

Designing Your Course in Brightspace

Brightspace provides an exciting new platform to help you enhance your course and provide a more engaging and improved student experience. Brightspace offers a course hub where you can present and deliver your content in a more visually engaging way, moving beyond acting as a simple content repository. Designing your course site effectively is the first step to better leverage the capabilities of Brightspace and to providing students with a better course experience.

Plan and Organize Your Content

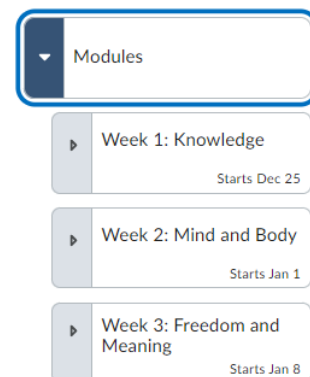
A well-planned course site sends a strong signal to the learner that they are a valuable member of your learning community.



Consider creating an outline or flowchart before copying content into Brightspace. It's important that all components of the course are explicitly organized in a way that reduces student guesswork and flows in the order in which students should complete tasks. Setting the course up this way allows for students to allot more cognitive load to the learning itself. Take time to examine all the various components of your course. Making the implicit explicit is vital when fostering a sense of inclusion.

In addition to considerations like types of assignments and course content, take into account the student's **workflow** when accessing the material. You may naturally organize materials by PowerPoint decks, homeworks, etc., but a student working through a specific class, week, or topic will likely benefit more from having all the materials for that class, week, or topic provided in one section for quicker access to they can complete their activities sequentially.

As opposed to the course documents and course assignments folders in Blackboard, you will be given an empty Modules Unit to add your content to. It is up to you to organize your content in a way that works for your class. How you sequence your content in Brightspace should reflect the way you want students to view and complete materials.



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Build Out Your Content

The Modules Unit is already set up for you in your course. You can add two levels of subfolders into a Unit (a Lesson followed by a Folder). Pages can be added directly into each level (Unit, Lesson, or Folder).

The type and amount of content you plan to add may help you determine if you should add Lessons or Folders or place your content directly in a Page, or a combination of both. If you are adding Kaltura videos or activities such as Assignments, Discussions or Quizzes/Tests you will likely need to create sub-folders to store the content with at least an initial Page for your text descriptions.

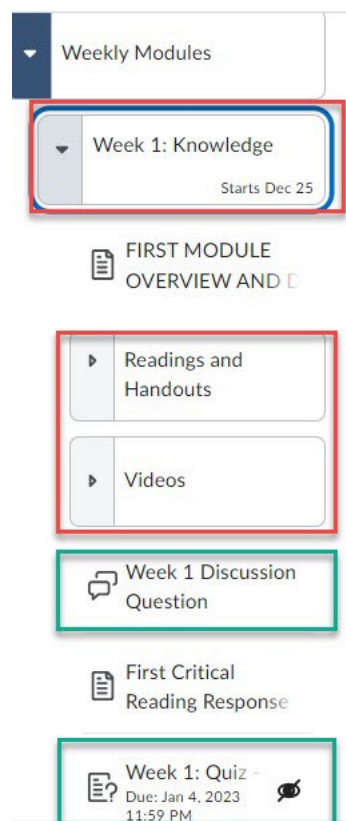
Despite the fact that students can independently access a specific activity (Assignment, Discussion, or Quiz/Test) using the "Activities" drop-down in the top course navigation bar, it's a good idea to integrate these activities into your content areas to provide students with quick and sequential access.

Here is one example of how you can structure your content.

Each weekly Lesson folder contains an overview Page, followed by Folders housing a variety of readings and videos.

Notice that there are separate links for a discussion and a quiz in the content area. Adding the links here establishes the ideal student workflow without the need to refer back to a separate page or to navigate elsewhere.

The due dates you see here will also be added to students' calendars.



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If you are only adding text, images, attached files, and external links (not Kaltura videos) that can fit comfortably on a series of pages, and if you are comfortable hyperlinking files inside text descriptions, consider adding Pages with quicklinks instead of sub-folders. This will reduce student clicks.

Here is an example of an overview Page with added quick links to files and external links.

A final note regarding Pages vs sub-folders: The method you choose will ultimately depend on what type of content and how much of it you are adding, and also your personal preference. If you have a large number of attached files, you may prefer the organizational structure of sub-folders or the ability to add files without needing to hyperlink files inside Pages. On the other hand, setting up Pages with quick links can provide an easy “all-in-one” viewing experience for students.

Overview/To-Do Pages

Crafting an effective overview page helps students plan their workload ahead of time with a clear picture of what they can expect. Also, this makes it easier for students to deal with competing priorities.

Overview pages should communicate:

- What should students do before class/When should they complete the task?
- What will the student be learning in class?
- What are students responsible for delivering this class?

