Customizing your Blackboard Course

Changing the visual appearance
Menu Buttons
Changing your course buttons can add a splash of color to your course and make it more visually appealing to your students. Thankfully you do not have to have any graphic design or web programming skills! Changing the color and shape of your menu is easy to do in Blackboard, just follow these steps:

1) Go into the course in which you wish to make changes to

2) Click on the “control panel.”

3) Go to the “Course Options” module located at the bottom left of the control panel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Manage Course Menu</td>
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4) Click on, “Course Design.”

5) Next, click on, “Course Menu Design.”

6) From here you can choose if you want to have buttons or text. Choose the radio button for your preference

   a) Buttons
      i) If you choose to have buttons displayed you get a ton of fun choices!
      ii) You have three button types to choose from:
           (1) Pattern
           (2) Solid
           (3) Striped
      iii) Once you have chosen how you want your button to look you can either use the small window with the scroll bar on the right or you can click on the link “Gallery of buttons” (it is very small and located underneath the button style) This link gives you the best overview of what the buttons look like.
      iv) After scrolling through, or looking at, the buttons you can choose your pick by sampling clicking on the one you like. In the area called “Button Style” you can see what your new button will look like.
      v) You also have the option to change the shape of your button. To change it you simply click on the radio button corresponding with the look you want. When you click on it, the example button will change automatically so you can preview it. Your choices are the following
           (1) Rounded
           (2) Rectangular
           (3) Rounded Ends

   b) Text
If you chose to have text displayed your options of customization are more limited, however you can do the following:

1) Change the background color for the menu
   (a) To change the background color you click on the pick button located next to the color display box.
   (b) When the new window pops up you can then chose the color you wish to use.
2) Change the text color for the menu
   (a) Follow the same steps as above to change the color of the text.

7) After you have finished making your changes click on the “submit” button. Once you have done that your changes can be seen immediately

Adding a Banner
Adding a banner to your course does not only add some personalization but it can be a great visual cue to the students to let them know what course they have clicked on. The course banner is located on the front page of your course and it is what your students see when they first log into your course.

1) Making your banner
   a) You will need to use a software program that will allow you to create banners. Some examples of this would be Photoshop, Paint shop pro, Gimp, or even Microsoft Paint.
   b) You could also go here:
      i) https://eat.scm.tees.ac.uk/ImageLibrary/bannerCreator.html
         (1) This website will help you create a banner right through their webpage. Save it and then use it to upload to blackboard.
2) Once you have your banner created you will need to do the following to upload it:
   a) Go into the course in which you wish to make changes to
   b) Click on the “control panel.”
   c) Go to the “Course Options” module located at the bottom left of the control panel.
   d) Click on, “Course Design.”
   e) Next, click on “Course Banner.”
   f) On the next page you will see what your current banner looks like if you have already uploaded one. If not, that area will be blank.
      i) To remove your current banner, check the box “remove this banner” and then click on submit.
   g) To upload your new banner click on the “browse” button. Locate the file on your computer, click “open.”
   h) Next, click on “submit.”
   i) Your new banner should appear on your front page immediately. Go to the front page of your course to take a look.
Organizing your materials

Organizing your materials has many benefits to running your online or online-assisted course. It makes navigating your course easier for you and the students. Doing this will make lecture notes, assignments, and tests easier to find, you could also make the links to the documents color coded so the students can easily tell what they are looking at (example: Red for reading materials, Green for assignments, Blue for tests).

Changing your course menu

You can change your course menu to fit the way your course “flows.” Your options are limited to your creativity and preference. You could organize your menu by weeks, book chapters, or subjects, the possibilities are endless. Just remember that you don’t want your navigation menu miles long and the similar the better.

To get started you need to follow these few simple steps. At the end of the directions I’ve included a few sample photos of how some courses are being organized:

1) Go to the course you wish to edit your course menu.
2) Click on the “control panel.”
3) Locate the “Course Options” Module. It is at the bottom left of the control panel.
4) Click on “Manage Course Menu.”

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5) From here you have many options
   a) Add Content Area
      i) Adding a content area includes any area where you would “put stuff.” This could include areas for any of the following:
         (1) Assignments
         (2) Books/Textbooks
         (3) Content
         (4) Course Documents
         (5) Course Information
         (6) Documents
         (7) Homework
         (8) Lectures
         (9) Labs
         (10) Projects
         (11) Syllabus
      ii) You could also create your own name for you content area if you wished (such as Week 1, Week 2; Chapter 1, Chapter 2; )
   b) Add tool Link
      i) Adding a tool link will allow you to some of the following:
         (1) Address Book
         (2) Dictionary/Thesaurus
         (3) Discussion board
         (4) Elluminate Live!
         (5) Email
c) Add Course Link
   i) A course link is a link that will take the students to a specific location or file within your course.

d) Add External Link
   i) An external link is a link that will take a student to a webpage.

6) Once you have chosen what you want to add by clicking on the button it will bring you to a new page. From here you must do the following:
   a) Give it a name by clicking on the down arrow and selecting one, or by typing it into the box.
   b) Next select availability options (best to select all boxes)
   c) When you click on submit, your item will be added to the course menu.

7) You can also Modify your current menu by doing the following:
   a) Click on the button that is in row with the item you want to change called “Modify”
      i) On this next page you can change the name of the item and change its availability.

8) To remove a menu item, simply click on the button “remove.”

9) To rearrange the menu items use the drop down button next to the name of the menu item and change it to correlate to where you want that item to be. Wait a few seconds and the menu will be updated for you.

10) When you are finished click on, “OK.”

**Tips about your Course Menu**

When you are working on your course menu you can add folders within each menu item. This can be used to help organize your material even more and make it really easy for students to find what they are looking for. Look at the pictures below for some ideas.
Adding Folders
1) Go into the content area where you wish to add the folders (access through the control panel in your course)
2) Click on the Add Folders button.
3) Give the folder a Name, color, and description.
4) Set the availability options
5) Click on submit.

Colorizing your material
Colorizing your materials is an easy way to visually show what each item is. To color your materials you can do the following:
1) Go into your course, into the control panel, then into the content area in which you wish to add/modify an item and change its color.
2) During the creation of a new item (assignment, external link, folder, etc...) you have the option to pick a color.
3) Click on the “Pick” button.
4) When you click here it will bring up a box where you can select the color. Click on the color box of your choice. The color will then be selected.
5) When you click on submit it will change the color of the name. \*
6) To change the color of an item (assignment, external link, folder, etc...) that you have already created, click on the “modify” button.
7) Next, follow the instructions below on how to pick the color.
8) Click on submit for the changes to take effect.