

### **BLACKBOARD 9.1 MANUAL FOR STUDENTS**

#### THE BLACKBOARD SYSTEM

Blackboard is the virtual classroom system used for courses at Ottawa University. Blackboard facilitates student-to-student and instructor-to-student interactions in a web-based environment. Students can submit assignments, access course materials, take quizzes and exams, and check grades and instructor feedback online. This guide provides a brief tutorial on how to use the basic functionality of the Blackboard e-learning system.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The screen captures, policies, and information provided in this manual are specific to fully online classes. If you are taking a face-to-face course which uses Blackboard but isn't fully online, you will notice some differences between your actual course and what is shown here. Please consult with your instructor for clarification regarding your course.

#### LOGGING IN TO BLACKBOARD

- 1. The Blackboard login is accessed from our MyOttawa portal at <a href="https://myottawa.ottawa.edu">https://myottawa.ottawa.edu</a>.
- 2. Click the link for Blackboard on the left-hand side under QuickLinks as shown below.

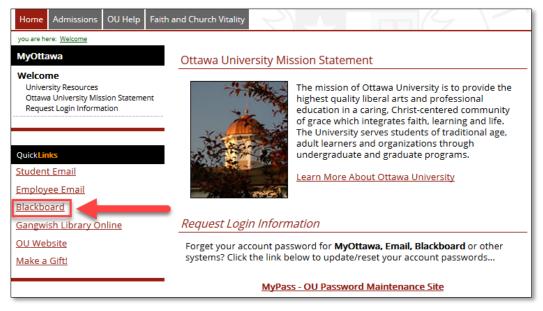


Image 1: The Blackboard link highlighted on myottawa.ottawa.edu.



3. This brings you to the Blackboard login page. This page contains important updates, announcements, and information about our Blackboard system. Please be sure to check this page for new information each time you access Blackboard.

On the login screen, enter your username and password. Your username is your **MyOttawa** portal username (for most students, this is the same as your OU student ID number), and your password is the same as the one you use for your Ottawa student email account. If you forgot your password, click the link labeled Forget Your Password?

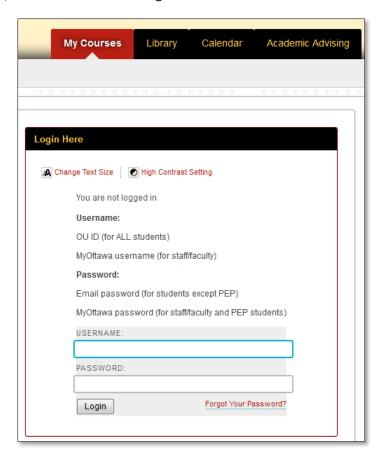


Image 2: The Blackboard login screen.



4. Click **Login** or press <Enter> on your keyboard. This is what the main page looks like:

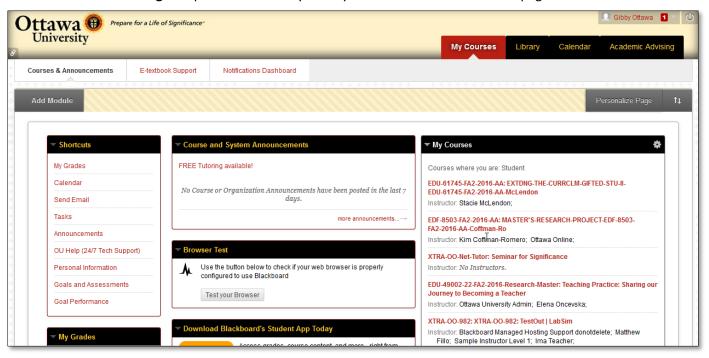


Image 3: The Blackboard main page.



### **ACCESSING YOUR COURSE(S)**

All courses in which you are currently enrolled are listed in the **My Courses** module. Courses become available a few days prior to the term start (at 8am the Saturday before the first day of the term). Click on the course name to enter that course in the Blackboard system.

