Blackboard: Discussion Boards for Faculty   (631) 632-2777
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Stony Brook University   http://it.stonybrook.edu

In this document, you will learn:

1. Discussion Board vocabulary
2. How to create a new forum
3. How to modify a forum
4. How to rearrange forums
5. How to read your students' posts
6. How to respond to your students' posts
7. How to grade student participation

About Discussion Boards

Blackboard's **Discussion Board** feature can be used to interact with your students, and for students to interact with each other. Use the Discussion Board to have students:

- Post answers to written assignments, so other students may review them and offer feedback.
- Post reactions to assigned readings, and discuss with the rest of the class.
- "Ask the Professor". Students post questions to you instead of e-mailing you privately. This way, the answers benefit the whole class!

Discussion Board vocabulary

1. **Forums:** A discussion board is comprised of one or more forums. Each forum pertains to a specific topic or assignment. If your class will have to complete three discussion board assignments this semester, you will need to create three separate forums.
2. **Threads:** Forums are comprised of one or more discussions, or threads. When a student wants to start a new discussion in a forum, they create a new thread. Other students can reply to the first to strike up a conversation, or post a new thread to start their own. Responses are grouped together (or "threaded") to help keep track of the conversations.
3. **Posts:** Threads are comprised of one or more posts. Each response in a forum is considered a post, whether it starts a new thread or continues an existing one.
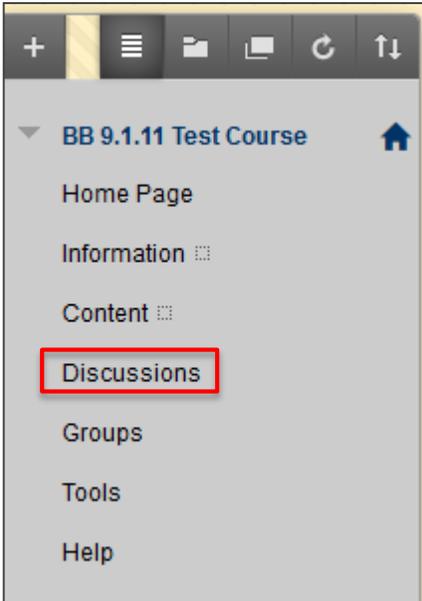
Create a new forum

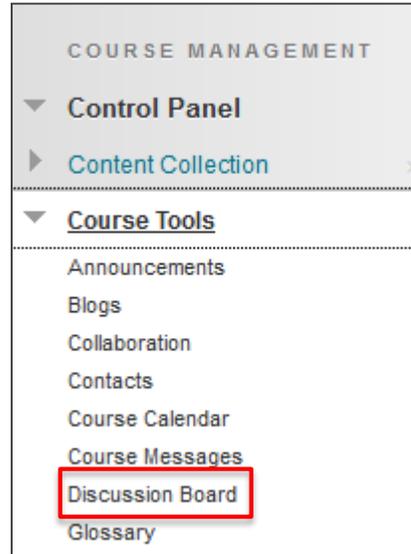1. Enter your course by clicking its name in the **My Courses** module.

I don't see my course!
E-mail your course number and NetID to blackboard@stonybrook.edu.

