

# University of Denver Blackboard Student Tip Sheet 2009

## About Blackboard

Blackboard is an online learning management software program that allows instructors to create web-based content for their courses (syllabus, assignments, exams, lectures, outlines, presentations, images, web links, etc.). Blackboard also facilitates online communication through the email and discussion board tools.

## Blackboard Username and Password

Your **DU ID** is your Blackboard Username and your DU Passcode (PIN) is your Bb Password. Below are options for accessing your Blackboard course containers.

### 1) Direct Access to Blackboard

Go to **http://blackboard.du.edu**. Click the **Login** button and enter your DU ID and passcode.

- OR -

### 2) Log into WebCentral and click on the **Courses** Tab

**Important:** If you are taking an online exam in Blackboard, do not access Blackboard via webCentral.

## Blackboard Student Support

Call the DU helpdesk at 303.871.4700 during normal business hours. From within a Blackboard course, click on the **Course Tools** link on the main course menu and then click on the **User Manual** link.

## Navigation within a Blackboard course

The course navigation menu along the left side of a Blackboard course gives you access to the course's content, assignments, communication tools, etc. Your instructor may choose to have several menu items in a Blackboard course, or they may choose to have only a few, depending on how the instructor wants to organize their Blackboard course. Click on Detail View to expand the course menu.

An instructor can make choices about the titles on the different menu items. For example, instead of a Syllabus link, you could have one that is labeled Course Information.

## Blackboard Communications Tools

### E-mail

An email distribution list is automatically created within your Blackboard course container. To send an email within Blackboard, simply click on the E-mail link from the main course navigation menu.

E-mails sent from within Blackboard are sent to the participant's DU email. All Blackboard email will be sent to your DU email address. You can set an **auto-forward of email** to another email account – to either consolidate your email or send it somewhere more convenient. Click on the Options tab within webCentral email to modify these settings or visit the url below to forward your DU email to an external email address:

<https://taurus.cair.du.edu/cgi-bin/emam/login>

If you have questions, contact the DU help desk at 303/871-4700

## Roster

Click on the **Communication** link and then **Roster** to view a list of fellow students in your Blackboard course. Click on the “**Search**” button to view all students enrolled in the course. If a student has created a Blackboard Homepage, you can view it by clicking on the student's name.

## Discussion Board

The Discussion Board is an asynchronous communication tool that allows students and instructors to participate in online discussions without requiring all class participants to be online at the same time. The Blackboard discussion board is organized into **Forums**. Forum messages are grouped in threads that contain a main posting and all related replies. To access the Discussion Board, click on the **Discussion Board** link from the main menu.

All users will also see a Search function at the top of the Discussion Board. The Search feature will allow users to search either the main Discussion Board or Group boards.

BB 7.1 - WHAT'S NEW > DISCUSSION BOARD

**Discussion Board**

Forum

Search   After Jun 13 2007  Before Jun 13 2007

in Current Discussion Board

| Display Order | Forum  | Manage | Remove | Copy |
|---------------|--|--------|--------|------|
| 1             | <a href="#">Sample Forum</a><br>This is an example of a discussion thread but does not allow students to add new threads. This forum also allows students to rate posts. |        |        |      |

Click on the **Forum Title (ex: Sample Forum)** to view or reply to messages posted within a forum.

## Reading and Replying to a Thread

Clicking on the thread link will allow students to read the first post and then reply to it.

Thread Remove Collect Lock Unlock Change Status to: Published Go

Display Published GO Search   After Jun 13 2007  Before Jun 13 2007

in Current Forum

|                          | Date            | Thread                               | Author       | Status    | Unread Posts | Total Posts |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 6/13/07 9:19 AM | <a href="#">Subscribe to threads</a> | Kathy Keaims | Published | 1            | 1           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 6/13/07 9:22 AM | <a href="#">Rate Posts</a>           | Kathy Keaims | Published | 2            | 2           |

Select All Go

To read a message, click on the subject name in the 1<sup>st</sup> column

## Saving Drafts

Users can save posts as drafts, allowing students and instructors alike to work on a post over more than one Blackboard session until the post is ready for publishing. At that point, the user would just click Submit instead of Save.