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 (MM/DD-MM/DD)

Timeframe	Content/Location	Activity
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Visual Table of Content Considerations

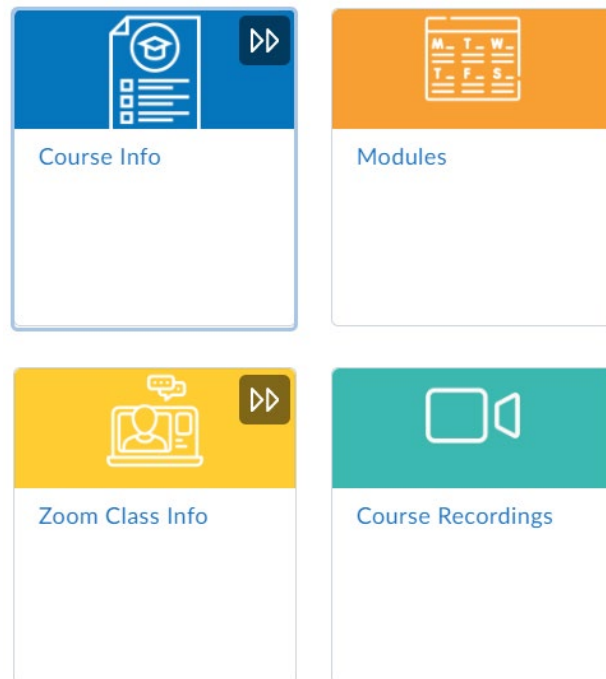
The Brightspace Content area includes a visual Table of Contents (ToC) cards, which provides consistency and accommodates different navigational workflows.

Providing students with consistent visual markers is key to promoting an equitable learning experience and will benefit the student with regards to time-management. It's therefore recommended that you maintain the provided number of Units and included images.

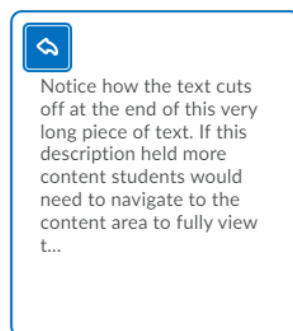
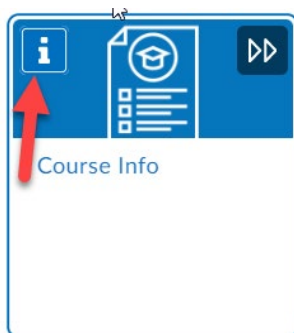
The learning design team is happy to help if you'd like add any additional Units with matching new images, however, you should plan to design the bulk of your content within the Module Unit.

Units in the visual Table of Contents:

There are between five to seven Units, depending on the type of course you are teaching.



It's tempting to add content directly, inside a Unit, Lesson or Folder description by editing the item itself, however, please add content in its own Page. We do not recommend adding any content besides an image and a sentence or two in this location.



On the desktop view, clicking the "i" only reveals part of the text, and students will need to click an extra link to view this text in the app.

For students using the Pulse app on their mobile devices the content is hidden a separate "View Description" page which requires an extra tap.

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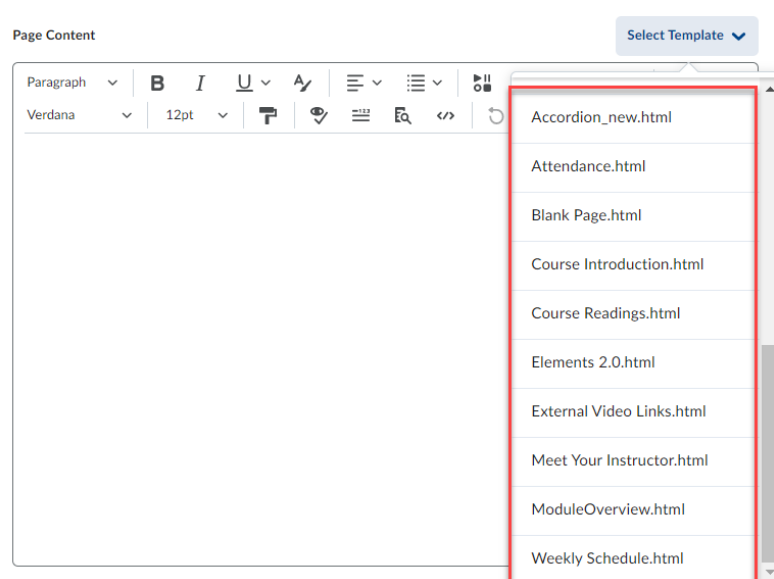
Adding Pages

When you add a new Page, you will default to a blank Page. You have the option to easily add customized Templates to your Pages. These Templates offer a variety of header images and sample text structures that have been customized for use by Bentley faculty.

Simplicity is essential in good course design. As with course icons, using familiar templates and prioritizing essential information will help keep learners focused and better at managing their time.

Clicking "Select Template" gives you access to custom Templates.

Clicking "Browse for a Template," you can select a file that already exists in your course and use it as a Template.



If you formatted a Page specifically for your course's needs, this means you can use it repeatedly without having to recreate it. If you feel a custom Template would benefit your course, the learning design team can work with you to build it. Here are a few sample Templates currently available to you:

Module Overview

Module Title

Topics:

- List topics Covered

Learning Outcomes:

- List weekly learning outcomes

Activities and Deliverables:

- List activities/deliverables here

Schedule:

Timeframe	Reading/Video	Activity
Due Date 1	Link 1	Activity 1
Due Date 2	Link 2	Activity 2

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 (MM/DD-MM/DD)

Timeframe	Content/Location	Activity
Due date 1	Article 1--linked on Brightspace	Read article and submit quiz
Due date 2	Article 2--found in textbook	Read article and respond to at least 2 discussion posts.
Due Date 3	Article 3--web link	Read article and create visual outline.

Designing Your Course in Brightspace

Check your course as a learner

Pretend you are the student and switch to a “learner” view.

Ask yourself:

- Is the navigation easy to use and understand?
- Is it engaging?
- Does it hold your attention?



Request Design Support

If you would like an instructional designer to:

- Provide design support
- Help you build your course structure in Brightspace
- Create or modify a custom image or Template for your course

Please reach out to the learning design team at: learningdesign@bentley.edu