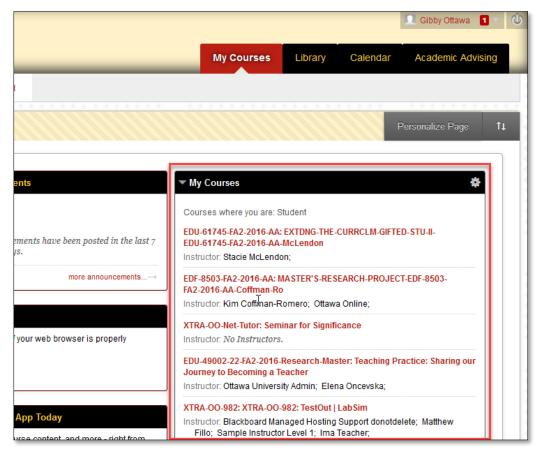


Image 4: The main Blackboard page with the My Courses portlet highlighted.



#### UNDERSTANDING THE COURSE MENU



The course menu is broken down into three sections:

- 1. Course Info
- 2. Course Materials
- 3. Resources

Your course content is located within these three sections. This content, along with your required textbook, contains all the information you need to be successful in your course. Each of these sections is explored in more detail below.

Image 5: The course menu.

### **COURSE INFO: GETTING STARTED**

The **Getting Started** link under Course Info is the first place you go when you enter your course for the first time. This area provides you with the first steps you need to take in your online course.

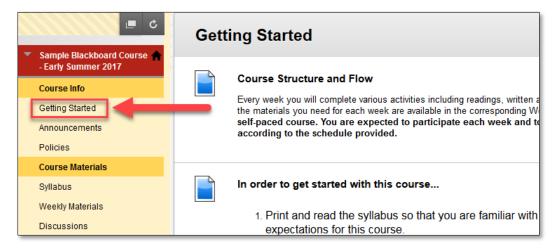


Image 6: The Getting Started page.



#### **COURSE INFO: ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Each course has its own announcements. Instructors create announcements for students and typically provide information on course updates and developments. When you enter your course, the announcements page always appears first. You can also view the announcements at any time by clicking the **Announcements** link in the course menu.

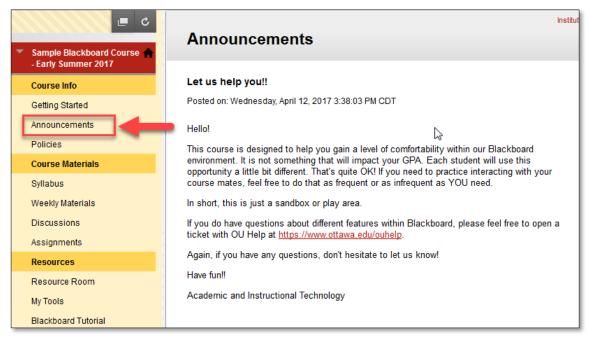


Image 7: The Announcements page.



### **COURSE INFO: POLICIES**

The **Policies** link under Course Info brings you to the University-wide policies and the course-specific policies. **You are responsible** for **reading and understanding these**. Contact your instructor if you have any questions. Refer to your student handbook to view all University student policies.

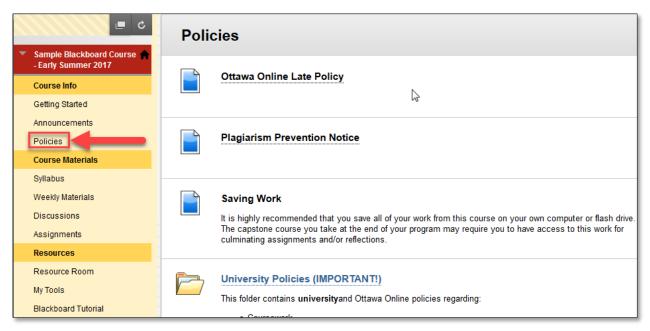


Image 8: The Policies page. The policies listed on this page are the same for every online course.



### **COURSE MATERIALS: SYLLABUS**

To view the syllabus, click **Syllabus** under the **Course Materials** section of the course menu. Ottawa University syllabi are designed in a three part format, divided into **Course Description and Objectives**, **Activities and Assignments**, and **University and Course Policies**. These links open files in a new window. Please review these for each course you take.

