An Introduction to Blackboard for Faculty
## *Part I: Organization and Navigation of Blackboard*

This guide explains how to access Blackboard and gives a quick overview of Blackboard's main functions and organizational structure. You will learn how to access Blackboard (Step 1), how to navigate your Blackboard's home page (Step 2), how to toggle between "Student" and "Instructor" views (Step 3), and how to navigate the course's content areas (Steps 4-6). You will also get an overview of various Blackboard tools, such as "Assignments" (Steps 7-8), Course Tools and "My Grades" (Step 9), the Discussion Board (Steps 10-11), the Text Editor (Step 12) and finally, how to navigate the course site using "breadcrumbs" (Step 13).

| Step 1	
Go to www.portal.cuny.edu. The following options for accessing Blackboard are available: A. Enter your Username and Password in the fields provided and click "Log-In." This admits you to the CUNY portal, where you can then access Blackboard by clicking on the "Blackboard" link under "Applications / Resources" (see inset). B. Clicking on "Alternative Blackboard Login" will take you directly to Blackboard after entering your username and password in the pop-up window. C. Hover over the "LOG-IN" link in the upper-right part of the screen to access various tools from the drop-down menu, including Blackboard. This option is available from any webpage starting with www.cuny.edu.	
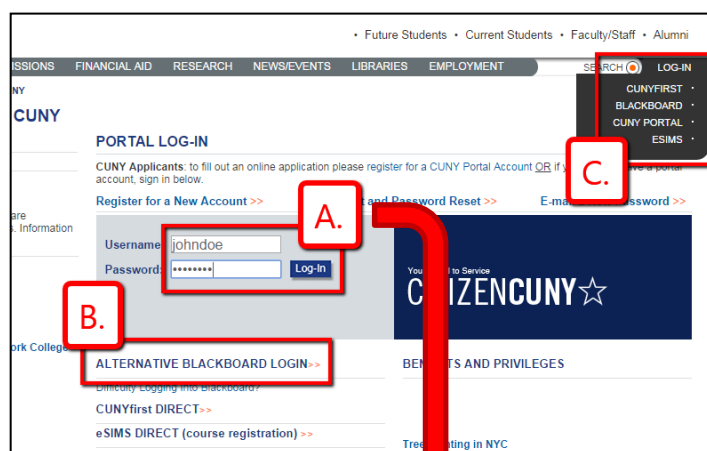
Step 2

The Blackboard home page contains a number of customizable modules* and navigational tools. Here is an overview of the most frequently used elements of the home page:

A. "My Courses" module: Course links are located in the "My Courses" module. Click on a course link to access that course's site.

B. "Tools": You can access a number of useful Blackboard tools here, including Calendar, Announcements, or My Grades (for students).

C. "Global Navigation Menu": By clicking your username in the upper-right part of the screen, you can access a menu of recently visited courses and organizations, along with all course activity notifications.

