
- Locate the file you would like to upload and double-click on it.
- Click on “Submit”.
- You will use the same steps to add any type of files in Blackboard Learn.
- You may add a web link, course link, a discussion board, an assignment dropbox, a test, or an URL in the content folder.
PDF Files in Blackboard Board

- For MS Word files with images, special characters, and complex formatting, you may convert it to .pdf.
- For MS PowerPoint or MS Excel files, you may convert them to .pdf.
- In MS Word, MS PowerPoint, or MS Excel, open the file.
  - Go to File and select Save As. Select .pdf in File Type. Click on Save.

- Add a PDF file uses the same steps as adding a MS Word file.
Edit Files and Reload Files

- If you need to make revision in a file such as MS Word or MS PowerPoint file, you will edit it off line and save the updated file.
- To reload the file, please follow the steps:
  - Under Control panel, click on “Content Collection”. Click on your course title such as “2090.117206”.
  - Navigate to the directory where the original file locates.
  - Click on the icon next to the file, select “Overwrite File”.
  - Click on “Choose File”. Locate the file on your computer and double-click on the file.
  - Click on “Submit”.

![Content Collection Panel](image)

![File Information Panel](image)
Use Item and Blank Page in Blackboard

- For MS Word files with simple format, you may copy/paste text to an Item or a Blank Page.
  - Students are able to view the text immediately – convenient for students.
  - You are able to edit the text online – save your time in editing.
- We highly suggest professors teaching online courses to use either Item or Blank Page for MS Word based files.
  - Item: students will see the content directly.
    - Use an Item for a Header or a footer.
  - Blank Page: it is like a “hyperlink”, need to click on the page title to view the content.
    - Use a Blank Page for instructions, notes, etc.

- Practice
  - Add an item and copy text.
  - Add a blank page and copy text.
Add a Link in Course Menu

- You can add various links in the Course Menu.
  - Content Area
  - Module Page
  - Blank Page
  - Tool Link
  - Web Link
  - Course Link – any link within the course.
  - Subheader
  - Divider
Announcements

- Click on **Create Announcement** button.
- Type the Subject and the Message.
- Choose Not Date Restricted or select a date to release.
- Click on Submit.

* Indicates a required field.

1. Announcement Information
   - Subject: Greetings
   - Message:
     Welcome! The class starts on Wednesday, August 28th. Please read the syllabus and purchase the textbook.

2. Web Announcement Options
   - Duration: Not Date Restricted
   - Date Restricted
     - Select Date Restrictions

3. Course Link
   - Click Browse to choose an item.
   - Email Announcement
   - Send a copy of this announcement
   - Location

- Post an announcement immediately
- Post an announcement on a set schedule
- Link the announcement to a Course Link
Edit/Delete/Reorder an Announcement

- As default, an announcement posted in the past 7 days will be shown under the Course Name in “My Institution” page.
- The newly posted announcement is listed at the top.
- To edit an announcement,
  - Click on the Action icon of the announcement and select Edit.
  - Edit the text and click Submit.
- To delete an announcement,
  - Click on the Action icon of the announcement and select Edit.
  - Edit the text and click Submit.
- To reorder an announcement,
  - Point at the reordering icon of a message and drag it to the order where you would like it to be.
Messages – Internal Mail

- Messages tool in Blackboard is an internal mail tool: only enrolled students and the instructor can email to each other. It is mainly used for private communication between a student and an instructor or among students.
- In the MxCC template, the message tool is labeled as “Mail”. In default, the Mail link is hidden from students.
- To use the Messages tool, you will need to show the “Mail” link.
- Move the mouse next to the right of “Mail” link. You will see the Option icon. Click on the icon, you will see the menu options for the “Messages” link.
- Select “Show Link”.

![Screen capture showing the Option icon and the menu options for the Messages link.]
Internal Mail – Messages – Send a Message

- Send an email to a student.
- Click on the Messages link, “Mail”.
- Click on “Create Message”.

Course Messages

Course Messages are private and secure text-based communication that occurs within a course and among course members. Although similar to email, users must be logged into the course to read and send messages. More Help

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Unread</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inbox</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Internal Mail – Messages: Send a Message

- Click on “To” box. You will see a list of students and your name.
- Choose a student and click on the “->” to bring the student name to Recipients.
- Type a Subject in the subject box.
- Type your message in the Message box.
- Click on “Submit”.

Compose Message

Messages are private and secure text-based communication that occurs within a Course and among Course members. Although similar to email, users must be logged into the Course to read and send Messages. More Help

* Indicates a required field.

1. Recipients

   - To

   ![Recipient List]

   ![Recipient List]

2. Compose Message

   - Subject
   - Body

   ![Compose Message]

   Welcome to this class. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me. Thanks!
Internal Mail – Messages: Read a Message

- Messages will be delivered to Inbox. But there is no alert next to the Messages link in Course Menu.
- Click on the Subject link to open a message.

- If there is a file attached, click on the file link. A dialog box pops up.
  - Choose Open to open the file. Click OK to confirm.
  - Choose Save to save the file to your computer. Click OK to confirm.
Messages: Delete, Create a Sub-Folder, Move

- In Inbox page, click on the Action box next to a message:
  - Delete: delete the message.
  - Mark Read: mark the message as read.
  - Mark Unread: mark the message has not been read.

