



Blackboard, Books, Syllabi and Printing

A Note on Accessing Syllabi

Although you will have access to Blackboard over the summer, your professors may not post your course pages and syllabi until closer to the class start date (often 1-2 weeks beforehand). They may or may not also send a copy of the syllabus via email before the course begins. Don't fret - you can still access a list of your required texts (see the following section on books). If you don't have access to a course on Blackboard or the accompanying syllabus the week that a course is scheduled to begin, reach out to the professor. You can go to the [BU Directory](#) and search for professors' email.

What is Blackboard and Who Uses It?

Blackboard is a website and online academic forum used by Boston University School of Social Work to share course information between students and instructors. It can be used to post announcements or discussion threads, locate course readings and syllabi, and submit course assignments and receive instructor feedback. It's a necessary and helpful tool for successful coursework at BUSSW. Instructors may use different functions of Blackboard so they'll let you know how to utilize it for their courses. In the meantime, it's good to practice navigating and familiarize yourself with the resources available on the site.

How to Access Blackboard

Please put the following address in your browser <http://learn.bu.edu> or access Blackboard via googling: BU Blackboard. You will be directed to a login page and asked for your BU login name and Kerberos password. Once you are logged in, your name will appear in the upper right hand corner of the screen and the courses (past and present) you have registered for will appear. To logout, click the icon of the folder with the red arrow next to your name in the upper right hand corner.

Navigating Blackboard's Functions:

Need help using Blackboard? Video tutorials on navigating and using various functions of Blackboard can be found on the Blackboard site under the *student services* tab and click *videos for students*, or by clicking [here](#).

Main Page/ My Blackboard Learn Courses Tab

To return to the main screen at any time you can click the *BU Learn* icon at the upper left hand of the screen or the *My Blackboard Learn Courses* tab in the upper right. Here you will find the numbers and titles of *My Courses* listed on the right side of the screen. **Courses appear on the Blackboard site after you've registered and usually about 1-2 weeks before the course begins.** If a class for which you are registered is not listed on your Blackboard page the week that a course begins, you may contact the instructor who can add you to the course's Blackboard list for access.

Individual Course Information

To access announcements and course documents for an individual class, click on the name of the course from the *My Courses* list of the *My Blackboard Learn Courses* tab. A list of options for the course title will appear on the left of the screen, the most important including *course documents* and *assignments*.

Course documents

This section contains many important documents such as the course syllabus, assignment descriptions and rubrics, class lecture slides, and electronic course reserve readings. In a separate document we will instruct you how to get to course reserves.

Many instructors post their lecture slides before class so that students can access them during class for note-taking. Most introductory courses have many sections so you may need to select a folder with your section number or instructor name to find section specific materials. (Readings and other useful resources may also be listed under *Content*...the exact Blackboard formatting and content for a class depends on the instructor/department so explore the sections to find all useful materials.)

Assignments

This section provides documents on course assignments and allows you to submit assignments and receive instructor feedback.

Individual instructors have different preferences for submitting assignments but some require electronic submission on Blackboard. If this is the case, the title of each assignment will appear next to a drafting icon under the *assignments* tab. To submit an assignment, click the title of the assignment. You will be brought to an upload page. Scroll down to the *assignment submission* section and select the *browse my computer* button to upload a document. Then check the *plagiarism tools* box. Blackboard uses a program called Safe Assign to automatically check for plagiarism. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the green *submit* button when you're ready.

You will be able to review what you have uploaded and if you have made an error, you will have the opportunity to upload another document in its place. There may be a limit set on the number of times you can resubmit the same assignment. Blackboard will record the date and time that the assignment was submitted so it's important to be mindful of deadlines.

Some instructors will also submit grades and provide assignment feedback through Blackboard which can be accessed in a few ways. The simplest method is to go to the *My Grades* section located on the left side of the screen of the *My Blackboard Learn Courses* tab. This will allow you to review all grades and instructor comments submitted to Blackboard.

Here is a [video](#) tutorial that walks you through submitting assignments and accessing feedback on Blackboard.

Learn more about **Safe Assign and avoiding plagiarism** [here](#). Some instructors set up their course pages to allow students to check their assignments for potential plagiarism through Safe Assign and verify correct source citations before submitting a document for grading. Here is a [video](#) tutorial on using Safe Assign for students.

Books:

Although you may not have access to course syllabi months in advance, you can still access lists of required texts for each of your courses through the BU bookstore. Below are details about how you might obtain less expensive books.

To access lists of your course texts via the BU bookstore:

1. Log into your BU student link account www.bu.edu/studentlink
2. Go the *Academics Tab* and click on *Current Schedule*
3. Click on *Buy Books* on the left of the screen.
4. A new page will open with information on the BU bookstore. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click *Continue*.
5. A page of the BU bookstore will open with a list of books for each of your courses.

Notes: Sometimes courses do not have texts (i.e., field education seminars) and will be labeled with *Textbook Not Registered*. Course texts may also appear on the bookstore website at different times so some courses may say *Course Materials Selection Pending* - check back periodically to see if texts have been added to those courses.

*Once your professor posts your class' syllabus to Blackboard - verify that you have all the texts you need to begin class. Occasionally a professor may add a text to the syllabus that was not previously listed on the bookstore website or they may post electronic copies of some materials on Blackboard or library reserves (meaning you won't need to obtain your own copies).

Options for purchasing or renting books:

- Buy or rent from the BU bookstore (usually more expensive)
- Buy or rent from Amazon.com and look for the best prices (use the ISBN to search the correct edition)
- Use a textbook comparison website which lists textbook prices from a variety of sources - use the ISBN to search the correct edition. (www.bookfinder.com; www.textsurf.com; <http://www.directtextbook.com/>; or google other similar sites to find your favorite)
- Buy books from other BU students. Those who have finished coursework may sell their books to new students at discount prices by posting on a BUSSW Facebook page.

Tips for saving money:

- Shop around for the best deals and ask advanced students for tips.
- Rent books instead of buying.
- **Check BU libraries to see if electronic copies of required chapter readings have been posted in the course reserves or general library site. Check if it is possible to obtain a text from BU libraries or an inter-library loan through your local library.

Printing Tips

Every grad student is allotted 500 sheets to print per semester through BU's student printing service, MyPrint. Additional sheets can be purchased with BU convenience points on your student account for \$0.08 per sheet. More information on MyPrint can be found here:

<http://www.bu.edu/tech/services/cccs/printing/myprint/>

Printers are primarily located in libraries, including Mugar Memorial Library and the School of Theology Library. A full list of printer locations can be found here:

<http://www.bu.edu/tech/services/cccs/printing/myprint/myprint-locations/>

You can print from University computers or you can install the printers on your own computer when connected to the BU network. Instructions for installing the printers can be found here:

<http://www.bu.edu/tech/services/cccs/printing/myprint/myprint-configure/>. The IT Help Center and the IT Help Center @ Mugar can also assist you with configuring the printers.

Tips for saving on printing costs: 1 page printed double sided still only counts as one sheet. You can save on printing costs by always printing double-sided and printing multiple article pages per print page side. Printing most articles/readings from SSW burns through your allotted print sheets. There is a computer program for highlighting PDFs called Mendeley; there are also other similar programs. Using such a program can make 500 sheets more than enough for each semester.