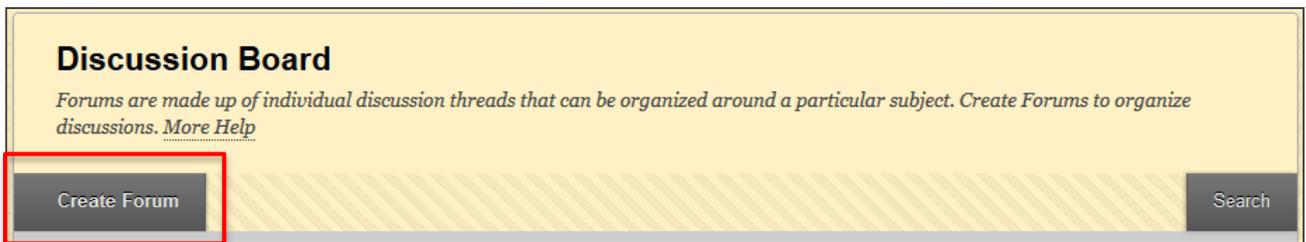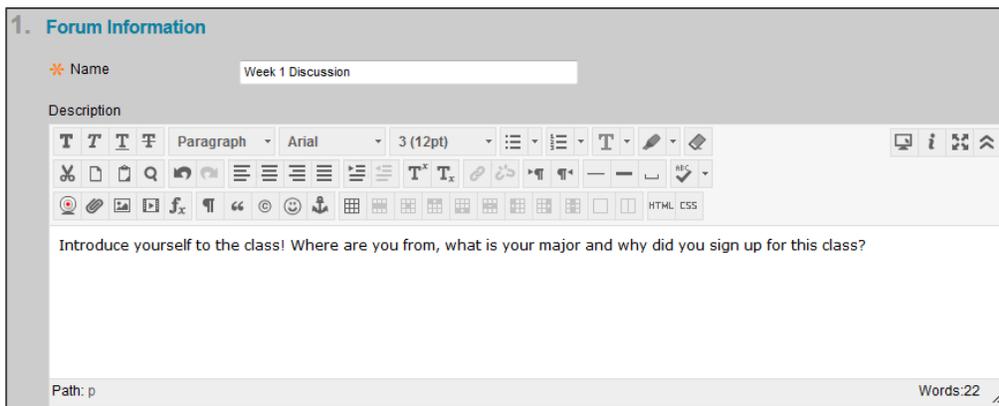2. In the course menu, select **Discussions**.

OR

Go to **Control Panel** > **Course Tools** > **Discussion Board**.

3. Click the **Create Forum** button.

4. **Forum Information:** Enter a name (required) and description (or instructions, optional) for the forum.

5. **Forum Availability:**
   - Leave **Available** at **Yes**.
   - Check the **Display After** box if you want to create this forum now, but make it available to students at a later date. Click the calendar and clock icons to select the date and time you want the forum to open, or type them manually into the boxes provided.
   - Check the **Display Until** box if students have to respond to this forum by a certain date or time. When that date and time has passed, the forum will automatically become unavailable to students.

6. **Forum Settings:** Check the boxes to enable any of the following options:
   - **Viewing Threads/Replies:**
     - **Standard View:** All Threads and posts are viewable to students.
     - **Participants must create a thread in order to view other threads in this forum:** Students must first post their initial thread before they are able to read and reply to their classmates posts.
   - **Grade:** Instructors may grade student participation. We recommend using **Grade Forum**.
   - **Subscribe:** Students may opt in to receive e-mail notifications of new forum activity. We recommend **Allow members to subscribe to forum** > **Include body of post in the email**.
   - **Create and Edit:**
     - **Allow Anonymous Posts**: Students may post without their name attached. There is no way to track anonymous posts.
     - **Allow Author to Delete Own Posts**:
       - **All posts**: A student can delete any post they've already made to the forum.
       - **Only posts with no replies**: A student can only delete their own posts if no one else has replied yet.
     - **Allow Author to Edit Own Published Posts**: A student can make changes to their posts after they've been published.
     - **Allow Members to Create New Threads** (enabled by default): This box must always be checked so students can post to the forum!
     - **Allow File Attachments** (enabled by default): Students can upload documents along with their posts.
     - **Allow Users to Reply with Quote** (enabled by default): Students can quote the person they are responding to in their post.
     - **Force Moderation of Posts:** All student posts are placed in a moderation queue, where instructors may publish or reject based on content.
   - **Additional Options:**
     - **Allow Post Tagging**: Instructors can label, or tag posts based on topic. Students and instructors can then use these tags to read all posts on a specific topic.
     - **Allow Members to Rate Posts:** Students can rate each other's posts on scale of 1 to 5.

