Welcome to BU Online: Finding Your Online Classroom
Once you’ve entered the online classroom, you arrive at the welcome screen, which will look something like this:

From this Welcome Screen, you can access any of your online courses, view your grades, contact Technical Support, or access a wide variety of student resources, but for now we're going to focus on the “My Courses” box (or module).

Your “My Courses” module will contain a list of all the courses in which you are enrolled. Click on the title of a course to enter that course’s online page.
Now, you should be “inside” one of your online courses. The screen may be colored differently, but the basic layout will look like this:

From this screen you can find almost every and any piece of information you will need for your online course. Before we look at any one kind of information specifically, let’s talk about how to get from place to place in the course.

**Course Navigation**

No matter what kind of information you need to find in your course, very often there will be more than one way to get there. Your main navigational tools in the online classroom include:

- Course Buttons
- Tool Box
- Bread Crumbs
**Course Buttons**

The course buttons can be found on the left hand side of your screen. They are labeled with titles to tell you what kind of information can be found when you click on them. The buttons may be different colored in every course you take—they may not even look like buttons per se, but more like a list of options down the left hand side of the online classroom screen. Throughout this orientation, you will see several different examples of button color and arrangement.

Notice that—just like in the examples above—some courses will have more buttons available than others. The number and name of the buttons in your course will be determined by your instructor, so ask him or her if you have any questions.

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**Tool Box**

The Tool Box is located directly below the buttons on the left hand side of your course. The links inside the tool box may be the same as those in the buttons—the box just provides another way to get to the information you need.
Breadcrumbs

At some point after you have “clicked around” in your online course, you will inevitably want to go back to a previous location. *Hitting the “Back” button on your browser will not work the way you want it to—more than likely it will take you back to the course’s home screen.* Instead, you should use the “breadcrumb” chain that the online classroom automatically creates for you as you maneuver through a course.

A breadcrumb chain is located directly under the tabs towards the top of your screen and may look something like this:

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**Messages from Your Instructor**

Your instructor will communicate with you online in many ways. One of these ways is email, so you should check your “bellevue.edu” email regularly. Bellevue University student email addresses contain the student’s first initial and last name@bellevue.edu; for example jdoe@bellevue.edu. In cases where there is more than one student with the same initial and last name, middle initials are used: jcdoe@bellevue.edu.

The other place you will find timely messages from your instructor is in the announcements area of your course. Usually, the Announcements screen is the first screen you will see upon entering a course.

Here is the same Announcements screen as shown on the previous page, but with crucial areas highlighted:

Your instructor may use the Announcements screen to share with you all kinds of information. Announcements can be used to:

- Welcome you to the course.
- Introduce a new week of coursework and direct you to another course location.
- Announce that a new assignment or test has been made available.
- Announce a change in the class schedule.
- Comment on a topic that pertains to the entire class.
- Announce that course evaluations are available.
- And more!

You may even receive all-course messages here from the Online System Administrator. Bottom line: whatever appears on the announcements screen is important, so read it carefully.
Faculty/Staff Information

Suppose you want to contact your instructor, find out their office hours, or learn a little more about them. You can find all this information in the “Staff Information” area.

In the picture at left, the “Staff Information” button is highlighted. Your instructor may put the buttons of your course in a different order; they may even change the name slightly (“Faculty Information,” “Your Instructor,” etc.). But there will always be a button you can click that will take you to the “Staff Information” page.

Clicking on this button will take you to a screen like this:

![Staff Information profile](image)

This “Staff Information” profile contains contact information provided by your instructor. In addition to the info shown here, it may also include more photos or a detailed biography.

*Notice that the buttons on this screen are a different color and contain different titles—each course you take may have a slightly different set up; your instructor should be able to answer any questions you have about the buttons in your course.*
Course Information and Documents

Other than the “Assignments” area, there are other places where your instructor may put information and documents for you to view. The most common two places for such information are the “Course Documents” button and the “Course Information” button.

Information that may be included behind these buttons includes:

- Course Calendar
- Course Syllabus
- Relevant Links
- Relevant Documents
- Information on how the course is organized
- Information on Grading
- Important Student Services and Resources
- And more!