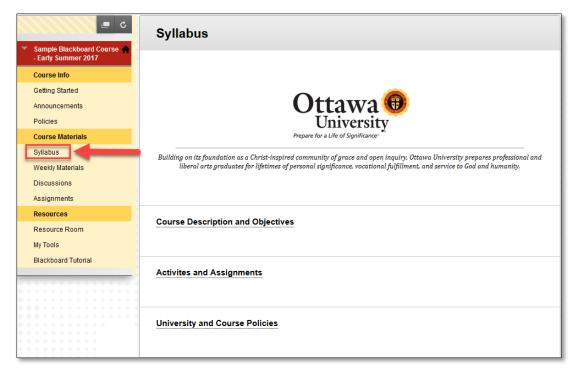


Image 9: The Syllabus link on the course menu and the three-part syllabus format.



### **COURSE MATERIALS: WEEKLY MATERIALS**

Your course materials are accessed via the **Weekly Materials** link. The Weekly Materials page shows the folders (or links) that contain the materials and information you need to complete your coursework. The organization of content in ground courses may vary as **Weekly Materials** could be named **Course Materials** or divided into weekly folders in the course menu.

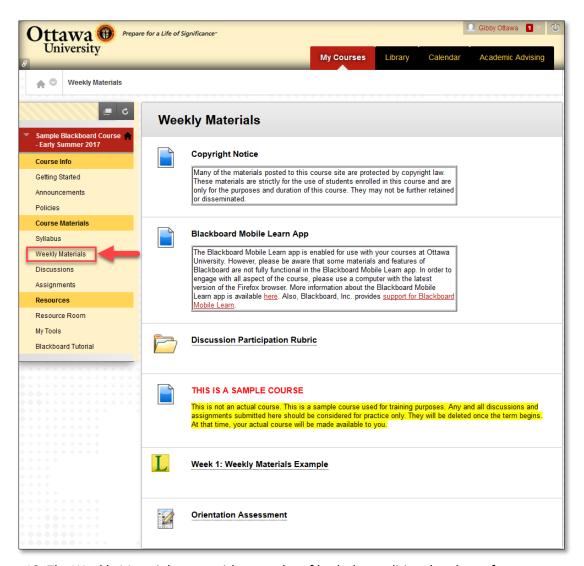


Image 10: The Weekly Materials page with examples of both the traditional and new formats.



### **COURSE MATERIALS: DISCUSSIONS**

The discussion forums are located under the link titled **Discussions**, under **Course Materials** in the course menu. To work in a specific forum, click the title of the forum to open it.

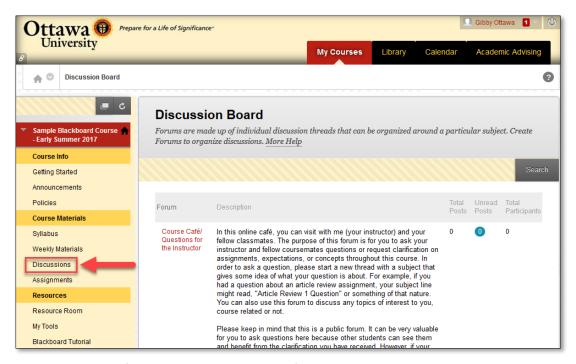


Image 11: An example of the Discussions screen and forums.

Once inside the discussion forum, you can view all the posts already made by other students. Discussion Forums have two view options: **List View** and **Tree View**. List View appears by default, as shown below:

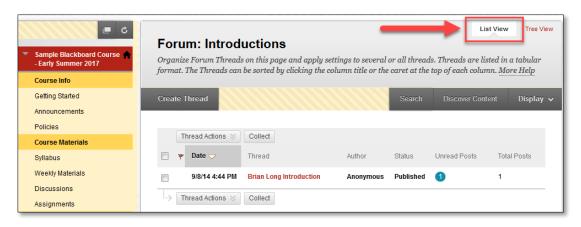


Image 12: The Introductions forum shown in List View.



Both views provide a list of threads in the forum. However, **Tree View** provides the ability to expand and collapse folders by using the plus/minus icon next to each message, and most students find this view more user-friendly. Switch to Tree View by clicking on Tree View in the upper right-hand corner of the screen.

In most forums, you reply to an existing thread. However, in the **Introductions** forum, you need to create a thread to introduce yourself. In fully online classes, this forum and the Course Café forum are the only forums that allow you to create a new thread. To do this, click **Create Thread**.

