

August 10, 2020

Colleagues,

We are asking all faculty to use Blackboard as a key tool for posting course documents and communicating with students. Using Blackboard will provide a consistent place for students to locate course information and to communicate with you. In an effort to facilitate the ease of faculty getting up-to-speed with Blackboard the attached document provides guidance to:

1. Add a course syllabus for ease of accessibility and consistency by students,
2. Upload a course schedule (which can also be embedded within, or attached to, your syllabus),
3. Provide contact information and virtual office hours, and
4. Create an announcement and email contact via Blackboard.

For faculty teaching an online or hybrid/mixed technology course, it is important to familiarize yourself with “regular and substantive interactions” to assure protection of students, faculty, and the institution (see item 5. of the attached document). You may find the excerpt for the Department of Education’s finding against Western Governors University and the subsequent financial judgment of interest. Finally, the four elements for regular and substantive interaction guidance provided to faculty at The Ohio State University may be beneficial. Elements include interaction initiated by the instructor, regular and frequent interactions, meaningful interactions of an academic nature, and interaction initiated by academic personnel that meet accrediting body standards.

We hope you will utilize this document to assist you with your preparations. As always, we thank each of you for your expertise and your support of our students. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your continual support of our students.

Sincerely,



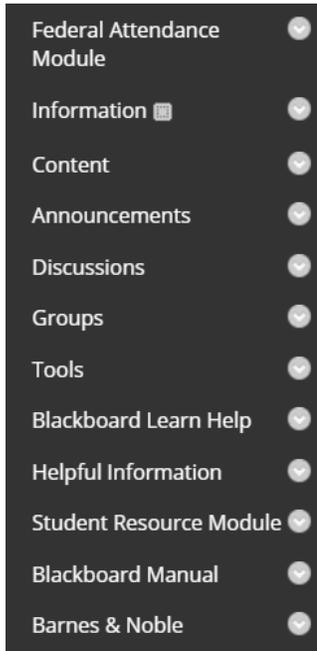
Barbara J. Johnson, Ph.D.

Vice President for Academic Affairs

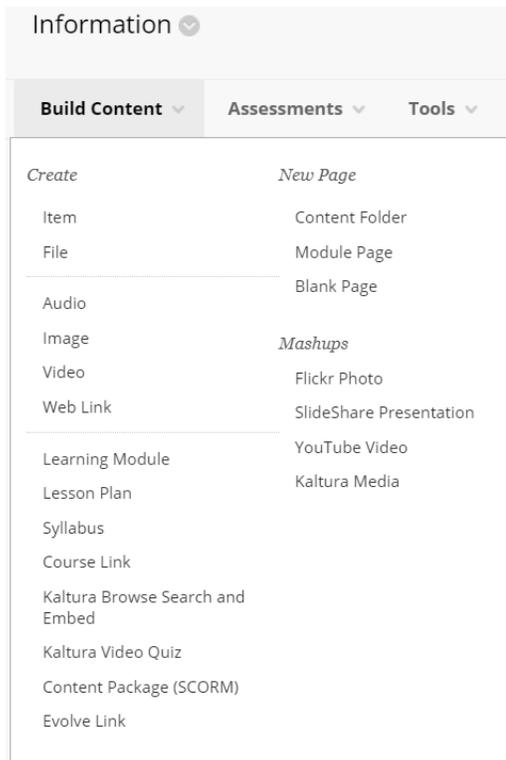
Arkansas Tech University – Blackboard Expectations

1. Syllabus

The first step to include the syllabus in your course Blackboard shell is determining where to place it. Several options are available, none of which are incorrect. The key is ease of accessibility by the student. The most common options are Content and Information. For this example, we will place the syllabus in the Information section.



Step 1: Click on **Information** to open the section.



Step 2: Click the **Build Content** drop down arrow. Click on Syllabus.

Arkansas Tech University – Blackboard Expectations

You are now on the Add Syllabus page. We are working with the assumption your syllabus is prepared and saved on your computer.

* Indicates a required field.

NAME _____

* Syllabus Name

PIRA 1003 Introduction to Pirating

SYLLABUS _____

Create New Syllabus Use Existing File

Attach File

Browse My Computer

Browse Content Collection

Click **Submit** to proceed.