- In Messages page, click on Create Folder. Type the folder name and click on “Submit”.
  - You may move a message:
    - Click on the Action menu at a message subject line.
    - Select Move.
    - Choose the Folder to which moved.
    - Click on “Submit”.
Email – External mail

- Email tool in Blackboard Learn is External Mail. If you use Email tool, mails will be delivered to student’s College Email address.
- A professor may need to use Email to communicate with students who have not logged on to Blackboard. You may do so in Grade Center.
  - In Control Panel, click on Full Grade Center.
  - Check a student’s last name.
  - Go to Email and select Email Selected Users.
  - Type the Subject and Message.
  - Click on **Submit**.
Discussions and Examples

- Learning can be enhanced through engaging active interactions among learners.
- All online courses at MxCC use discussion boards as one of learning activities for students.
- Discussions in Blackboard allow students to post messages at different time at various locations.
  - Examples for on-ground courses:
    - Sociology and Education
      - Continuation of group discussions after classes
    - Medical Terminology
      - Jeopardy game to learn medical terms.
    - Psychology
      - Respond to the instructor’s questions.
      - Respond to at least 2 student answers.
    - Human Service
      - Assign discussion buddies: pair up students and they respond to each other’s questions.
Discussions - Create a Forum

- Make Discussions link available.
  - In Course Menu, move the mouse over “Discussions” link. Click on the Option icon next to Discussions link. Click on “Show Link”.

- In Course Menu, click on Discussions link.
- Click on Create Forum.
- Type a name and description.
- In Forum Availability
  - Yes – available
  - Choose display date, end date.
  - If the forum is graded, check Grade Discussion Forum and type a point value.
  - Click on “Submit”.

Discussion Board

Forums are made up of individual discussion threads that can be organized to discuss topics. More Help

Create Forum

Delete

Forum Availability

Available [ ] Yes [ ] No

Enter Date and Time Restrictions

Display After [ ]
Enter dates as mm/dd/yyyy. Time may be entered in any increment.

Display Until [ ]
Enter dates as mm/dd/yyyy. Time may be entered in any increment.

Grade

[ ] No Grading in Forum

[ ] Grade Discussion Forum: Points possible: 10
Discusion Forum Setting

- For a discussion forum, you are able to reorder, change settings, delete, Manage student roles, copy, and delete.
  - Click on the Action icon next to a forum,
    - Edit: change forum name, description, grade points, etc.
    - Reorder the forum.
    - Grade the forum.
    - Copy or Delete.
    - Manage: Change student role to Readers – students can only read messages but unable to post. This setting serves as “locking” a forum after its deadline.
Post a Message in Discussion Forum

- Enter a discussion forum by clicking on the Forum Name.
- Click on “Create Thread”.
- Type the message subject.
- Type the message.
- If you wish to attach a file, click on “Browse My Computer”. Locate the file on your computer and double click on it. Click on Submit.
- Click on “Submit”.

![Create Thread](image_url)

![Attachments](image_url)
Operations on a Discussion Message

- In List View, click on the Action icon next to a message. You are able to do the following operations:
  - Collect – see the message and replied message.
  - Delete.
  - Mark as Read/Unread
  - Hide, Make Unavailable
  - Publish
  - Lock/Unlock
“List View” of Discussion Messages

- In Course Menu, click on Discussions link. Forums are displayed with Description, Total Posts, Unread Posts, and Total Participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forum</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Total Posts</th>
<th>Unread Posts</th>
<th>Total Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questions and Answers</td>
<td>Post your questions about this class here.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 - Introductions</td>
<td>Tell us a little about yourself, why you are in school, why you take this course, your expectations about the course, what your career goals are etc. Share</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Click on a Forum Name to enter the forum. As “default”, 25 messages are displayed in List View. The messages are in chronological order with the most recent at the top. Click on Display and select Show All to show all messages.
If you choose “Tree View” in a Discussion Forum page, you will see the messages in “thread.”

When there is a reply to a message, it creates a “thread”. In a thread of messages, you will see how the messages associate with each other.

A thread of messages is indicated by a “+” next to the Subject line of the initial message.

To view a thread with the initial message and replies, you will click on the Subject line of the initial message. Then click on the subject lines of replied messages.
Discussions-Read/Reply to a Message

- Click on a message Subject to read the message.
- To reply, click on Reply button. Type your message and click on “Submit”.

![Image of a discussion forum interface with a thread titled Hello and a reply by Instructor Yi (Test Student) Guan-Raczkowski. The interface includes options for thread actions, collect, delete, and message actions such as reply, quote, edit, and delete.]
Discussions – Edit or Delete a Message

- To edit a message you posted.
  - Click the message Subject to open the message.
  - Click **Edit Message** button.
  - Make revision
  - Click **Submit**.

- Delete a message
  - Click on Delete when you open a message.

“Email Author” will send an email to the author’s external email account. For students, it will be their college email account.
Assignment Dropbox - Planning

- An assignment dropbox is used to collect projects or papers.

