D2L Semester Checklist

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GRADES

Note: Category is the types of graded assignment (quizzes, labs, exams, homework, etc.), while **Item** is the actual graded assignment.
Setting up your gradebook FIRST allows you to link other tools (quizzes, discussions, dropboxes) to be connected and post graded directly into the gradebook.

- ❑ **1. Determine and Create the Categories.**
  It is helpful to organize the list of assignments in the gradebook. The two most common structures of "categories" are to group by **Type** or to group by **Time**.
  Group By Type Organization: Most classes will have a variety of assignment types. Some categories you may wish to establish are Exams, Quizzes, Weekly Homework, Major Assignments, Attendance, Labs, Clinicals, and Off-Site On-The-Job assignments.
  Group by Time Organization: Most classes will have points-earning activities each week. In this organization, the Categories are by Week (Week 1, Week 2, Week 3...).

- ❑ **2. Set up the Gradebook Items**
  Connecting Discussions, Quizzes, and Dropbox items to the gradebook is easier when the gradebook already has an item. Setting up the full gradebook in one section also makes it much easier to set up other sections of the coruse -- since the entire gradebook structure can be copied to the other course sections.

DROPBOXES (Homework)

Note: **Category** is the type of folder (graded, ungraded, draft, review, group) and **Folder** is the place where file are transferred back and forth.

- ❑ **1. Set up a Practice Dropbox**
  A practice dropbox should be set up to ensure that a student's computer can upload a file to D2L before the first assignment is due. This allows the student time to work through any technical difficulties, and it also helps the instructor verify that the students are all set to upload files when it is time for assignment grading.

- ❑ **2. Set up Other GRADED Dropbox Folders (3+ weeks ahead)**
  Students might wish to work-ahead if they know they will have scheduling conflicts with work, other classes, field-trips, etc.

DISCUSSIONS

Note: **Forums** are the "rooms" and the **Topics** are the conversations within a room. You must have at least one Forum before you can add a topic.

- ❑ **1. Create a "Class Communications" Forum and an "Introduce Yourself" topic**
  Students should be encouraged to introduce themselves to other members of the class. Further, students could be encouraged to upload a small photo or small image which they feel represents who they are (giving them practice using the editing and attachment tools in the Discussions).

- ❑ **2. Add a "Questions and Answers" Topic**
  Students should be encouraged to post questions in the Discussion area (rather than sending emails to the instructor) -- so that all students get the benefit of the question and answer.
  Also, in many cases, the other students might answer the question before the instructor sees it -- getting the student with the question back on track more quickly (and the instructor only needing to write "That's correct! Thanks for helping (student name)."

NEWS

Note: Since Hyperlinks to outside sites may change and "break" – it is recommended that you use the news tool to post your hyperlinks. This avoids having broken links inside your content in future terms (since each run of the course – you will post updated news links to sites and resources).

❑

1. Include a Welcome Notice

This should be a brief overview of the class and the instructions for how students should get started in the course ("Click on Content in the navigation bar above and read through the documents linked in the Course Information and also the Week 01 headings.").
It also is recommended to post an appropriate photo of the instructor and a brief instructor biography.

❑

2. Post Weekly messages should be posted as reminders of upcoming deadlines.

(e.g. "This week, read through the documents in the Week 03 heading, post the homework assignment to the dropbox titled Changing Attitudes and Changing Beliefs, and take Quiz 04 - Learning in the Cyber Age. Also - you should have posted your initial comments by Wednesday to the discussion on Susie's Challenge and then make at least three follow-up posts to your peers by Saturday. ")

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3. Post other announcements and opportunities you wish to share with students.

Conferences, articles, broadcasts and other announcements can be posted in the news area as well. It might be useful to make these as separate posts - so that when you copy items to the next semester, you can easily flag them for deletion (and still keep the weekly assignment notices).

FILES (documents)

Note: Not all students own Microsoft software at the very start of the course. Even if you REQUIRE certain software – you need to let students read your documents while they are waiting for the software to arrive and be installed.
Also -- Microsoft documents such as Word and PowerPoint can cause problems for students in D2L due to security warnings and pop-up blockers. We recommend that any "view only" documents be saved in the Adobe Reader .PDF format.
A free plug-in from Microsoft is available to save documents as a PDF file from any MS Office 2007 program.

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1. Convert Word Files to PDF

Save all Word documents in the PDF format. Exception: Do not convert any Word files which are homework templates which students need to fill out and submit as an assignment.

❑

2. Convert PowerPoint Files to PDF Handouts

Save all PowerPoint documents in PDF format using the OPTIONS to publish HANDOUTS (either 3 slides per page or 6 slides per page). This format is directly viewable in D2L and can be printed without wasting paper (students who otherwise would print 1 slide per page).

❑

3. Ensure "web-safe" Filenames

Use mixed case without spaces when naming files.
(e.g. ResearchPaperRubric.pdf, Week02Discussion.pdf, Week09UnitOverview.pdf).
If you are copying the same course content to separate course shells in D2L (one for each section), uniquely name syllabi and course schedule documents to avoid accidentally overwriting those documents during Course Copy Components.
(e.g. SyllabusMgmt310Sect03.pdf, CourseScheduleMgmt310Sect03.pdf, SyllabusMgmt310Sect07.pdf, CourseScheduleMgmt310Sect07.pdf).

CONTENT

Note: Modules are the "headings" and **Topics** are the clickable-links to the content (stored in Manage Files area), activities, and other materials.

1. Create a "Getting Started" module

The module should appear at the top of the Content area and include the following topics links:

- A complete syllabus
- A class schedule separate from the syllabus with the topics of study, dates, activities, and assignments (with due dates).
- Technology and other tips for getting started
- Instructions for any other "getting oriented" activities to the course (quiz about syllabus, introduction discussion, etc.).

2. Create additional Content Modules and Topics for the class.

Suggested options are:

Weekly-Based	Topics-Based	Activity Based
Getting Started Syllabus Class Schedule Tips for Success in this Class Weekly Content Week 01 .... Week 02 .... Week 03 .... Optional Resources and Links ...	Getting Started Syllabus Class Schedule Tips for Success in this Class Topics of Study (topic 01 name) .... (topic 02 name) .... (topic 03 name) .... Optional Resources and Links ...	Getting Started Syllabus Class Schedule Tips for Success in this Class Readings and Practice Activities (topic 01 name) .... (topic 02 name) .... Assignments and Grading Rubrics (assignment 01 name) .... (assignment 02 name) .... Optional Resources and Links ....

3. Carefully Name each Module and Topic to ease copying to future terms.

To make it easier to copy content to future course shells - try to avoid including specific dates (use "weeks" instead) or other time-sensitive specific titles ("Seasonal Flowers" - rather than "Springtime Flowers"). This will allow you to quickly copy materials to future semesters without having to edit each item.

4. Refer Students to *Class Schedule* for Due Dates to reduce content editing in future terms.

To make it easier to copy content to future course shells -- try to avoid putting deadlines inside assignment instructions, and instead refer students to the Class Schedule document to get the deadlines. If all the activities students need to complete are in the schedule -- the course assignment instructions can be written in a generic fashion -- easing the reuse of the course in future terms.

OPTIONAL: Weekly Content HOME PAGE

To help guide students along the path –you can consider creating a Custom Home Page link for your course – which showcases the information and learning activities for that week. Students still have the ability to click to the TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The weekly content Home Page can be set under CONTENT > SETTINGS > CONTENT HOME.