Step 3: For *Syllabus Name*, enter the text you want to be visible to the student (e.g., TECH 1001 Syllabus).

Next, click *Use Existing File*.

Navigate to the syllabus file location by clicking *Browse My Computer*. Select the file.

SYLLABUS _____

Create New Syllabus Use Existing File

Attach File

Browse My Computer

Browse Content Collection

Attached files

File Name

 OL 4443 Professional Leaders Syllabus 15 Week (Fall 2020).doc

Step 4: Verify you have uploaded the correct file by reviewing the File Name.

Click **Submit** to proceed.

Arkansas Tech University – Blackboard Expectations

You are now on the Content Information page. You may add any additional information you desire to convey to your students regarding the syllabus.

CONTENT INFORMATION

* Name

Color of Name █ Black

Text
For the toolbar, press ALT+F10 (PC) or ALT+FN+F10 (Mac).



Please carefully review Section 5: Late Work Policy.

Path: p

Step 5: After you enter information (not required), click **Submit**. Additional action is not necessary.

The syllabus is now available to students in the Information section of Blackboard.

Information

Build Content Assessments Tools Partner Content

 **PIRA 1003 Introduction to Pirating**

Attached Files: [OL 4443 Professional Leaders Syllabus 15 Week \(Fall 2020\)\(1\).doc](#) (100.5 KB)

Please carefully review Section 5: Late Work Policy.

Should you need to change the file or edit the guidance to students, click the drop-down arrow next to the name of the syllabus and select *Edit*.

Arkansas Tech University – Blackboard Expectations

2. Course Schedule

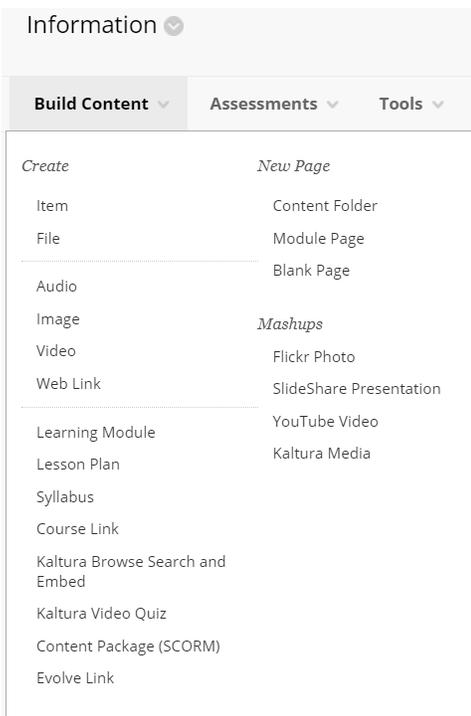
If your detailed course schedule is embedded within (or attached to) your syllabus, you do not need to take any additional action; however, you may want to include guidance to students on where to find the course schedule in the syllabus description above.

If you prefer to upload your course schedule as a separate document, follow the syllabus guidance above.

3. Contact Information and Virtual Office Hours

Your contact information and guidance for office hours will be included in your syllabus; however, it is a best practice to make this information readily accessible to students. As with the syllabus and course schedule, the two primary choices for entry are Information and Content.

For the purposes of the example, select Information.



The screenshot shows a navigation menu with 'Information' selected. Below it, three tabs are visible: 'Build Content', 'Assessments', and 'Tools'. The 'Build Content' tab is expanded, showing a list of options under 'Create' and 'New Page'.

Category	Item
Create	Item
	File
	Blank Page
New Page	Content Folder
	Module Page
	Mashups
	Flickr Photo
	SlideShare Presentation
	YouTube Video
	Kaltura Media
	Learning Module
	Lesson Plan
	Syllabus
Other	Course Link
	Kaltura Browse Search and Embed
	Kaltura Video Quiz
	Content Package (SCORM)
	Evolve Link

Step 1: Click the **Build Content** drop down arrow. Click on Item.

Arkansas Tech University – Blackboard Expectations

CONTENT INFORMATION

Name

Color of Name █ Black

Text
For the toolbar, press ALT+F10 (PC) or ALT+FN+F10 (Mac).



