

# Guide to Personalizing Blackboard Course

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Blackboard (Bb) is a robust and enhanced learning management platform that will help you deliver rich content that gives you maximum control of your classroom. Although the course content is already pre-loaded, Bb needs customization before it is ready for your students. Below you will find a wealth of information about Blackboard, and the tasks that need to be completed before your class begins. As a general rule, you should have access to Blackboard about 14 days (2 weeks) before your class begins. Your students will receive access 10 days before the first day of class. Please be sure that your class is updated at least one week before class begins to allow your students ample opportunity to download the syllabus and browse the course.

**Please complete the tasks identified with a check box  to prepare your course, and compare the syllabus and course for consistency.**

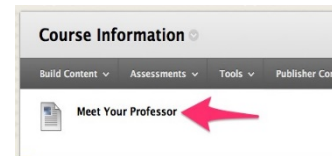
## **YOUR TEACHING MENTOR**

“Iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17 NIV). The AGS staff assigns all new online faculty with a Teaching Mentor to serve and support you during your first course, and to provide support as needed in your second course. Please take advantage of this invaluable resource. Your Teaching Mentor will help you with Bb tools, and is available to assist you with any course- or student-related issue. Your Teaching Mentor is your contact person, and will help resolve any problems by working with the appropriate AGS staff member.

- Connect with your personal Teaching Mentor as soon as they are assigned and set up a call for assistance with personalizing your first online class.
- Schedule another call mid-week of Week 1 to discuss grading and review questions that arise in Week 1.
- Use the Mentor (“Auditor”) Discussion Forum to ask questions, share ideas, and learn about the faculty resources. (Students can see the forum title, but cannot open it.)

## PERSONAL TEACHING PROFILE

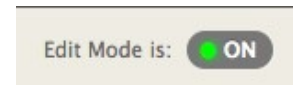
As you are personalizing your first course, work with your Teaching Mentor to integrate your Personal Teaching Profile goals into the course design. There may be specific activities you want to include in the course that need to be vetted, so discuss your PTP with your right away.



## PERSONALIZATION OF YOUR ONLINE COURSE

### Edit Mode

- ❑ First, make sure that Edit Mode is on. You will not be able to change anything in your course if this is off. Look for this button in the top right corner of your course.



Turn Edit Mode off if you wish to see the course as students do.

### Meet Your Professor

The gray bar on the left side of your Home Page is the navigation bar (“nav bar”), from which you can access course links and tools.

- ❑ Fill out the Meet Your Professor section in “Course Information,” accessible from the nav bar. With the Edit Mode on, you can click on the title to complete. Provide students with at least two contact methods, and provide “office hours.” Protect your personal boundaries! Advise students when you’re offline, and remind them to post questions in the General Questions forum or send an email, or in an emergency, text you. Let them know you will respond within 24 hours.
- ❑ In the Professor’s Bio section, mention your academic accomplishments, professional/career status, a bit of personal info (location, family, hobbies, or pets), upload your photo, share your place of worship, and your call and desire to teach at OKWU.

### Due Dates in Blackboard

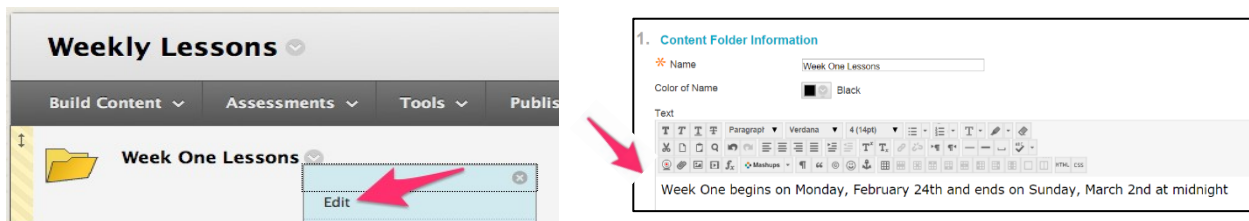
Due Dates are an essential part of your course. Bb sends automatic reminders to students before due dates, and they can see a list of all assignments and their due

dates. For professors, assignments are automatically marked late if they are turned in after the due date, which assists when you are grading. To prepare your course, you will need to add due dates, check Points Possible, and proofread the following areas:

