



Communicating with Students – Sample Messages

Use the sample announcements that follow as templates to tweak or to give you an idea for announcements that will suit your course. Including a greeting and closing is one way to reaffirm your presence, inject your personality, and set the tone for the announcement.

Getting Started

One Week Before Class Begins:

Welcome to [name of course here]!

I'm [your name], your instructor. This What's New area is your source for course information and updates. Check this area each time you log into Blackboard as I will update it frequently.

Our course doesn't start until [official start date], but you can select "START HERE Module" below to see our syllabus, schedule, and other important documents.

Here are my "3 Keys to Success" for Blackboard:

1. Never use Internet Explorer, Edge, or Safari to access Blackboard. Google Chrome works the best!
2. Always use the My Mail tab to send course messages to me.
3. Always compose written responses in a Word document and save frequently. Then copy and paste into Blackboard.

Message me if you have questions about this. I want you to get off to a good start!

Best,

[your name]

First Day Class Begins:

Hello! Welcome to [name of course here]!

I'm [your name], your instructor. This What's New area is your source for course information and updates. Check this area each time you log into

Blackboard as I will update it frequently.

Before you begin any course work, select "START HERE Module" below to see our syllabus, schedule, and other important documents. Your first assignment is to review everything in the START HERE Module thoroughly. Then, you can select Module 1 and begin the course work there.

If you are unfamiliar with navigating Blackboard, you can select the link in the Navigating Blackboard item to see some videos on Blackboard basics.

Best,

[your name]

Start Here Module/Quiz Reminder:

Update [insert date]:

The first week is flying by! I've already met some of you via the Introductions discussion board, but others of you still have not introduced yourself. Remember that initial posts are always due by Wednesday.

Information about discussions and other assignments can be found in the syllabus, which you must read closely along with the rest of the Start Here Module.

If you have not worked through the Start Here Module yet, do this quickly so you can start the Module 1 course work ASAP. If you have trouble navigating Blackboard, check out the Navigating Blackboard video playlist.

Explaining your Role in Discussions:

As we start using Discussions for more than introductions, I want to give you some examples that will help you understand what my role is in our class discussions.

1. In the public area, I am a **moderator**, like they have for political debates. I pose an initial question (the prompt). Then I stand back and let you all discuss. I will not carry the whole discussion.
2. I can also pose questions to each of you based on your ideas. I may even ask you to clarify something. I may not do this to everyone, every time, but I will try to point out these areas of focus via this announcements area so we can all benefit.
3. Behind the scenes (meaning in your grading area) is the only place

I will be like a **director** and give you feedback to do with your grades or your performance. The rubric will help you know what areas you need to improve in, and my comments will give you more specific direction.

Remember that I will be looking at and interacting with your responses as you post them, but I will not be able to grade and give you direction until you have submitted your post and two peer-responses. I will have discussions graded within a three days of peer-responses being due.

Message me with questions!

Reminder Announcements

Module Access Reminder:

Want to know one behavior of successful online students?

Get into the Module ASAP! Then read the Assignment Checklist closely. Look through the various materials and assignments to make sure you have access to them.

This will not only prevent last minute panic if you cannot find or access something, but it will also help you plan and give you time to ask questions.

This is one of the things I see successful students do time and again!

Syllabus Changes:

Update [insert date]:

Hi All,

Just letting you know that there has been a change to the syllabus/schedule. [Explain the change]. If you have questions about this, please send me a course message.

Best,

[your name]

Due Date Reminders:

Update [insert date]:

Just a reminder that your [name of assignment] due date is approaching. Remember that technology issues are no excuse for missing the due date. Do not wait until the last minute to submit in case you do have issues.

The due date is [enter date and time]. Please send me a course

message if you have questions about this assignment or date.

Best,

[your name]

Break Reminder:

Update [insert date]:

[insert holiday or break name here] is right around the corner! Have you checked your grades? Are you caught up on reading? Do you have questions about assignments due when we return?

The rest of the semester will fly by when we get back and we still have new ground to cover as well as major projects due. Take a minute to plan and think about the rest of the semester. Do you need to do some work over break to get back on track?

Please let me know now if you have questions as I may not respond as immediately as usual. Send questions through Course Mail, or post to the Class FAQ forum if you think it will benefit the class. Have a great [name of break]!

Be safe and smart because I want to see you all back here on [return date].

Encouraging Interaction

Sharing Resources:

Update [insert date]:

Hey Everyone,

As we are moving into Module #, I thought this website about [topic] might be useful. It has some good tips for time management and studying. It isn't mandatory, but I highly recommend checking it out!

Have a good day,

[your name]

Discussion Re-Direct:

Update [insert date]

I was looking at your discussion responses today, and there are few interesting ones that I want to point out. [student name] brought up an interesting point about [insert point], and [student name] included a great resource about [insert topic].

If you haven't taken a look at these and the other posts yet, make sure you get in there and check them out. Ask yourself how your perspective fits into the conversation.

Remember, this is how you find the material to create good responses— if you agree or disagree, explain why with your own rational, supported explanation. Remember Respect and Tone!

Best,

[your name]

Using the Rubric:

If you haven't noticed yet, I grade most of the written work in the course using a rubric specific to that assignment. Just as you can see the rubric when you see your grade for the assignment, you can see the rubric **before** you do the assignment.

That means you can know exactly what the expectations are for mastery with each assignment.

If you select the My Grades tab, you can access the rubric for assignments by selecting the View Rubric link after the assignment name. Assignments that do not have rubrics will not have that link. If you have questions, don't forget to post to the Class FAQ Forum!

Finishing Up

Course Evaluations:

Update - Course Evaluations are Now Open (get 10 points extra credit):

You can now complete the course evaluations. Remember that these are completely anonymous. I do not have access to them until after final grades are entered.

More importantly, this is your way to give feedback. I really need your input to help me improve the course, so take the time to do this.

All you need to do is select the Course Evaluations tab from the main Navigation menu on the left. Answer the questions and provide feedback. The bonus is that, if you take a screenshot of the completion screen and send it to me via Course Message or my direct email, I will add 10 extra points to one of your assignments.

If you have already completed it and didn't take a screenshot, message me ASAP! Thank you so much for taking this survey and helping me improve the course!

Last Week of Class:

Last Week of Class Update:

The end of class is only a week away. Are you where you need to be to finish up successfully? Have you started studying for the final? Look at the course schedule in the syllabus to make sure you know the dates, times, and expectations for the remaining assignments. Here are the items due this week:

- [assignment name and due date]
- [assignment name and due date]
- [assignment name and due date]

In order to finish strong, make sure you are aware of all due dates and block out time to study well for the final.

If you have questions about these assignments, reach out to me NOW. Do not wait until the due date to get the answers you need to complete the assignment.

You got this!

[your name]