Instructor Name: Dr. Moody Blue
Office Hours: Virtually via [WebEx](#) or Voice Monday and Wednesday 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
Office Phone: 479.xxx.xxxx
Email: mblue1@atu.edu

Path: p

Step 2: Enter your information in the text box. Click *Submit*.

After adding your syllabus and contact information, your Information section now appears as follows. Should you choose, you can enter or upload any additional information or guidance you desire to make available to your students.

Information ⌵

Build Content ⌵ **Assessments** ⌵ **Tools** ⌵ **Partner Content** ⌵



PIRA 1003 Introduction to Pirating ⌵

Attached Files: [OL 4443 Professional Leaders Syllabus 15 Week \(Fall 2020\)\(1\).doc](#) ⌵ (100.5 KB)

Please carefully review Section 5: Late Work Policy.



Contact Information and Office Hours ⌵

Instructor Name: Dr. Moody Blue
Office Hours: Virtually via WebEx or Voice Monday and Wednesday 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
Office Phone: 479.xxx.xxxx
Email: mblue1@atu.edu

Arkansas Tech University – Blackboard Expectations

4. Announcements and Email Contact via Blackboard

When you post announcements in Blackboard, and you select to also deliver the announcement via email, you deliver the information in two modalities and create a permanent record of the distribution to your students.

First, click on **Announcements** in the left-hand menu of your Blackboard course. Next underneath the **Announcements** guidance, click *Create Announcement*.

* Indicates a required field.

ANNOUNCEMENT INFORMATION

* Subject



Black

Message

Path: p Words:0

Enter the subject of your announcement (e.g., Module 1 Readings and Assignments).

Next, enter your guidance to students in the text box.

Arkansas Tech University – Blackboard Expectations

ANNOUNCEMENT INFORMATION

* Subject

Welcome to PIRA 1003 Introduction to Pirating

Black

Message

Welcome to PIRA Introduction to Pirating!

Do this first: Complete the Federal Attendance Module (see the link on the left-hand navigation pane).

Next: Open the Start Here! (accessed by the Content link on the left-hand navigation pane).

Your initial assignments for the Start Here! module are due at 11:59 p.m. on Monday, January 20 at 11:59 p.m.

Path: p Words:120

Once your text is entered in the Message field, you will select your **Web Announcement Options**.

Duration: You may set the duration the announcement is available by selecting “Date Restricted”; however, if you select “Not Date Restricted” the announcement remains visible for the duration of the term, or until you choose to remove it.

Email Announcement: By selecting “Send a copy of this announcement,” all users enrolled in your course (students, graduate assistants, etc.) will receive an email duplicating the announcement.

WEB ANNOUNCEMENT OPTIONS

Duration

Not Date Restricted

Date Restricted

Email Announcement

Send a copy of this announcement

Arkansas Tech University – Blackboard Expectations

Here is how the email will appear to all users in your course.

jaulgur sandbox2 (jaulgur_sandbox2): Welcome to PIRA 1003 Introduction to Pirating



Jeff John Aulgur - jaulgur@atu.edu <BbNotificatio
n@atu.edu>

Tue 8/4/2020 2:42 PM



Welcome to PIRA Introduction to Pirating!

Do this first: Complete the Federal Attendance Module (see the link on the left-hand navigation pane).

Next: Open the Start Here! (accessed by the Content link on the left-hand navigation pane).

Your initial assignments for the Start Here! module are due at 11:59 p.m. on Monday, January 20 at 11:59 p.m.

Use the "Ask the Class!" discussion forum to your advantage. We are creating and community of learners, and it is critical to the success of the class to engage and participate.

Finally, I am always available to answer your questions or resolve any challenges you may have. I strive to reply to my emails within 24 hours.

I hope you enjoy the journey!

Click **Submit** to post and email the announcement. Click **Cancel** should you choose not to proceed.

As you post additional announcements during the term, your most recent announcements will appear at the top.

Arkansas Tech University – Blackboard Expectations

5. “Regular and Substantive Interactions”

Should circumstances require the migration to a 100% virtual delivery model during the fall term, it is critical for each course to meet the Department of Education’s “regular and substantive interactions” standard (which the Department of Education has yet to formally define). Though they do not provide a definition or a singular test to prove the presence of “regular and substantive interaction” with students; this standard is the test utilized by the Department of Education to differentiate between distance learning (i.e., online courses) and correspondence education.