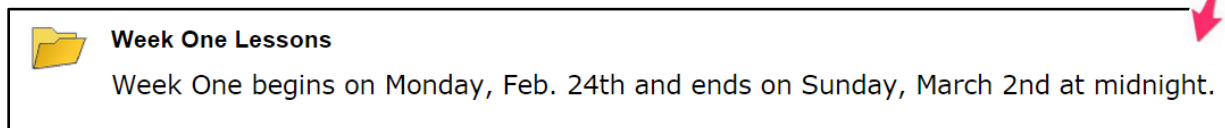
- ❑ *Weekly Lesson Folders – for every week*
- ❑ *Weekly Learning Objectives & Activities document – for every week*
- ❑ *Weekly Discussions – for every DQ and SLDQ in the Weekly Lessons folders*
- ❑ *Main Discussion Board – for Bio and DQ/SLDQ Discussion Forums (Bio Forum has no Points Possible, just a due date)*
- ❑ *Assessments – for every assignment for which students receive points, either individually or with a team.*

To edit folders, discussion board(s), DQs/SLDQs, and assessments, the process is the same. Hover your mouse near the title, and click on the down arrow in a gray circle that appears next to the title to open a drop-down menu with the command of ‘Edit.’ Select ‘Edit’ to make changes. Instructions below demonstrate how to change the due dates for the above listed areas.

Edit all **Weekly Lessons folders** to add the dates the week covers, as shown below.

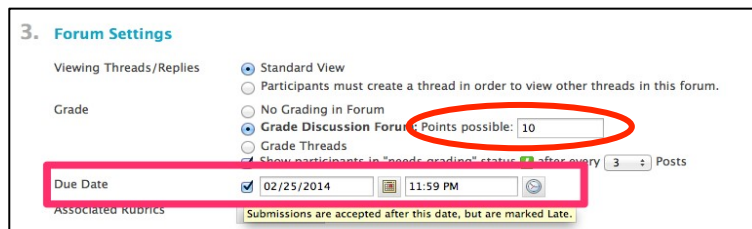
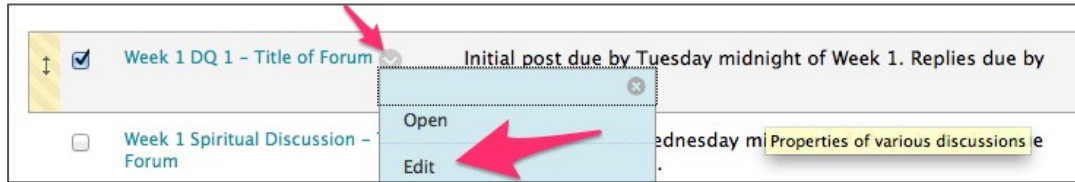


Below is the final view of Week One Lessons folder with the dates the week covers:



## Adding Due Dates to the Discussion Board DQs and SLDQs

Access the Discussion item by clicking the down arrow by the DQ title to Edit, as shown below. The Due Date is set in Forum Settings Section 3, shown below. Review the DQ settings and Points Possible, too. Click Submit when you are finished.



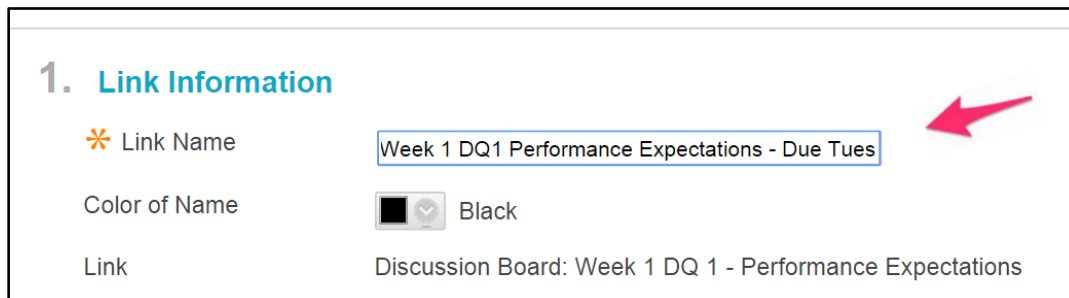
Below is the final view of DQ1 in the Discussion Board with the added due date:



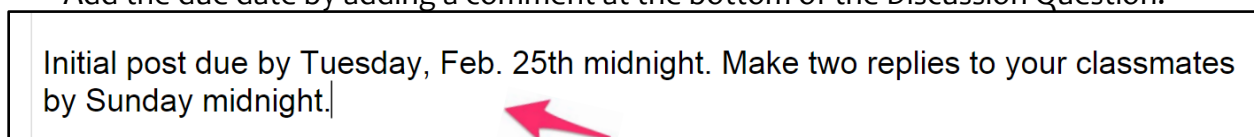
Continue through the Discussion Board and add due dates to each DQ/SLDQ and the Bio Forum in both the written description and in Section 3 Forum settings. Having a calendar in front of you will assist in this process.

