



Quick Start Guide to American University Blackboard

Purpose of this Guide

This guide is meant to help you navigate American University Blackboard. If you have previously worked with any version of Blackboard you will find that most of its features are the same. Many of the changes in navigation are cosmetic and designed to offer a more streamlined experience. There are also new features that will allow you to do more in a more generous interface.

What is Blackboard? Blackboard Learn is an online multimedia content management system which professors can use to host video, audio and text documents relevant to your class. Professors can also use Blackboard to collect assignments, give online test and quizzes, and even hold live lectures.

Accessing Blackboard

1. We strongly recommend that you use the most up-to-date versions of Apple's Safari, Mozilla Firefox, or Google Chrome (all free). These browsers have no known issues. Internet Explorer does not properly render Blackboard's Grade Center, and we do not advise you use Internet Explorer with Blackboard.
2. There are two ways to access Blackboard:
 - Go to the AU Portal at <http://myau.american.edu> and click on the **Academics** drop-down menu on the left-hand side of the screen. Then click on **Blackboard**.
 - Point your browser directly to <http://blackboard.american.edu>. We suggest you bookmark <http://blackboard.american.edu> in your browser for easy access.
 - Please note that you cannot bookmark pages within Blackboard after you've logged in as you will receive an error when trying to access them.

Logging in

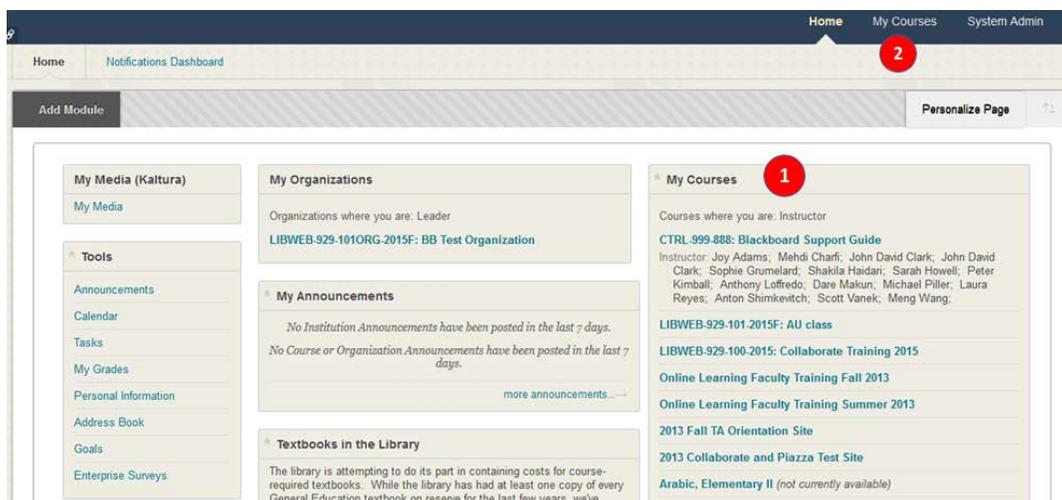
1. Blackboard uses the same username and password created by students and faculty for the University's network accounts so new faculty first need to create network accounts. These can be created at <http://myau.american.edu>. You will need your AU ID number to create this account, which is obtained during the orientation or appointment process. After you create your network account, you will be in the Blackboard system.
 - Please note that you must change your password for your network account every 90 days, or you can opt-in for a 1 year password. If you are unable to log in to Blackboard, you should reset your password at <http://myau.american.edu> or by clicking the "Reset an expired or forgotten password" link on the login page.

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2. Go to <http://blackboard.american.edu> and click the blue **Login** button.
3. Enter your username@american.edu and password.
4. Click the **Log In** button to access Blackboard environment.

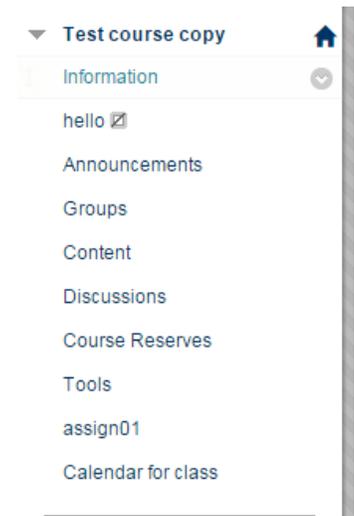
Navigating Blackboard

1. When you log in to Blackboard, you will see what is called the Home page. It shows several modules which you can personalize. The most important is the **My Courses** module on the right-hand side, which lists the courses in which you are enrolled. To get into the unique Blackboard Page for your course, find the course link in your list and click on the name of the course.
2. If your list is very long or features courses with the same name, you can alternatively click on the **My Courses** tab which offers a complete Course List.