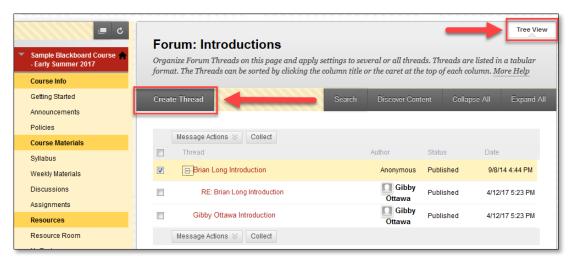


Image 13: The threads within a discussion forum displayed in Tree View.

All discussion posts require a subject. Type your subject in the **Subject** box. Your introduction text is typed in the **Message** area of the text editor.

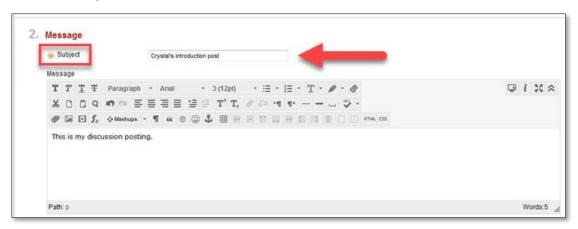


Image 14: The Create Thread input screen.



Most discussion forums are not configured to allow students to attach files. For conversational discussions, do not attach your post as a separate file. Putting your ideas in a separate, attached file makes it hard for your classmates to follow the conversation thread. Some special forums, such as the Introductions forum or a forum in which students are sharing their work, allow for attachments. This is done identically as submitting assignment documents. If you need to review those steps, please see the section below on uploading assignment files.

At the bottom right you have three options: **Cancel, Save Draft,** and **Submit**. When you save a submission as a draft, you can come back and edit it later. To enter your thread in the discussion, select **Submit**.

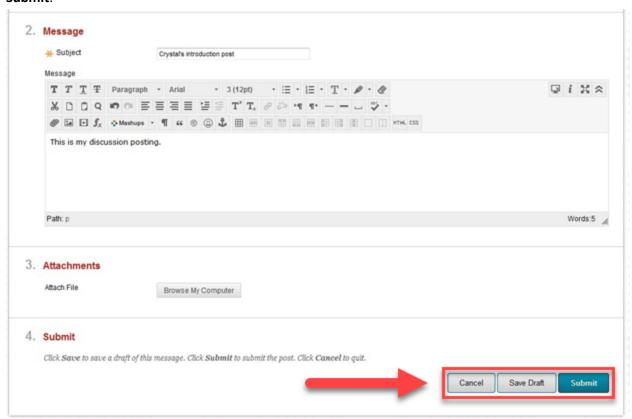


Image 15: The Create Thread screen with the Submit button highlighted in the bottom-right corner of the window.



Once you have submitted your discussion post, a green bar confirms the success of your submission. You can also view your post in the forum.

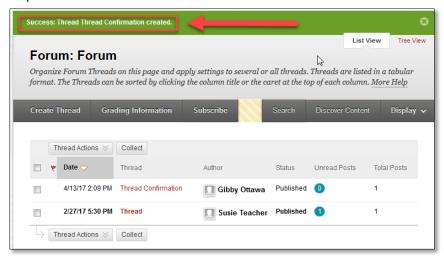


Image 16: The green confirmation bar appears at the top of the screen and the new thread is visible.

To reply to the instructor's opening prompt/question or to another student's post: Simply click on the title of the discussion post to open it.



Image 17: The title of a discussion post highlighted.



The post you are replying to is completely visible. To reply, click on the Reply button shown in the image



below:

Image 18: The location of the Reply button.

The process of writing a reply is like creating a new thread. One difference is that the subject is already filled in for you. As with your initial post, you must click **Submit** to post to the forum.

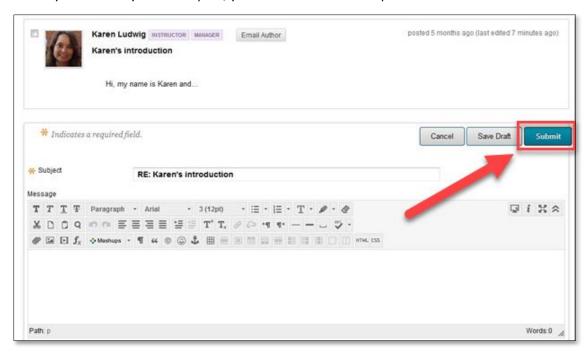


Image 19: An example of a reply to a student's introduction. Note the location of the Submit button.



Once you submit your reply, a confirmation appears at the top of the thread detail screen.