D. "My Blackboard" (see detail): The Global Navigation Menu lists six menu items on the left linking to the following areas or tools within Blackboard: My Blackboard Home, Posts, Updates, My Grades, Retention Center, and Calendar. Clicking on one of these icons will display recent activity from all courses and organizations you are enrolled in. Activity notifications appear as red superscript numbers next to the icon in the menu bar.
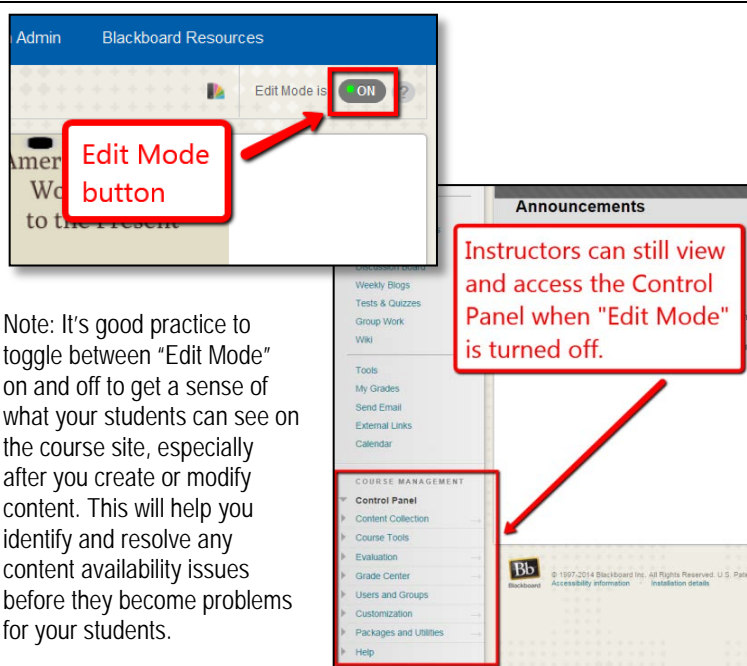
*Note: You can minimize any module by clicking the triangle to the left of the module title, or move modules around by hovering over the module title, then clicking and dragging on the four-way arrow icon that appears.
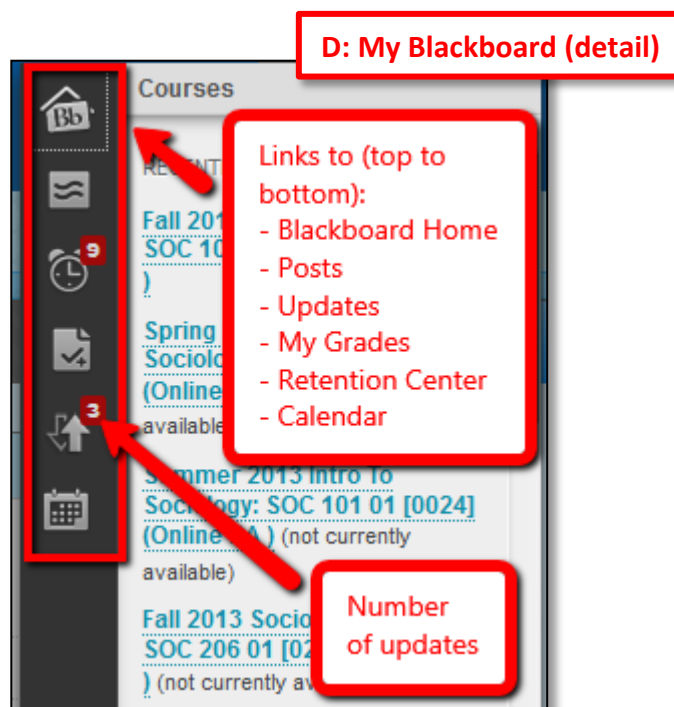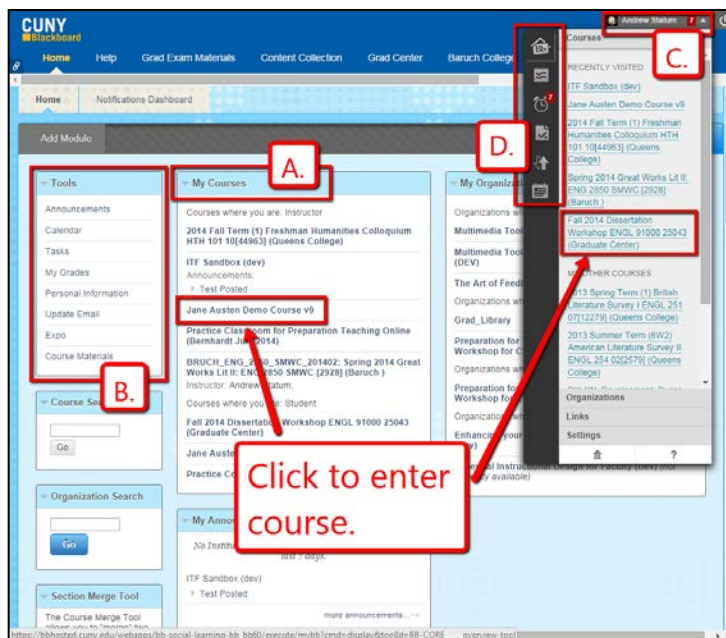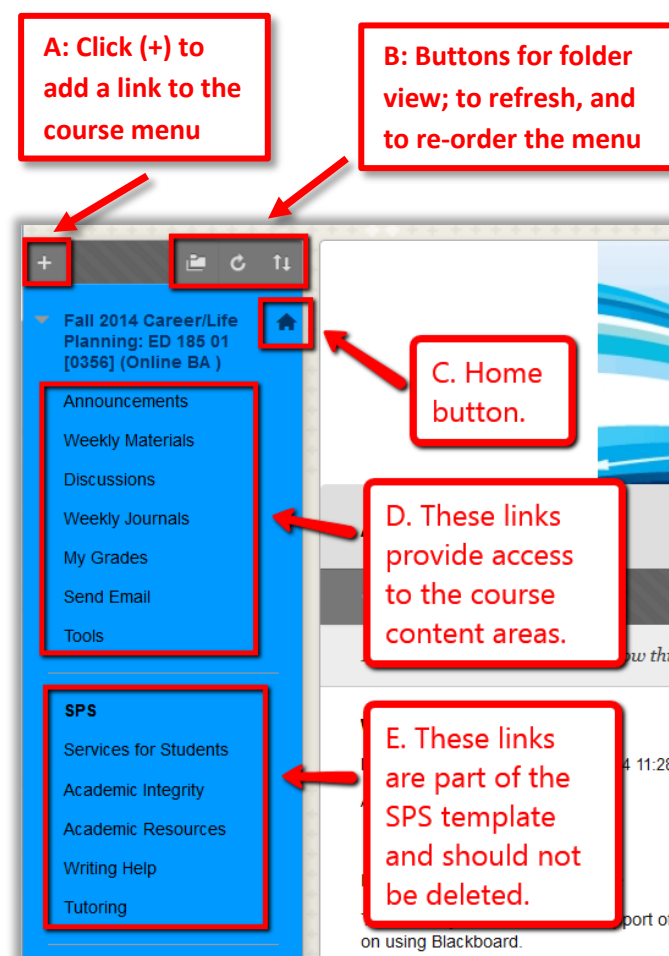
Step 3