In 2020, the Department of Education offered the following draft regulatory language addressing three key terms: instructor, regular, and substantive.

Source: <https://wcetfrontiers.org/2020/04/03/new-regs-review-1-regular-substantive-interaction/>

**Note: These are definitions/additional information.

Distance education: Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1)(i) through (1)(iv) of this definition to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor or instructors, and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor or instructors, either synchronously or asynchronously.

1. *The technologies that may be used to offer distance education include —*
 1. *The internet;*
 2. *One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;*
 3. *Audio conferencing; or*
 4. *Other media used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1)(i) through (1)(iii) of this definition.*
2. *For purposes of this definition, an instructor is an individual responsible for delivering course content and who meets the qualifications for instruction established by the institution’s accrediting agency.*
3. *For purposes of this definition, **substantive interaction is engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes at least two of the following:***
 - *Providing direct instruction;*
 - *Assessing or providing feedback on a student’s coursework;*
 - *Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency;*
 - *Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or,*

Arkansas Tech University – Blackboard Expectations

- *Other instructional activities approved by the institution’s or program’s accrediting agency.*
4. ***An institution ensures regular interaction between a student and an instructor or instructors by, prior to the student’s completion of a course or competency—***
 1. *Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and regular basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency; and*
 2. *Monitoring the student’s academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed, on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.*

Why is this important to Arkansas Tech University? The 2017 Western Governors University case (see below) demonstrates the risk to the institution.

“For many observers, the issue came to light via an investigation begun during the Obama administration, one that didn’t bear fruit until September 2017, when an audit by the Education Department’s Office of Inspector General found that most of the courses offered by the nonprofit Western Governors University failed to meet the “regular and substantive interaction” standard. The audit called for WGU, which utilizes a competency-based model, to pay back at least \$713 million in federal financial aid. It also said the university, which enrolls more than 100,000 students, should be ineligible to receive more federal aid.

The audit found that 62 percent of WGU students enrolled in 2014 took at least one of 69 courses that failed to meet the requirements. In its report, OIG said none of the 69 courses “could reasonably be considered as providing regular and substantive interaction between students and instructors.”

Source: <https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2018/08/08/new-debate-regular-and-substantive-interaction-between>

On the following page, please find **clear and concise guidance** The Ohio State University offers to its faculty regarding **regular and substantive interaction**.

Source: <https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/course-design-and-pedagogy/regular-and-substantive-interaction-online-and-distance-learning>

Arkansas Tech University – Blackboard Expectations

Four Elements of Regular and Substantive Interaction

Over time and through the gathering of various interpretations, "regular and substantive interaction" is defined by four elements, outlined in more depth in the article [Interpreting what is Required for Regular and Substantive Interaction](#).

To sum up the elements:

- **Interaction initiated by instructor:** While in distance courses students have a heightened responsibility to take ownership of their learning, the faculty presence, guidance, and initiation of contact is critical. In distance courses, the flow, sequence, and deadlines of the course must be directed by the instructor and the timing of the course set through use of learning activities, online discussion, lectures, etc. In comparison, in correspondence courses students submit work when they finish it and initiate questions when they have them with little or no guidance from the instructor.
- **Initiation of interaction must be regular and pretty frequent:** This element is probably one of the least defined of the bunch. Essentially interaction with students should happen fairly frequently and regularly where students are likely to grow to expect it. A weekly interaction is a good baseline.
- **Interaction must be meaningful or of an academic nature:** Essentially, the interaction should lead toward increased learning and might consist of things like:
 - Regularly scheduled synchronous activities. At The Ohio State University this might equate to regular use of CarmenConnect.
 - Facilitating a study group or online discussion forum.
 - Facilitating faculty-guided independent study.
 - Announcements, email, or social media check-ins initiated by the instructor about aspects of the course, additional guidance, etc.
- **Interaction must be initiated by academic personnel who meet accrediting body standards:** Essentially, interaction should be initiated by someone who is qualified to do so as it relates to the subject matter. At Ohio State, this would fall to qualified faculty or those who meet similar requirements of faculty, lecturers, instructors, etc. For competency-based programs this has been defined by the HLC as "appropriate academic credentials and experience in the applicable knowledge domain".