Image 20: The green confirmation bar appears at the top of the screen.

Click the **OK** button in the bottom-right corner to return to the forum's main page.



Image 21: Note the location of the OK button.



### **ASSIGNMENTS**

To submit an assignment, locate **Assignments** in the main menu. Important Note: Ground courses and online courses still in the traditional format do not have a menu item for Assignments. In those courses, assignments are in the **Weekly Materials** (or **Course Materials**) menu item.

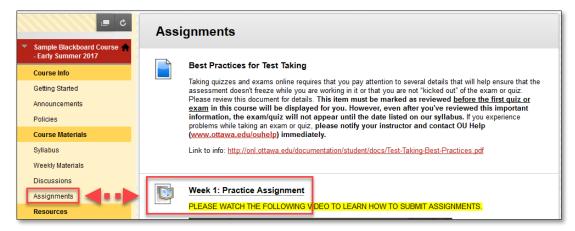


Image 22: Some courses have assignment links located within the Course Material or Weekly Materials area (this is common for face-to-face classes, and online courses in the traditional course format).



- 1. Click on the title of the assignment to open it. All the assignment information including the title of the assignment, the instructions, and the points possible appear in the Assignment Information section. Below that is the Assignment Submission section. There you have a choice of either typing your submission or attaching a file. Most often you will not type your assignment. In many instances, you will be asked to prepare your assignment in an application such as a word processing program, and upload the file as explained below.
- To upload an assignment file, scroll down to the Attach File option and click on Browse My Computer.

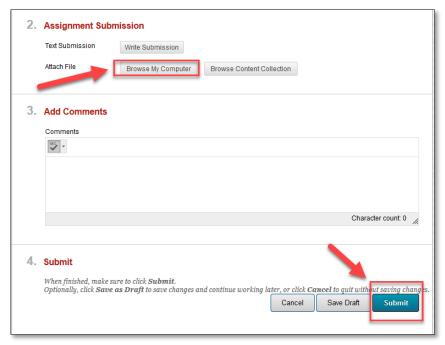


Image 23: The Browse My Computer button is located to the right of the Attach File option. The Submit button is at the bottom right corner of the screen.



3. A separate window launches that allows you to look on your computer for the file you want to attach. Click on the document and select **Open** (this does not actually open your file).

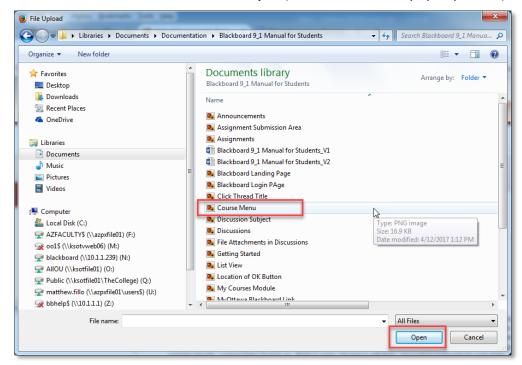


Image 24: Files are attached by clicking on the document and then clicking the Open button.

4. The selected file appears in the Attached files area. Important Note: Do not use special characters in your file name (such as &, %, or #) or a file error may occur.

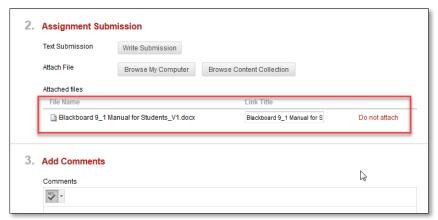


Image 25: The selected file appears in the Attached files section when properly attached. The instructor can view this file after the assignment is submitted.



5. You can also add any comments you would like in the Comments box to your instructor (only your instructor can see these comments – other students are not be able to view them). To submit your assignment, you **must** click the **Submit** button. If you click **Save as Draft**, it will save the information for your future access but it will not be available to your instructor until you return and click **Submit**.

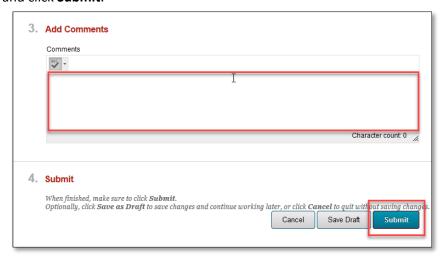


Image 26: The Upload Assignment page with the Submit button highlighted.