After entering a course site by clicking its title, check if "Edit Mode" is turned on (upper right corner).

With "Edit Mode" on, you can make changes to course content. With "Edit Mode" off, you will not be able to make changes, and you will not see any content marked "Not Available" or "Hidden from Students." "Edit Mode" off basically displays the course site as your students see it but with one key difference: you will still be able to view and to access the "Control Panel," located in the lower left part of the screen beneath the course menu. Remember that students do not have a "Control Panel" available to them. (We will assume that "Edit Mode" is turned on for the rest of this guide).

Note: It's good practice to toggle between "Edit Mode" on and off to get a sense of what your students can see on the course site, especially after you create or modify content. This will help you identify and resolve any content availability issues before they become problems for your students.

Edit Mode button

Instructors can still view and access the Control Panel when "Edit Mode" is turned off.

Step 4

Course Menu and Content Areas

You will find the menu for navigation of the course site on the left of the screen.

A. The (+) sign at the top left allows you to add content areas, tool links, sub headers and dividers to the menu page. (See the Quick Guide "Introduction to Blackboard Part III" for more information.)

B. The three icons at the top right can be used to open the course menu in folder view in a new window (see Step 6), to refresh the course site after updating the menu, and an option for reordering the menu using keyboard commands.

C. The house icon to the right of the course name returns users to the course entry page from anywhere within the course.

D. The links on the course menu provide access to the various content areas of the course as set up by the developer or instructor. You can add and delete these links as needed.

E. These links are part of an SPS template that will appear in all live semester (but not Dev) sites and should not be deleted.

A: Click (+) to add a link to the course menu

B: Buttons for folder view; to refresh, and to re-order the menu

C. Home button.

D. These links provide access to the course content areas.

E. These links are part of the SPS template and should not be deleted.

Step 5

You have control over the organization of the course menu. Try to think of a logical organization to make the course easy for students to navigate. In this sample menu, notice that the menu is divided into three sections with dividers between each:

1) General course information and course announcements

2) Course materials and links to frequently used course tools

3) Links to tools helpful to students, such as "My Grades", "Email," or the calendar

1) General course information

2) Course materials

3) Student tools
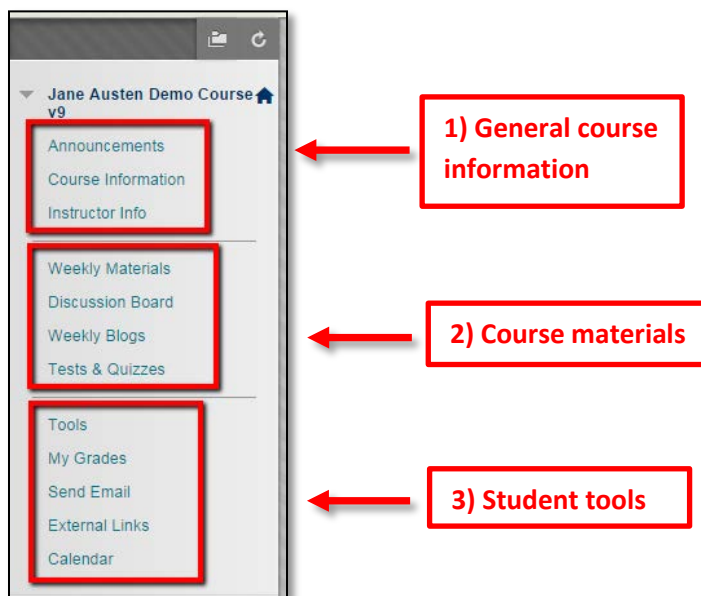
Step 6

The Folder View allows for an overview of your course's organization, and quick navigation to a particular item in the course.