7. Click **Submit** at the bottom of the page.

8. The forum will be listed on the Discussion Board. If it's not supposed to be available to students yet, it will say so beneath the Forum title.

- See forum activity at a glance in the three columns on the right.
  - o **Total Posts:** How many posts are in this forum.
  - o **Unread Posts:** How many posts you haven't read yet.
  - o **Total Participants:** How many students have posted so far.

9. Repeat these steps until all forums have been created.

Need to make changes to your forum?

Move your cursor on top of the forum you want to edit and click the down-pointing arrow button to the right of your forum's title.

- **Edit:** Modify the forum's name, instructions, availability and other settings.
- **Grade:** If enabled, grade your students' participation.
- **Manage:** Control who can post to the forum and who cannot.
- **Copy:** Send a copy of the forum to another course. Perfect for courses with multiple sections who have the same assignments.
- **Delete:** Removes the forum and all posts. Deleted forums cannot be recovered.
  - o You may also delete by checking the box to the left of the forum's title, then clicking **Delete** at the top or bottom of the page.

Don't like the way your forums are arranged?

Move your cursor on top of the forum you want to move then click and drag the double arrow button to the left of each forum to move it up or down the list.

Click the two-arrow button near the upper right corner of the Discussion Board module.

TLT Instructional Technology Support Group
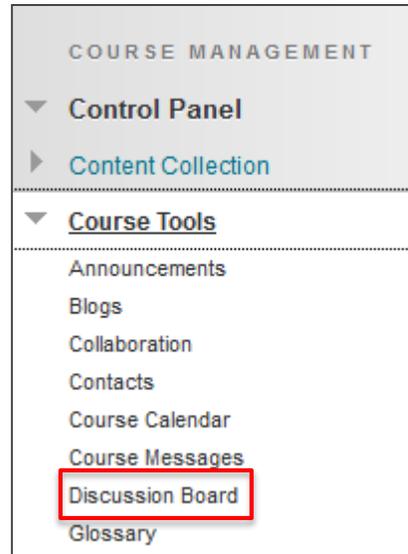
Last updated: 11/20/2013

How to read your students' posts

1. In the course menu, select **Discussions**.

OR
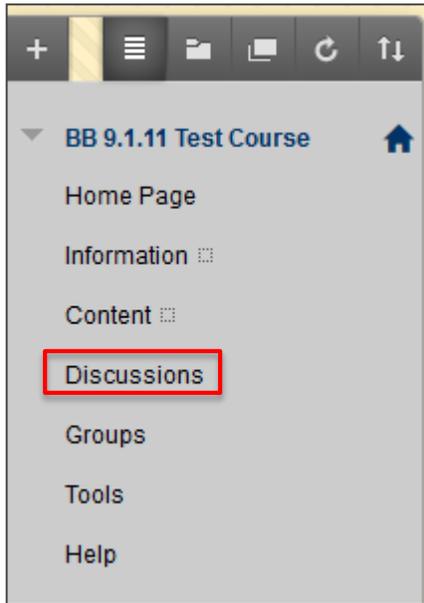
Go to **Control Panel** > **Course Tools** > **Discussion Board**.

2. Select the **name** of a forum to view all posts, or select the number under **Unread Posts** to skip right to those you haven't seen yet.

3. There are two ways to view a discussion forum:

   List View (default)
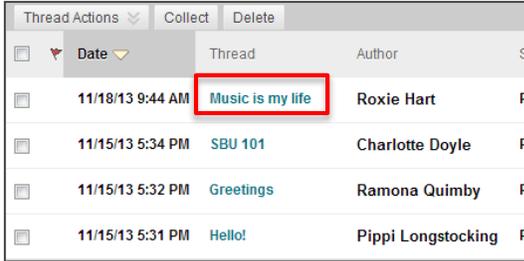   - All threads are divided into separate links.