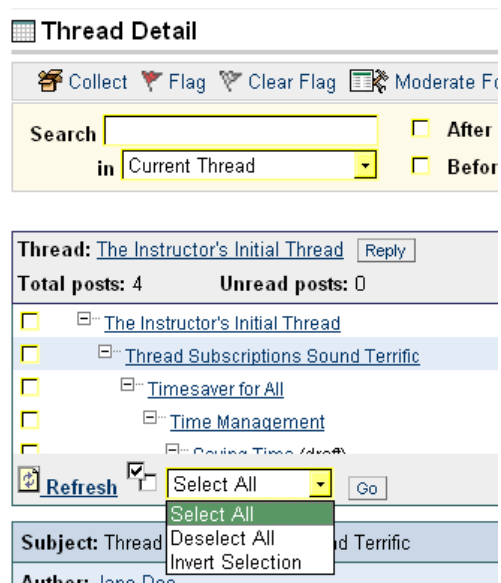
## Searching Forums

A search function appears at the top of the page throughout the Discussion Board. The search includes a keyword field, options for where to search, and date restrictions.

The search function starts at the current level, and options exist to work up. For example, in a thread, the default search option only searches that thread, but options exist to search the entire forum or all forums, including any forums that appear in the user's groups.

## Collecting Posts

Users can group posts into Collections, which is handy for reading multiple posts at once. One clicks a checkbox next to the desired posts, or uses a selection dropdown field and clicks **Go**.



## Filtering Collected Posts

After clicking Collect, the user can sort and filter to customize the Collection for easy viewing and printing. Filtering options include filtering by Author and by Status. For instance, one might choose to see all of Jane Doe's Published posts.

## Sorting Collected Posts

With the Sort feature, one can choose to see the posts according to Author, Date, Subject, or Thread.

## Printing Collected Posts

A Print option appears at the top of the Collect page to make it easier to print just the discussion posts.

## Blackboard Course Tools

### Digital Drop Box

The **Digital Drop box** can be used to send electronic assignments (Word docs, etc.) to your instructor. To access the Digital Drop Box, click on the **Course Tools** link from the main course menu. To "**Send**" a file is to actually send it to the instructor's Digital Drop Box. To send a file to your instructor:

- Click on the **Course Tools** line from the main Blackboard course menu
- Click on Digital Drop Box link
- Click **Send File**
- In the File Information area, **Name** (Ex: Assignment 2 – Keairns)
- Click on the **Browse** Button and locate your file on your computers hard drive or disk
  - **Important information about filenames** – Blackboard has issues with filenames that include special characters such as #, & or filenames that contain spaces. Example: "smith\_assignment1" is an acceptable filename, "smith assignment #1" is not.
- Add Comments and
- Click **Submit**

You should get a message that the file was "submitted" and the date. The Instructor will receive the file with the date and time on which it was submitted. To "Add" a file just means that you save your file(s) to the server, so it will ONLY be visible to you. A student without a printer might use it to save their file, in order to print it later at a different location. The student will see the file in their digital drop box, with the message: "Posted on:" with the date. The file will not be sent to the instructor until they actually "send" the file.

### Blackboard Homepage

Follow the steps below to create a Blackboard homepage:

- Click on the **Course Tools** link on the course menu
- Click on the **Homepage** link
- Enter the homepage information into the areas provided. You may enter text information as well as an image and links to favorite websites to the homepage area.
- Click **Submit** when done

Note: To view the Homepage, go to the **Roster** which is located under the Communication area.

### Check Grades

If your instructor is using the Blackboard gradebook to post your course grades, click on the **My Grades** link under the Course Tools area to check your grades.