To access the syllabus for this sample course, click the plus (+) icon next to the "Course Information" folder, then the plus (+) icon next to the "Syllabus" folder, then select on "Interactive Syllabus."

Note: For any item, faculty can enable a setting requiring students to mark an item as reviewed. To do so, navigate to the item after creating it, click the downward-facing arrow, select "Set Review Status" from the menu, change the setting to "Enable" and click "Submit." This is especially useful for the syllabus or other important course documents.

Expand "Course Information" folder

Open Folder View

Expand "Syllabus" folder

Click on "Interactive Syllabus"
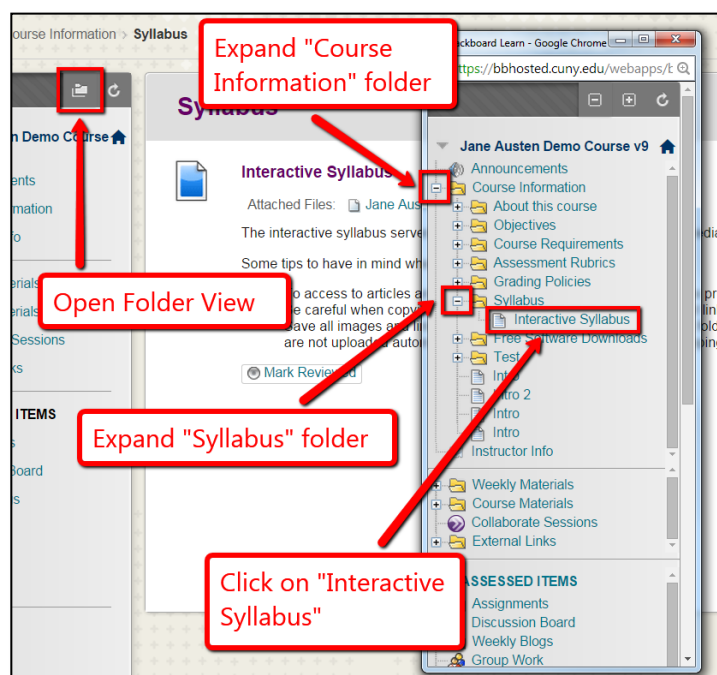
<u>Step 7</u> **Assignments** In Blackboard, "Assignments"—as opposed to "Tests," "Surveys," "Discussion Board," etc.—designates a particular kind of assessment that requires students to submit written work directly to the Grade Center. To view or attempt an assignment, click on its title. For more information about assignments, please see our "Creating Assignments" Quick Guide: http://spsfaculty.commons.gc.cuny.edu/quick-guides/	
<u>Step 8</u> This is what students see when they click on an assignment title. Instructions appear at the top, along with a link to the rubric associated with this assignment, if you are using one. Students may enter text directly into the assignment by clicking the "Write Submission" button, which will open the text editor, or by attaching a file from their computer by clicking "Browse Computer" and selecting the appropriate file. Students may also write comments to you in the "Add Comments" field at the bottom of the page. They should click "Submit" only when text has been finalized and they have attached a file (if necessary).* Note: You should encourage students to click "Save as Draft" to save data without submitting to prevent losing data in the event of a browser crash, for example. *<u>Please note</u>: in order for you to grade an assignment using Blackboard's "inline grading" tool, students *must* submit their work as either .doc, .xml, or .pdf file, and NOT by using "Text Submission." See our "Inline Grading" Quick Guide for more information: http://spsfaculty.commons.gc.cuny.edu/quick-guides/	

Step 9

Course Tools and My Grades

Every SPS course site should include a "Tools" link on the course menu by default.* Clicking on the link gives you and your students access to an entire suite of Blackboard tools, including "My Grades," where students can track their progress in your course, and "Send Email," which allows you or your students to email the entire class. Students can access these tools through the "Tools" link as shown here, or you can add links for specific tools to your course menu. You can also choose to hide tools from students by clicking on the "Hide Link" button that appears to the right of each tool.

