Getting Started with Blackboard
Blackboard Learn is UAlbany’s Learning Management System. Blackboard has many features which allow faculty to upload files and organize course content, communicate with students and assign/grade assessments easily. Login to blackboard with your UAlbany NetID and Password at https://blackboard.albany.edu.

Blackboard Essentials
A Blackboard course is created automatically for ALL sections on the Schedule of Classes and/or enrolled course sections. Courses are displayed under the “My Courses” block on the Blackboard Academics tab. Tips for finding your courses: Manage your Blackboard course list.

Before your course begins
These resources help guide you through common course start-up tasks.

- Make your course available (video) REQUIRED for student access.
- Combine multiple sections into one course (merge rosters)
- Copy your prior semester course
- How to connect your course to electronic reserves
- How to enroll TA and co-instructors

Navigating a Blackboard Course (UAlbany Standard Course Template)

A. Edit Mode: ON for course editing/management; OFF for “student view” simulation.
B. Student Preview: Exact student experience. Ability to interact and submit assessments.
C. Course Menu: Foundation for course organization and navigation.
D. Course Content: Area where course content is created and stored.
E. Control Panel: Access point for course management, tools, and users
Working with the Course Menu
This menu appears on the left side of the screen and is focal point for navigation and organization with a course. From the course menu you:

- Create links to tools and course materials.
- Customize appearance and organize links.

Course Template
To assist in development, a course template is applied to all courses. It allows the flexibility to customize a course, while leveraging the essential components of Blackboard. It is part of the Course Menu and includes:

- **Announcements**: Spot to create class wide communications.
- **Course Content**: Where to build your course.
- **My Grades**: Where students receive feedback on their assessments.
- **Campus Resources**: Links to different resources available to students.
- **Research Guides**: University Libraries research resources.
- **Blackboard Help**: Students and Faculty, Browser check.
- **Faculty Resources**: How to ready your course and resources for success. Refer to [Before your course begins](#) and [Help Resources](#).

Organizing a Course
There are a few basic ways to organize materials within a course content area. A **Content Folder** or a **Learning Module**.

| A Learning Module has a table of contents. | A Content Folder does not. |

Adding Course Content
After choosing a Module or a Content Folder it is time to start adding content. There are many ways to create content. Here is a full list of [Blackboard content building tools](#) and some best practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Course Link</th>
<th>Syllabus</th>
<th>Mashups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used to present a combination of content:</td>
<td>Shortcut to anything within a course.</td>
<td>Two options for syllabus creation:</td>
<td>Used to add media content directly into course:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Full functionality of the text editor.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Attach a file.</td>
<td>- Flickr Photo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attach files.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Build a course syllabus through a series of steps.</td>
<td>- YouTube Video.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Everything presented together.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Slide Share.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File</th>
<th>Web Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used to create a link to file(s):</td>
<td>A link to a website or outside resource.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Add meaningful descriptions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Choose how students view file.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Allows for a compact look to a course.</td>
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[Ed Tech Services – LC-27](#)  [Schedule Consult](#) - [www.albany.edu/edtech](http://www.albany.edu/edtech)  [518-442-4288](#)
Adding Interaction Tools
These tools help foster contact between students, instructors and course content within Blackboard. A complete list of interactive tools and a set of interaction best practices.

Announcements
Space to communicate with all students on your roster about time sensitive course wide subjects. Typically used for:
- Due dates, schedules.
- Changes or clarification of content.
- How to Create Announcements.

Email
Allows sending of external emails to users or groups of users within the course:
- No need to use outside email application.
- Blackboard does not keep copies of emails.
- A great resource on using email.

Messages
Course based communication tool:
- Must be logged into course to view.
- Based on course enrollment.
- How to use course messages.

Discussions
Essential component in an online class:
- Asynchronous – can happen anytime and anywhere.
- Build Community and Social Presence.
- Richer and more thought provoking.
This resource offers a complete overview of Blackboard Discussions.

Adding Assessment Tools
Blackboard provides a multitude of ways to assess learners. Outlined are selected tools.

Tests, Pools and Surveys
Used to measure student progress, knowledge or just gather information:
- Create, Deploy, Students Submit, Grade, Students review.
- Depending on question settings tests can grade themselves.
- Wired connection advised for taking tests.
- Details on tests, pools and surveys.

Groups
Used to aid in student interaction:
- Helps to foster relationships with peers.
- Good to use in large classes.
- Increases critical thinking skills.
- A complete overview of using groups in Blackboard.

Blogs
Used as a personal, shared online space:
- Allow for commenting.
- Great social learning tools.
- Explore how to use blogs in your course.

Journals
A private space for self-reflection and communication with the instructor:
- Safe space to explore ideas, opinions or concerns about course content.
- Discuss problems faced and solutions.
- Examine using Journals.

Wikis
Interactive space that allows multiple users to edit and contribute:
- Great for group work.
- Sharing and Collaboration.
- Wikis are a multifaceted tool and can be used throughout the course.

Assignments
Used as a space for students to submit course work to be evaluated:
- Grade center column automatically created.
- Use SafeAssign to check for plagiarism.
- Attach a rubric for evaluation.
- More information on assignments in Blackboard including Self and Peer Assessment.
Grading in Blackboard
The Grade Center in Blackboard is a powerful tool that assists instructors in tracking of student performance. It organizes submissions, allows for easy grading and calculates grades.

- Explore how to navigate the Grade Center.
- Learn about the three different types of grade columns.
- All about grading tasks.
- How to create and associate rubrics with course content.
- Create and access grade reports and statistics.

Additional Supported Resources
There are tools that we support to assist with the teaching of your course. It is suggested that you contact Educational Technology Services if you need help with implementation of these tools.

- Voicethread: Is a "multimedia discussion board" that enables interaction with course content.
- Ensemble Video: A video streaming platform for your courses.
- Top Hat: Has an InteractiveText platform that lets faculty adopt, customize or create content.
- Respondus: Software that creates quizzes and assessments offline for upload to Blackboard.
- Skype for business: Includes several communication and collaboration features.
- OneDrive: Cloud based files application that allows sharing and collaboration from anywhere.

Help Resources
Looking for more guidance on teaching online? Explore these links:

- Blackboard Learn Help for Instructors.
- Blackboard On-Demand Learning Center.
- University at Albany AskIT knowledge base.
- University at Albany Blackboard Policies.
- Educational Technology Workshops at UAlbany.
- University at Albany Teach Online.
- Make an appointment for Teaching Online consultation.