   OR

   Tree View
   - All threads can be expanded and collapsed on the same page.

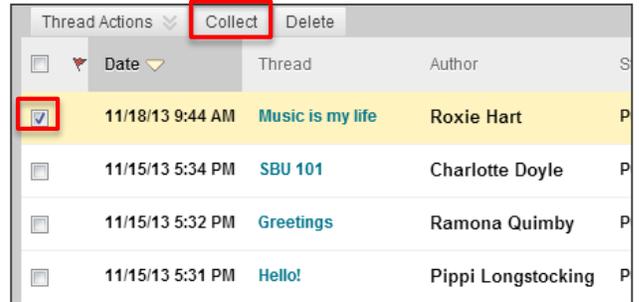   Select your desired view from the upper right corner of the screen.
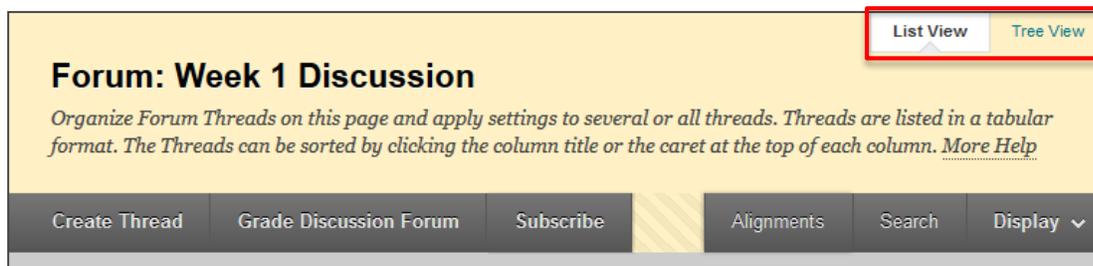
4. To view posts in a thread:

Click the **subject** of the thread.

OR

Check the box to the left of the thread, then click **Collect**. Expand thread and check all boxes when in Tree View. **NOTE**: If you are in Tree View and the threads are not expanded you will only collect the first post for each thread