* If no "Tools" link exists on your course menu, you can create one by hovering over the (+) button at the top left of the menu, clicking "Tool Link," selecting "Tools Area" from the menu and naming the link accordingly.

Note: You – as an instructor – also have access to all tools by clicking "Course Tools" on the Control Panel on the lower left.

Click "Tools" link to access Tools suite.

Students can track their progress here.

You or your students can send an email to the entire class or select users using this link.

You can hide a Tool link from students by clicking here.

Step 10

Discussion Board

The "Discussion Board" can be accessed by clicking the "Discussion Board" link on the course menu.* Once in the Discussion Board, click on the title of the discussion forum you wish to access.

* As with the "Tools" link in Step 9, if no "Discussion Board" link exists in your course menu, you can create one by hovering over the (+) button at the top left of the menu, clicking "Tool Link," selecting "Discussion Board" from the menu and naming the link accordingly.
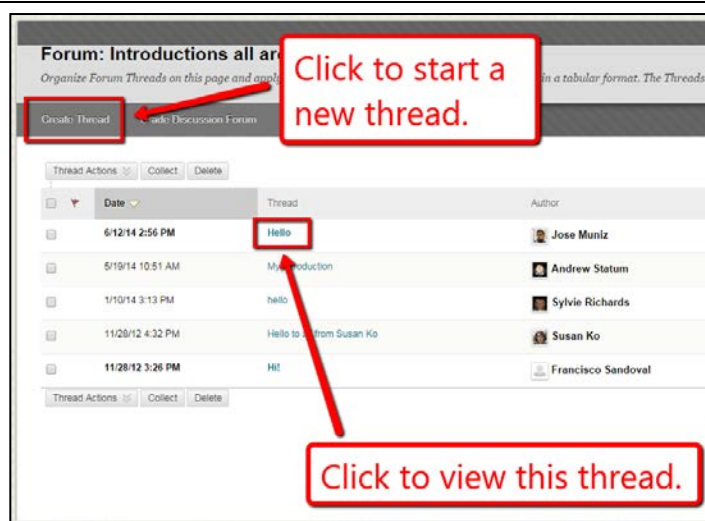

Click on the title of a forum to enter it.

Click to acess the Discussion Board.

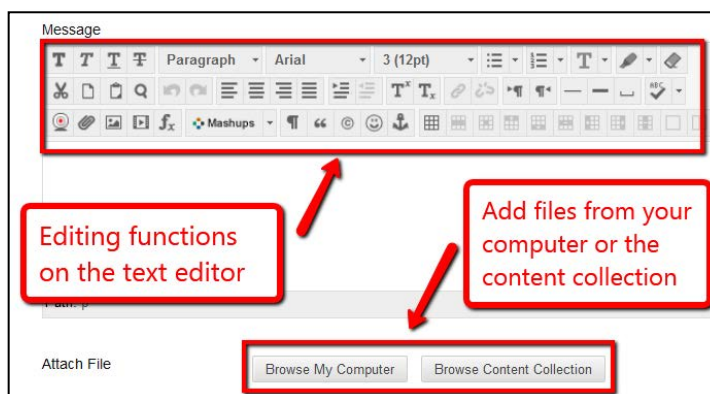|	
<u>Step 11</u> Each discussion forum is composed of a series of discussion threads. By default, students are allowed to create their own threads (though you are able to limit this permission when setting up a discussion forum). To create a new thread, simply click "Create Thread" at the top of the screen. To view a thread, click on its title. See our Quick Guides on the Discussion Board for more information: http://spsfaculty.commons.gc.cuny.edu/quick-guides/	
<u>Step 12</u> **Text Editor** When creating a text entry in Blackboard – such as an announcement, a discussion board post, assignment instructions etc. – the text editor offers rich text editing functions like various fonts and sizes, boldface and italics, or adding images or a webcam comment to your posts. You can also attach files by clicking the "Browse My Computer" or "Browse Content Collection" button beneath the text editor. Note: Most editing functions on the Text Editor are also available to students when creating text entries in Blackboard, such as discussion board posts, blog or wiki entries, or when submitting assignments.	
<u>Step 13</u> **Navigating the Course Site** You can use the "breadcrumbs" at the top of any page to navigate your course site. This allows you to retrace your steps should you need to revisit a particular content area without having to use your browser's "Back" command, which may take you back into the content creation editor if you've recently created something.	