Planning
- Each assignment will use a dropbox.
- Decide the number of assignments you will be collecting.
- Decide where you would like the dropboxes to locate.
- Write down the instruction for each of the assignments.

Example: Create a page named “Essays”. Put all essay assignment dropboxes in the page.
Assignment Dropbox - Example

- Create the page in which the assignment dropboxes are located.
- In Course Menu, create a link, “Essays”.
  - Click on Add Item icon, “+”.
  - Select “Create Content Area”.
  - Type the name of the link, “Essays”.
  - Check “Available to Users”.
  - Click on “Submit”.
- The new link will be placed at the bottom in Course Menu.
- Drag the reorder icon to reposition the Essays link.
Create an Assignment Dropbox

- In Course Menu, click on the “Essays” link.
- Under Assessment, choose “Assignment”.
- Type the name and brief instruction.

Create Assignment

Assignments are a form of assessment that adds a column to the Grade Center. Use the Grade Center to assign grades and give feedback to each student. More Help.

* Indicates a required field.

1. Assignment Information

   ✴ Name and Color
   
   Essay
   
   Black

Instructions

Submit your argument essay in .rtf or .doc format. Refer to the syllabus for instructions.
Assignment Dropbox

- Enter the grade points in Points Possible.

- **Availability vs. Due Date**
  - **Availability – Display Until**
    - After the date set in Display Until, students are unable to see the Assignment link.
  - **Due Date**
    - After the set due date, students are able to see the assignment link and submit their work. However, their work is labeled as late.
Grade Center

- Last Access: show a time stamp of when a student last time accessed the course.
- The grade columns carried over from graded discussion forums, assignment dropboxes, and tests.
- Under “Control Panel”, click on “Grade Center”.
- Click on Full Grade Center. You will see the columns:
  - Student names, Last Access
  - Columns for Discussion Forums
  - Columns for Assignments – use Inline Grading
    - no need to download and upload papers.

Grading

- You are able to access grading page directly in Grade Center.
- If a student submit an assignment, you will see “!”.
- Click the Action icon for the assignment and select View Grade Details.
- Click Grade Attempts to enter the grading page.
Copy Course Content

- You are able to copy selected content or entire course to another course.
- You will need to first go to your “source” course from which you need the content.
- Go to “Control Panel”, under “Packages and Utilities”, select “Course Copy”.
- Choose “Browse”, find the “destination” course which you want to copy content to.
- Select the components or tools you would like to copy. Do not check “Getting Started, MXCC Help, Blackboard Resources, Academic Support, and Faculty Resources” since these four pages are already built in MxCC’s courses. If you have graded discussions, tests, and assignments, you need to check “Grade Center Settings” option.
- Click on “Submit”. 
Faculty - Learning Blackboard Learn

- Group training
  - Training schedules are posted at https://mxcc.edu/techbootcamp
  - https://mxcc.edu/ett

Online Training - learn on your own
- In My Institution page, click on the training class named as "Course Design and Delivery Competencies: Course Design and Delivery Competencies (self-paced course)"
  - Instructor: Tobi Krutt, Tobi Krutt, Francine Skalicky
  - Announcements:
    - This is a SELF-PACED TRAINING COURSE for faculty
    - About the "Course Design and Delivery Competencies" course

- Additional instructions on Blackboard – How-to-Documentation
  - http://mxcc.edu/distance/faculty-online-teaching/how-to-documentation/

- Faculty Remote Learning Resources
  - https://www.ct.edu/facultypd
    - More system wide training
    - CSCU Technology Youtube Channel
    - One-on-One Faculty Peer Tutoring Network
Inform Your Students

- You **MUST** inform your students when you start using Blackboard for your on-ground course.
- Students will log on to Blackboard via MyCommNet just like Faculty. For Students, NetID is BannerID@student.commnet.edu. Initial password and change of password apply the same rule as Faculty.
- At various computer labs, there are “bookmarks” and instructions to direct students on how to log on to MyCommNet.
- Blackboard resources can be found at
  - [http://mxcc.edu/distance](http://mxcc.edu/distance) – Blackboard Tutorials
Tutorials and Orientations
- Blackboard Tutorials
  http://mxcc.edu/distance2/orientation
- Blackboard FAQs
  http://mxcc.edu/distance2/orientation/faq.shtml
- Campus Orientation
  https://mxcc.edu/distance/campus-orientation
- The above three pages are linked in all MxCC Blackboard shells – Help & Tech Support page

- https://mxcc.edu/ttfs - Tech Trail for Students
- Schedule an appointment Distance Learning
- (860-343-5756), mxccdistance@mxcc.commnet.edu
- Technical Support Center – 24 x 7
  - 860-723-0221
  - https://ccsu.edusupportcenter.com
Technical Help in Blackboard Learn

- **Distance Learning/Educational Technology**
  - Chapman 701b/701C, Middletown Campus – schedule an appointment
  - (860) 343-5756
  - mxccdistance@mxcc.commnet.edu
  - Monday – Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

- **Technical Support Center**
  - [http://websupport.ct.edu](http://websupport.ct.edu)
  - 860-723-0221 – 24/7/356