**Add due dates for each Weekly Discussion forum in Weekly Lessons folders, as shown below:**


Add the due day in Section 1 Link Information, Link Name



Add the due date by adding a comment at the bottom of the Discussion Question:



Below is the final view of your updated Week 1 DQ1 with the **due day in title**, and **due date at the bottom of the question**:



**Week 1 DQ1 Performance Expectation - Due Tues**

Enabled: Statistics Tracking

It is normal to wonder what to expect when undertaking something new. It is no different when beginning the MBA program. After reading the article on [MBA Performance Expectations](#) and completing the [Learning Style Survey](#), the next step is to see how to put these things to use in the online environment.

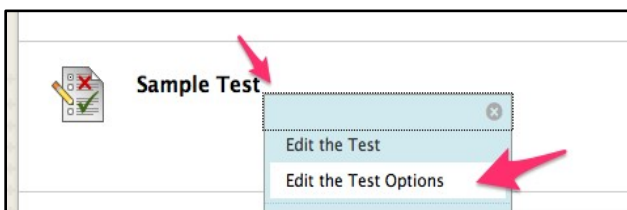
**Question #1**

Based on the online assessment of learning styles, what is your learning style and what does your learning style mean to your success as an online student?

Initial post due by **Tuesday, Feb. 25th midnight**. Make two replies to your classmates by Sunday midnight.

**Set due dates** for all assignments, including Learning Team work. Edit the assignment in the same way you edit a folder, and then select Due Date in Section 5. Click Submit when you are finished.

**Set due dates for Tests and Quizzes.** Access the edit menu and then Edit the Test Options. The due date is set in Section 4. While you are editing, confirm possible points. You have an additional option to lock students out of the test if the due date has passed. You can adjust test options in this edit view. Click Submit when you are finished editing the test or quiz.



Edit the due dates in every week’s Weekly Learning Objectives and Activities document:  
Open the document by clicking on the title.

Add due dates to the “Discuss” and the “Submit” sections, as show below:

**Week One Lessons** ▾

Build Content ▾ Assessments ▾ Tools ▾ Partner Content ▾

**Week One Learning Objectives and Activities** ▾  
Enabled: Statistics Tracking

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**Discuss**

- Post your Bio by Tuesday, Feb. 25 midnight. Read and respond to your classmates' bios during the week.
- Post your initial response to Wk.1 DQ1 by Tuesday, Feb. 25 midnight. Read and reply to at least two of your classmates' posts by Sunday midnight.
- Post your initial response to the Spiritual Life Discussion Question by Wednesday Feb. 26 midnight. Read and reply to at least two of your classmates' posts by Sunday midnight.
- Post your initial response to Wk. 1 DQ2 by Thursday Feb. 27 midnight. Read and reply to at least two of your classmates' posts by Sunday midnight.

**Submit**

- Submit written assignment "Individual Leadership Beliefs Platform" 6-7 pages in APA format by Sunday, Mar. 2 by midnight.

### Class Announcements

- ❑ Create a Welcome Announcement to your students the weekend before the class begins. Announcements are found on the course homepage. To create an announcement, simply click [more announcements...](#) on the lower right hand side of the box and follow the directions.

**My Announcements**

No Course Announcements have been posted today.

[more announcements...](#)



**Announcements can be sent to maintain communication, for a variety of reasons:**

- Welcome Announcement with preview of Week 1 (mandatory)
- Grades Posted - weekly (mandatory)
- End of Week Review / Next Week Preview
- End of Course Announcement (mandatory)
- Course, Due Dates, or Syllabus changes (mandatory)
- Learning Teams: Instructor-selections of members (mandatory, if applicable)
- Learning Team Assignment Information (mandatory, if applicable)

- Videos: Instructor-made or course-related
- Mid-Week reminders, and clarification of weekend assignments
- Reminder of course-spanning assignment
- Topical articles to share
- Encouragement and devotionals
- Reminder about substantive posts, APA format, and DQ/SLDQ issues (desirable)

Announcements can be sent at a pre-scheduled date and time, or sent immediately. If you choose to send an announcement with the email option, it is sent via email immediately, and will also appear in the Announcements section on the Bb home page.

Preferably, draft all Announcements in a Word doc first to review, spell-check, and proofread. You can copy and paste the content into Bb. Format in Word with a 14 pt. font with two spaces between paragraphs. Preview the content one last time before you choose your settings (include email feature if you want students to receive immediately), and hit Submit.

