



Getting Started in Blackboard



Using Blackboard: Blackboard (Bb) can be accessed from anywhere on either Mac's or PC's. Bb features such as file sharing, discussion board, web links, and assessments are fully supported on any system. If you experience technical difficulties, contact your instructor or ask for assistance at the student computing help desk (552-6969).

Finding and logging into Blackboard: Go to the SOU portal at my.sou.edu and log in using your student computing ID and password. In the upper right hand corner of the tool bar area, you'll see the Bb icon. Click on the icon. Welcome to Blackboard!!

On the right side of the screen you will see a list of the courses you're enrolled in. Follow the link for the class you'd like to enter. You will see the **Announcements** page with a row of buttons or text links on the left side. If you do not see navigational links down the left side, click the "back" button on your browser and be sure to choose the course title that is on the **right** side of the screen (under the heading **My Courses ... Courses in which you are participating**). Explore the site and get familiar with the materials that your instructor has provided.

Resetting your email address: Your Bb account defaults to your campus email address (yourID@students.sou.edu). It is recommended that you use your student address for Blackboard and some instructors may require it. If you prefer and you have not been instructed otherwise, you may designate another email address for all of your Bb correspondence. Under **Tools** (or **Student Tools**), choose **Personal Information**, then **Edit Personal Information**. Type in your preferred email address.

Accessing the discussion board: Click on the link for the **Discussion Board** on the navigational bar (the Discussion Board may also be found under **Communication**). To participate in a discussion, click the underlined name of the forum. Click on subject heading links to read the comments posted by your peers and the instructor.

- To make your own original posting, click on the **+Thread** button at the top of the page.
- To post a reply to a classmate, click the **Reply** button, type your message, *spell check* your work, and then click **Submit**.
- If you need to refer to the original posting while you are drafting your response, the message to which you are replying will appear at the top of the screen if you click on "Show Original Post."

HINT #1: For extensive comments, you may wish to type in a word processing program, save, then copy and paste into your message. It is possible to be "timed out" on your web connection, resulting in the loss of your posting. ☹

HINT #2: To eliminate excess space between paragraphs, use only one return at the end of each paragraph.

Attachments in the discussion board: It is possible to attach files to your discussion board postings if you wish. Be sure to include a file "extension" (i.e., .doc, .xls, .jpg, etc.) so that others will be able to open the file (providing they have corresponding software on their

computer). (Most instructors will ask you to make your posting directly in the forum area rather than attaching it in a separate file.)

Viewing multiple discussion postings: Click on the discussion question to see all of the threads listed. In the lower left corner of the page, you'll find a button that says **Select All**. Click on it (you can also select specific threads individually). Click on **Collect** on the toolbar *above* the message list. Voilà! The selected messages will be opened for you to read. (Note: The messages will be posted in reverse chronological order, not in discussion threads, so you may find that the replies jump around a bit.)

Accessing a group: Click the **Groups** button from the navigational bar (if there is not a link for Groups, choose **Communication**, then **Groups**). If you are enrolled in a group, the group name will appear as an underlined link. Follow the link to your group area. There you can enter your group's discussion board, send email to your group members or post files to share in the file exchange area (Note: Be sure to customize your files by adding your initials or a date to assure that each shared file has a unique name).

Downloading files from Blackboard: Your instructor may post files in Blackboard for you to work on. *Before you begin, be sure to download the file to your computer* – Blackboard will allow you to edit online, but will not let you save your changes! Right click on the file name and “Save target as...” to save it to your computer.

Submitting assignments via Blackboard: Your instructor may ask you to complete and return assignments using Bb. Read the instructions, then open the link to the assignment. Download any attached files to your computer and complete the assignment. When finished, re-open the assignment link, add a comment to your instructor, browse to find your completed file, and submit to send it to the instructor.

To see your instructor's comments and any attached files, go to your grade book (see “Checking your grades” below) and click on the score for that item. An exclamation point indicates that the assignment has been received, but not yet graded. If you send the wrong version of an assignment or need to send files subsequently, contact your instructor to have the link cleared for you.

Uploading files to Blackboard: You can save files to your Bb course site (a helpful practice as a backup for class presentations in case your disk fails to open). Go to **Tools** and look for **Digital Dropbox** (if you do not see it listed, ask your instructor if this feature is activated for the course). Open the Dropbox and **Browse** to attach your file. **Submit**.

Checking your grades: Your instructor may or may not activate the grade book feature in your Bb course site. To check your grades, go to **Tools** and follow the link for **My Grades**.

Finding things in Blackboard: Can't find something you saw somewhere along the way? Click on the **Course Map** button under the navigation buttons. The **Open All** icon will expand all of the course's folders so you can scroll through to find what you are looking for. To see the site's contents in a directory format, click on **Detail View** in the box below the Tools box under the navigation links.