5. While viewing contents of a thread on the **Thread Details** page, you can scroll down to see the replies to the original post.
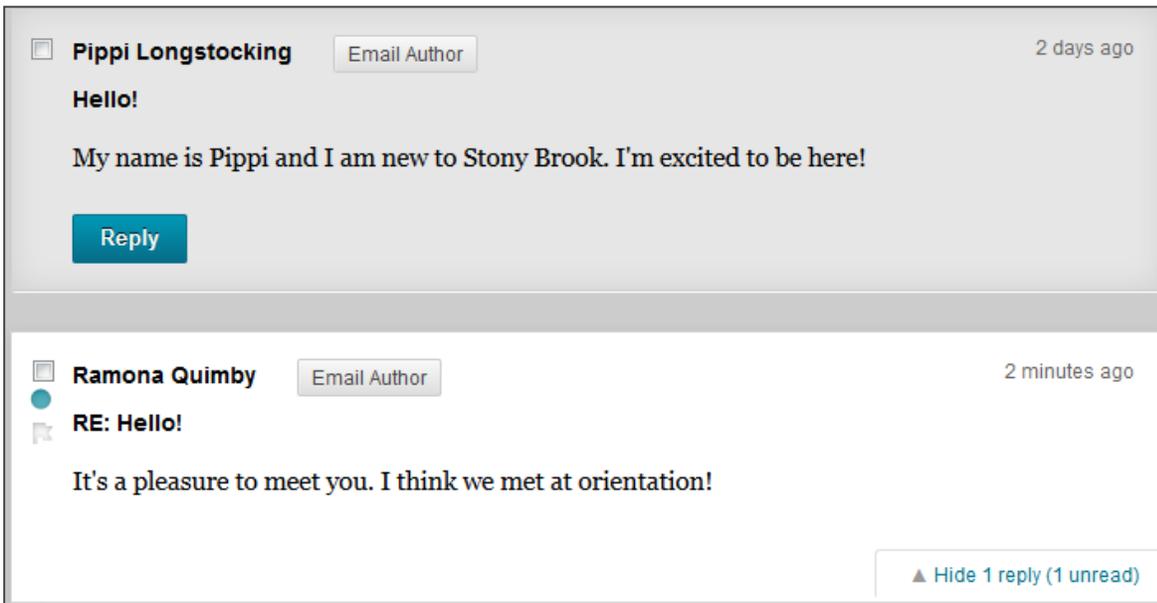
6. Moving your cursor over the post brings up different options:
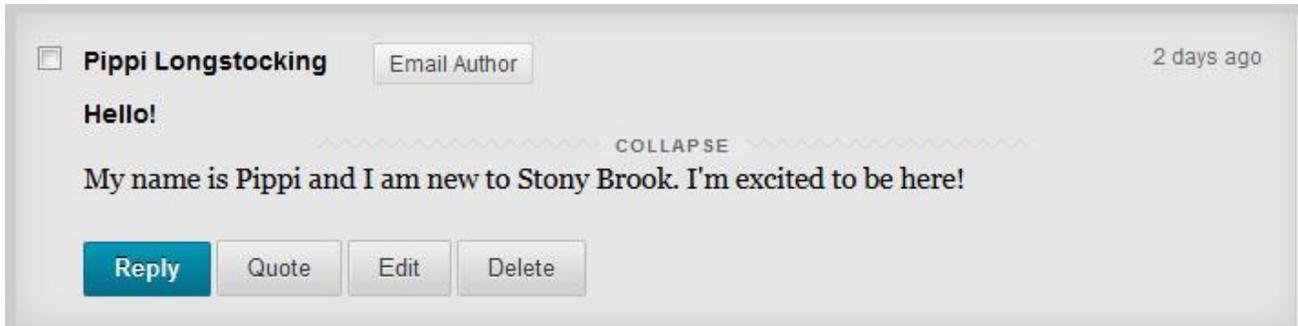
- Email Author allows you to send a message to the student who wrote the message.
- Moving your cursor over the number of days posted, tells you the date and time the post was written.
- Clicking Collapse hides the message of the post.
- Clicking Reply allows you to reply to the post.
- Quote copies the message into your reply.
- Edit allows you to change the post
- Delete allows you to delete the post.

7. Click Ok at the bottom of the page to go back to the forum page.

Respond to student posts

1. Follow the above steps to view a student's post.
2. Click **Reply** or **Quote** above or below the student's post to respond.
3. Compose your response, then click **Submit**.
   - Or, click **Save Draft** to come back and finish it later!

Grade student participation

1. To begin Grading make sure you are on the Discussion Board Page. Click the arrow button to the right of your forum, then select **Grade**. If you do not see Grade listed, select **Edit** and enable grading for that forum.

2. The **Posts** column will list the number of posts made by each student. Click **Grade** for any student.

	Last Name △	First Name	Username	Posts	Grade	
☐	Dallas	Leeloo	**andreastu5**	0	--	Grade
☐	Doyle	Charlotte	**andreastu3**	2	--	Grade
☐	Hart	Roxie	**andreastu4**	1	--	Grade
☐	Longstocking	Pippi	**andreastu**	3	--	Grade
☐	Quimby	Ramona	**andreastu2**	2	--	Grade

3. From the Grade Forum page you will see information on your student's submission:

- **Print Preview:** allows you to print out a copy of your student's posts.
- All posts by a single student are shown.
- **Forum Statistics:** gives you information on how active your student has been in the discussion board.
- **Forum Grade:** allows you to grade and view grade information for your student.
  Contributors: Names of all students who participated in the forum