## **LEARNING TEAMS (LT) INFORMATION**

If your class uses a Learning Team assignment, please review the LT information for future use. Many classes include Learning Teams. In Bb, Learning Teams are called “Groups” and when students are assigned to a LT, their nav bar will show a link to “My Groups.” Learning Team members are instructor-selected, not student-selected. Add yourself to each LT, so you receive the LT emails, too.

If the course has LTs, the teams are set up, and need the assignment due date. If the teams are not set up, work with your Teaching Mentor to accomplish this task. Set up the LT Discussion Forums, instructions, and team tools. Recommend students use Zoom to collaborate.

## **COURSE SNAPSHOT**

The Bb **Course Snapshot** summarizes the course, and is located in the Bb Course Learning Information folder, accessed from the nav bar.

Review the content so you are familiar with the summary of the course.

## BLACKBOARD WEEKLY LESSON FORMAT

Each Weekly Lesson folder should include folders and documents in the following order:

### **Weekly Learning Objectives and Activities document that includes:**

Learning Objectives (should list at least 3-4 for each week that reach the overall learning activities in the class) and Learning Activities (should include headers: Read, Discuss, Write and Submit).

### **Weekly Discussions folder (Folder title in blue font)**

Includes DQ1, SLDQ, and DQ2 with added due dates.

These questions are linked to the Main Discussion Board, and students can click the DQ/SLDQ title to take them directly to the Discussion Board, where they will post their original substantive posts and responses.

### **Assignments (Review for clarity of assignment instructions) (Folder title in red font)**

- Written Assignments
- Learning Team Assignments
- Tests or Quizzes

Assignments must be opened to submit work. Students must click on the assignment title to open the assignment, and submit their completed work in Section 2.

## DISCUSSION BOARD FORMAT

In addition to the DQs and SLDQs in the main Discussion Board, there are several ungraded Discussion Forums included at the beginning of your Discussion Board:

- 1.) **“Auditor Forum”** (private, for Teaching Mentor conversations)
- 2.) **Chapel Forum** (for students and faculty use, with anonymous posting allowed)
- 3.) **Bio/Chat Forum** for students to post their bios and then use as a Chat room, which requires a due date in the description and settings
- 4.) **General Questions Forum** for all course-related questions.

*Recommended: Subscribe to Auditor, Chapel and General Questions Forums to receive email notification of posts.*



- ❑ ❑ If your course does not have all of these ungraded forums, your Teaching Mentor will assist you as you set them up, using the “Create Forum” tab. The “Search” tab is used to sort for one student’s posts (or your own), and the up/down arrows allow you to re-order the Discussion Board items. You’ll see these up/down arrows in other areas of Bb, too.



**Discussion Board**  
 Forums are made up of individual discussion threads that can be organized around a particular subject. Create Forums to organize discussions. [More Help](#)

Create Forum Search

→ Delete

Forum	Description	Total Posts	Unread Posts	Total Participants
Auditor Forum <small>This forum is currently unavailable.</small>	This folder is for faculty use only. <b>“Auditor Forum” is for Mentor conversations.</b>	0	0	0
Chapel Forum	We are together on this academic journey at Oklahoma Wesleyan. If you have a prayer request, or have praise, worship, and thanksgiving to share, please post in our Chapel Forum. This Chapel Forum is for everyone, faculty and students alike. Take the time to ask for prayers, and to pray for your professor and classmates. Give thanks to God for the blessings that He bestows on you and others. This is our place for shared worship. You can post anonymously if desired.	3	0	1
Bio and Chat Room	Get to know your classmates. Post your bio and respond to your classmates' bios. After all bios are posted, use this forum for non-course related topics. Initial Bios should be posted by Tuesday midnight of Week One.	0	0	0
General Questions	Post questions about the class or assignments in this forum. <u>Please do not post personal questions in this forum</u> ; if you have a personal concern, please contact your professor via email, telephone, or text message. Your concerns are ours, so please do not hesitate to reach out if you need any help or support.	0	0	0

The Chapel Forum is a new AGS course-wide Forum, but needs to be added to all older courses. Mention the new forum in Course Information folder using the same description.

- ❑ Create Forum, use the text in the description above, and change the forum settings to allow for anonymous posting.

## WEEKLY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS GUIDELINES

Most courses have at least two course-related DQs each week. Students must post an original substantive post for DQ1 due *Tuesday 11:59 p.m.*, and an original substantive post for DQ2 due *Thursday 11:59 p.m.* Students should post a substantive response to at least two of their peers’ posts by *Sunday 11:59 p.m.* of the current week.