6. After you click submit, you are brought to the Review Submission History screen. A green bar appears at the top showing you that the assignment was submitted successfully. If for some reason the submission failed, this bar would be red and you would be instructed to resubmit the assignment.

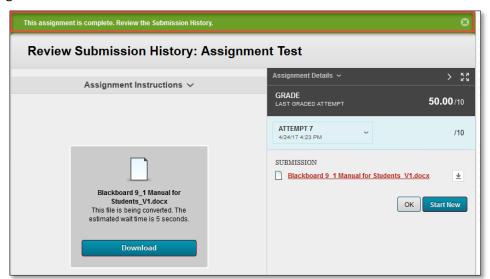


Image 27: The green confirmation bar at the top of the Review Submission History screen.



7. Furthermore, the Review Submission History screen shows the date and time the assignment was submitted as well as the student's comments and any files that have been attached.

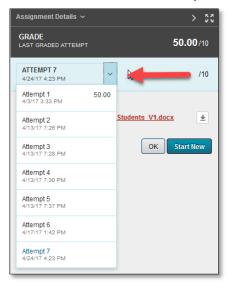


Image 28: The Review Submission History screen.

### **RESOURCES**

#### **RESOURCE ROOM**

The Resource Room contains academic resources, technical help, bookstore access, and other support services. To access it, click **Resource Room** on the menu.

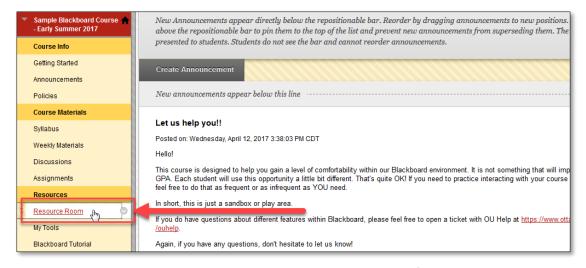


Image 29: The link to the Resource Room is located toward the bottom of the course menu.



The Resource Room opens in a new window.

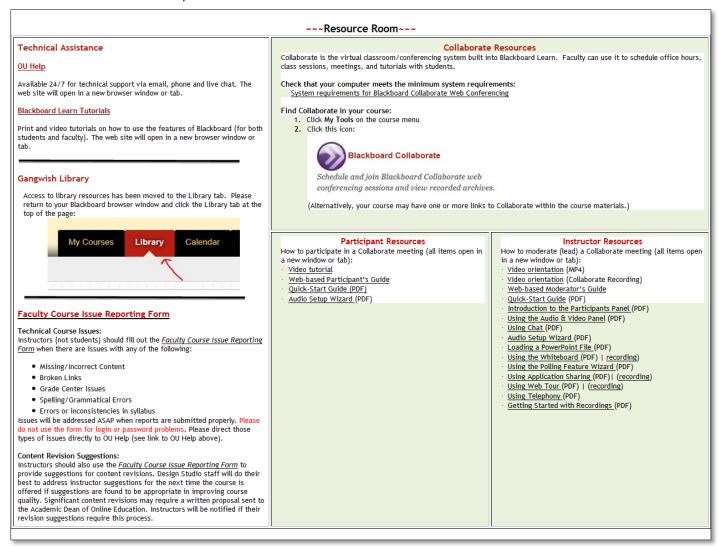


Image 30: The Resource Room web page.



#### MY TOOLS

The **My Tools** area is where you can find the class roster, send email, and where you can go to check grades and view instructor feedback.

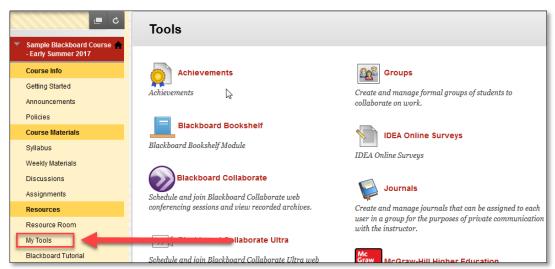


Image 31: The My Tools Page

#### TO SEND AN EMAIL

1. Click Send Email in the My Tools area.



Image 32: The location of the Send Email link.



Choose the set of users whom you would like to email. It is suggested that you choose Select
Users and choose the specific people whom you want to email from a list. That option is
demonstrated in this manual.