Navigating your course page

1. Menu – On the left hand side of the screen, you’ll see a menu containing links that students can click on to access Content Areas or Tools for the course.
2. Content Areas – Blackboard pages where you can post content for your course. In the example on the right, the content areas are “hello”, “Content”, and “Assign01”.
3. Course Tools – A link to applications within Blackboard. In the screenshot on the right, the course tools are “Announcements,” “Groups,” “Discussions,” “Course Reserves,” “Tools” and “Calendar for class”.
 - The difference between Content Areas and links to Course Tools is that Content Areas allow you to add any kind of content, where Course Tools are specific links to applications within the Blackboard environment.
4. Control Panel – The place you’ll go to modify the appearance of your site and use the Grade Center.



Managing content

1. To create a new content area, click on the + sign in the upper left-hand corner of the Menu. Choose **Content Area** from the drop-down menu and enter the name you'd like.
2. To create a new file or item, e.g., to add readings within a Content Area, begin by going into that Content Area. Click on the **Build Content** tab across the top of the page. Choose either **Item** or **File** to add content such as a Microsoft Word document or .PDF file. Browse your computer to locate the file and upload it. Click **OK** to be brought back to the screen where you'll be able to adjust the availability of the file if you'd like to. Click **Submit**.
 - There are three main types of content for Content Areas: Files, Items and Folders. Files are a simple upload of a singular file. Items can include text, pictures, tables and multiple documents. Folders are new sub-pages within which you can organize and add additional content.

Create File

Use the File content type to add a file that can be selected and viewed as a page within the course or as a separate piece of content in a separate browser window. Also, a collection of files or an entire lesson, including cascading style sheets (CSS), can be developed offline and uploaded into a course from a local drive and viewed in order. [More Help](#)

* Indicates a required field.

Cancel Submit

1. Select File

Select a local file by clicking **Browse My Computer** or one from within Course Files by clicking **Browse Course**. Enter a Name for the file and choose a Color for the text to appear in the list of content. Click **No** to display the file within the Course environment or **Yes** to display it as a separate piece of content with no Course page heading.

* Name

Color of Name Black

* Find File

2. File Options

Open in New Window Yes No

Add alignment to content Yes No

3. Standard Options

Permit Users to View this Content Yes No

Track Number of Views Yes No

Select Date and Time Restrictions Display After

Enter dates as mm/dd/yyyy. Time may be entered in any increment.

Managing students

1. Students are added to your course automatically through the link between the Registrar and the Blackboard system. When a student registers for a course through the registrar, that information is sent to Blackboard, which then runs an enrollment "script" (server function) 3 times daily.
2. Create announcements for your students by clicking on **Announcements** in the course menu and clicking on the **Create Announcements** button. Enter a Subject and Message in the respective fields. You can set a date restriction on the announcement, which determines when an announcement will appear for your students.
 - Announcements live on the Announcements page within your Blackboard course. They also appear on a student's Homepage when they log into Blackboard.
 - Please note that announcements are not emailed to students.
3. To send emails to students, click on **Tools** and then select **Send Email**. Select the group of users that you'd like to send an email to. If you select **All Users**, then you and your Teaching Assistants will also receive a copy of the email.

- Please note that Blackboard does not maintain a log of your emails. The only record will be the copy of the email sent to you if you select All Users.
4. To locate a roster of students, click on the **Grade Center** link in the **Control Panel**, and select **Full Grade Center**. Here you will see a full list of the students in your course. To download this list for use outside of the Blackboard environment click on the **Work Offline** button, then **Download**, and follow the prompts.
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To learn more about Tools available through Blackboard

1. Visit the Blackboard Help website: <https://en-us.help.blackboard.com/Collaborate/Ultra>.
2. Attend a workshop offered by the E-Learning Support Services staff. For information about upcoming opportunities or to request a group training session, contact our office or visit our website: <http://www.american.edu/library/technology/blackboard/>.
3. Contact us for immediate live support at (202) 885-3904 or blackboard@american.edu. We are available from 9:00 am until 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday, in Room 321 of AU's Bender Library.