Course Information

Your Course Information area will contain info that you need to navigate and complete your course successfully, such as syllabus, course orientation, and information on how to navigate the course. Notice the items included in the Course Documents example below:

Course Orientation

There are various links in this folder, which provide you access to general expectations about your academic behavior. Other useful resources are available in this folder as well. For specific expectations and information related to this course, please see the Course Syllabus.

How to Navigate This Course

Course Outline/Syllabus
**Course Documents**

If your instructor has posted documents, Power Points, or links for you to view, they will often be found in the Course Documents area. Here is a sample of Course Documents from a real BU course:

The appearance here is very similar to that of the “Course Information” area, but notice what things are included: a tutorial, a trivia quiz, and a book list—all pieces of information you will need at some point while you are taking this course.

*As a rule of thumb, the Course Documents area covers the “what” of a course; Course Information covers the “how.”*

**Remember:**
Because every course is different, your instructor can best point you where you need to go to find important information in your course. Very often they will spell this out in the Announcement area. Ask your instructor if you have a difficult time finding information within your course.
Assignments

Instructors post assignments online so that you can access them anytime and anywhere. (It also saves paper!) Most of the time, your assignments will be found by clicking on the Assignments button.

Within this area, the format may vary. Most instructors divide their assignments into “Weeks.” In these cases the area inside the “Assignments” button may look something like this:

This screen contains a list of “folders.” Folder icons look like this:

Folders are places where more information is stored and organized. On the next page you will see inside an example “Week One” assignments folder. (Note: This is just an example. Your instructor can set up their assignments however they choose.)
Within the Assignments area, you may see many different types of items. Examples of the most common types of assignments are included in the picture below, along with instructions on how to access them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Icon</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>What is it?</th>
<th>What do I have to do with it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Item Icon]</td>
<td><strong>Item</strong></td>
<td>A piece of information your instructor wants you to read or view. It may contain an attached document or powerpoint.</td>
<td>Open and read any attached document. (See the “Read this document” item in the image above for an example.) Read any information your instructor has included in the item. (You do not have to “respond” to an item in any way—only read the info provided.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Link Icon]</td>
<td><strong>Link</strong></td>
<td>A connection to a website outside of Blackboard. (short for “hyperlink”)</td>
<td>Click on the link and follow the directions provided by your instructor. You may simply need to read or view the information at the website, or there may be a quiz or activity with which you need to interact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Folder Icon]</td>
<td><strong>Folder</strong></td>
<td>An organizational tool—folders are how instructors divide and categorize course information online.</td>
<td>Click on the name of the folder to view the contents inside. (See the “Week One” example on the previous page.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Test Icon]</td>
<td><strong>Test</strong></td>
<td>A quiz, test, or assessment you take online.</td>
<td>Click on the title of the test, and follow the directions to take you to the online test. In most cases you will be able to take the entire test or quiz online, and sometimes get your score as soon as you finish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Survey Icon]</td>
<td><strong>Survey</strong></td>
<td>A way for your instructor to collect opinions or responses, sometimes anonymously.</td>
<td>You access this much like you access a test. Click on the survey name and follow the instructions to complete your survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Upload Assignment Icon]</td>
<td><strong>Upload Assignment</strong></td>
<td>A portal where you can submit documents (papers/writing assignments) for your instructor to grade.</td>
<td>Click on the link that allows you to view/complete the assignment. You will then upload a document you have created and saved into your Blackboard course so your instructor can grade it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grades

If your instructor uses the online grade book in Blackboard, you should be able to view your grades online. You can get there a few different ways.

Step One: Access the Course Tools list by clicking on either the “Tools” button or the “Course Tools” link in the Tools box. Either one will bring up a screen that looks like this:

(Note: This screen contains many helpful tools you may wish or need to use in your course. They are all worth checking out, but for now, find the “My Grades” link.)
Step Two: Click on the “My Grades” link:

Step Three: From here you can view your grades and due dates, depending on what options your instructor has made available.

View Grades

Your grades for this Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Name</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Last Submitted, Modified, or Graded</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Running Total</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>473</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running Weighted Total</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANYTHING YOU WANT</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Nov 9, 2007 10:46 AM</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 7 assignment</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Sociologists Quiz</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Literature Ch. 4</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ass 1.1</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Literature Ch. 4</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To exit the gradebook, either click the “OK” button, use the buttons at left, or the “breadcrumb” list at the top of the page.