If you should want to edit or change a question, first check with your Teaching Mentor. Please strive to be specific, and ask open-ended questions pertaining to the weekly material. A good discussion question engages and makes the learner think and reflect on the material. A bad discussion question simply asks something like, “After reading chapter 2, post your responses.”

**NOTE:** Students should only post in the current week of discussions, to keep the class together.

Online faculty can start threads in Discussion Forums, to summarize the thread's discussions, bring in new content, or clarify a concept. Discussion forum responses should receive a substantive response of 100-150 words, supportive resources, scripture, and APA format. We should include a Critical Thinking Question when appropriate. Be encouraging in your responses, rotate your responses to different students, redirect off-topic discussions, correct misconceptions, and respond to at least 3 posts in each forum. Remain visible to students by not being absent for more than 48 hours from the course, and by posting, sending Announcements, or emailing the class.

## **VIDEOS AND SUPPLEMENTAL CONTENT**

You can download all available documents and supplemental content, and save to your computer file for this course. (If a student cannot access the material, you'll have it readily available to email to them.)

### **Videos**

Add instructor-made videos or videos from other sources when possible. Ask your Teaching about creating your own video, and how to embed a video or a video URL to your Bb course.

### **Possible Video Sources**

<http://video.google.com> [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com) [www.godtube.com](http://www.godtube.com)

## **GRADE CENTER**

Each DQ/SLDQ, assignment, and assessment with points possible are linked to the Grade Center. A standard Rubric is included in the Discussion Questions and should be used when grading. Ask your for help navigating the Grade Center tools, and applying rubrics to DQs/ and assignments.

## **COURSE CORRECTIONS/CHANGES TO BLACKBOARD OR SYLLABUS**

If you find errors or make necessary course changes, document them. Create a Word doc and save it in your hidden Faculty Information folder. Work with your Teaching Mentor to resolve any time-sensitive issues during your course. At the end of your class,

any noted corrections or changes to Bb or your Syllabus should be submitted to Sean Stedwell ([sdstedwell@okwu.edu](mailto:sdstedwell@okwu.edu)).

## SYLLABUS

The syllabus provides objectives, expectations, resources required, grading scale, and a review of the assessments, discussion questions, Learning Team assignments, possible point values and standard OKWU policies. The syllabus should also include a Written Assignment rubric. A Discussion Question rubric is embedded into the Discussion Board DQs/SLDQs, and is viewable by students and faculty for grading.

- ❑ Download your syllabus and save to your computer.
- ❑ Review the learning objectives and activities listed in each week's outline, and descriptions of assessments.
- ❑ Standard policies and guidelines such as the Late Policy, Attendance Policy, Academic Honesty Policy, Discussion Forum Guidelines, are now included in your course for you. Please review for refreshing on the University's policies and procedures learned in FOLT.

The syllabus also provides outlines for each week that identify learning activities. Due "days" are listed, but not specific dates, so the syllabus is not revised for each course. In the syllabus weekly outlines, you will see the following items, which align with the **Weekly Learning Objectives and Activities** page listed in the Bb Weekly Lessons.

- Reading Assignments identifying the text book and chapters, or alternative resources and their location or link. (Aligns with the Bb "READ" section of the Weekly Learning Objectives & Activities)
- Discussion Questions/Spiritual Life Discussion Questions with due days (Tues., Wed., and Thurs.), and instructions on posts and responses. (Aligns with the Bb "DISCUSS" section of the Weekly Learning Objectives & Activities)
- Weekly Assignments are listed with due day (Sun.). (Aligns with the Bb "COMPLETE and SUBMIT" section of the Weekly Learning Objectives & Activities)
- Learning Team Assignments are listed with due days for different aspects of the LT assignment. (Aligns with the Bb "COMPLETE and SUBMIT" section of the Weekly Objectives & Activities)
- Tests and Quizzes are listed with due day (Sun.). (Aligns with the Bb "COMPLETE and SUBMIT" section of the Weekly Learning Objectives & Activities)

If an assignment or DQ/SLDQ falls on a national holiday, you may move the due date in Bb to the day before or day after the holiday.

All assignments are typically due by Sunday 11:59 p.m. (Central Time Zone). *Assignments or assessments can be due prior to Sunday 11:59 p.m., ONLY if it is necessary to build upon the weekly material. In this case, the due date must be announced to students with sufficient notice. An Announcement, email, and update to the Weekly Learning Objectives & Activities document should be used to notify students of any change to course assignments, activities, and routines.*

**If the Syllabus needs revision due to any PTP content you have added, work with your Teaching Mentor to make changes, upload the revised document to the Bb Content Collection, and upload to the appropriate sections of Bb.**