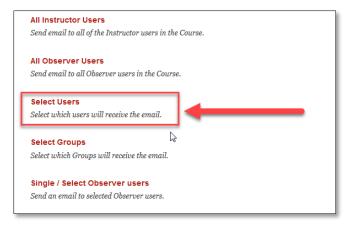


Image 33: The Select Users option is located toward the bottom of the Send Email screen.

3. Select the names of the people you want to email and use the arrow to add them to the Selected list.

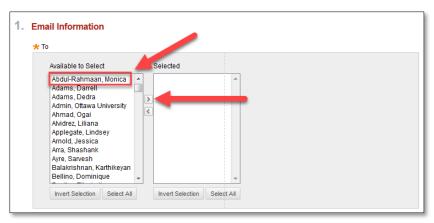


Image 34: The Select Users page.

If you accidently move the wrong names over, you can deselect them by clicking on their name and using the left arrow button to move them back to the Available to Select list.



4. Type in your Subject and message. You can add an attachment to the message if desired. This is done the same way as submitting an assignment document file. If you need to review those steps, please see the section on uploading an assignment file. Once you are satisfied with your message, click **Submit**.

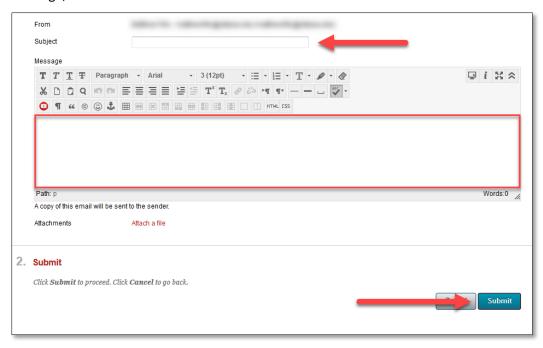


Image 35: The Subject and Message areas of the Select Users page.

After you submit, the main **Send Email** page appears along with a green confirmation bar at the top showing that the email was successfully sent. You also receive a copy of this email in your OU student email account Inbox (not in your Sent folder) for your records.

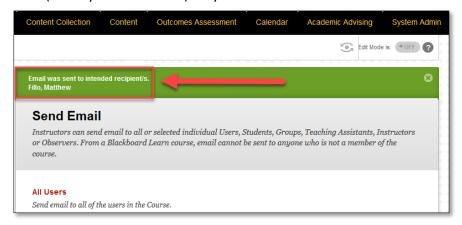


Image 36: The green confirmation bar appears at the top of the screen.



#### **MY GRADES**

To access view your grades for a course in Blackboard, go to My Tools > View Grades.



Image 37: The View Grades button is located on the bottom-right side of the Tools menu.

A screen showing all the grade book items appears showing your total grade so far, items that have already been graded, items waiting to be graded, and future assignments. Click on the title of a graded assignment to view details such as your instructor's feedback.

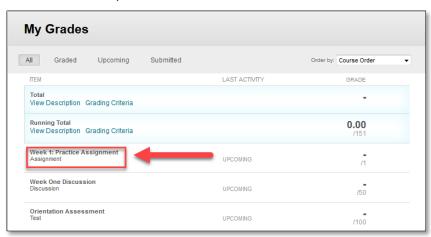


Image 38: An example of a student's grade book.



This brings you to the **Review Submission History** page. It section provides a snapshot of your submission. The date and time of your submission, comments for and from the instructor, and the file submitted (if one is attached) are viewable.

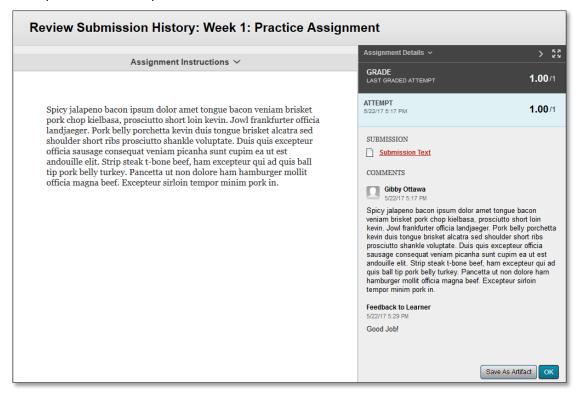


Image 39: The Review Submission History page provides detailed information about submitted assignments, the grade received and any comments from the instructor.