

Using WebCT/Blackboard

WebCT is the Learning Management System (LMS) utilized by the University of San Diego. This overview of WebCT will provide you the basics required to interact successfully with your instructors and colleagues. If you have technical questions about WebCT, please contact iTeam@sandiego.edu. If you have questions about an assignment or general content in the course, please contact your instructor.

Logging on to WebCT

You can access WebCT by logging in through the MySanDiego portal, or by going directly to this URL: <http://pope.sandiego.edu> and signing in.

MySanDiego

MySanDiego is your gateway to personalized campus resources. Students, faculty and staff can log in for centralized access to information and services, communication tools and customized connections. Here you will be able to access WebCT, your grades, your USD E-mail, the library, bookstore, and many other resources.

1. Type in web address <https://my.sandiego.edu> (bookmark this URL for future reference)
***Note:** if you are using a Mac, you will want to be using Safari as your browser. If you are using Firefox all WebCT features will not function properly, particularly the html editor.
2. You will be prompted to enter your User Name and Password. Use your MySanDiego User Name, and password.
- 3.



- Once you are logged in you will see a page similar to this. To access WebCT, click on the Academic Resources tab.



Click on the down arrow on the My E-learning tab in the center of the screen. A menu will appear that includes “CE (WebCT/Blackboard)”. Please click on this hyperlink. Another window will open and you will see a screen as shown below.



***Note: Before attempting to continue, please run the ‘Browser Check’ the first time you**

attempt to log on. The Browser Check will ensure that your computer settings are properly configured for WebCT to allow full functionality.

5. You will be prompted to enter your User Name and Password again. This is the same MySanDiego User Name and password.

The WebCT Interface

6. You will now see a screen that looks similar to the following window. This area is customized for you and contains just the classes you are taking and WebCT resources. Note: You may customize this page and add both Campus and Personal Bookmarks.



WebCT Resources & Orientation for Students

This course is a resource for all USD students. We recommend you explore this course the first few weeks into the program. It has tutorials and information on how to best utilize WebCT, such as setting up your preferences, conducting a browser update, and maximizing your learning experience, including tips on how to be a successful online student.

Environment

WebCT is a Web based learning management system that is similar to a Web site but is password protected. You will be able to access information pertinent to your course or program by clicking intuitively in different areas. The system also acts as a repository for files and learning materials, assignments, etc.

Syllabus & Course Content

From the main course listing screen, select the course you wish to enter by clicking the title. Icons arranged on the Course Content home page of your course will have labels indicating what you will find there. Icons can represent a single file, a folder that may contain many files, or even

a web link. You will notice that you may be able to access the same materials from more than one place in a course as there are multiple points of access.

It is recommended that you download the syllabus and course materials to your hard drive or another convenient location (i.e. a 1 GB removable memory stick) for easy reference. You may want to print them as well. We recommend you create a folder for each course on your hard drive in which to store the documents pertaining to each course. It is strongly recommended you purchase a back-up drive, such as a memory stick or external hard drive, on which to store all of your written materials.



Note: You may find a wide variety of document formats in your courses such as: Word (.doc), Adobe (.pdf), FlashPaper (.swf), Excel (.xls), Audio (MP3).

Modules

Some of your instructors may utilize the Learning Modules tool to organize the materials for you. A Learning Module will highlight the content for a particular unit, chapter, week, and will deliver it to you in a linear manner, meaning you will know where to start, and how to proceed through the items because of the order in which they appear. Modules may contain PowerPoint presentations, podcasts, lecture notes, articles, links to Discussion Board topics, links to other online resources, Assignment Drop Box links, etc.



Again, you may want to download the posted documents to your hard drive or print them. The information will always be available on WebCT during the course, but there may be occasions where the system is not available to you (i.e. scheduled maintenance or unexpected network outages) and you may not be able to obtain the necessary documents at a crucial moment.

Submitting Assignments

Assignment Drop Box

You may be asked to submit your assignments via the Assignment Drop Box tool in WebCT. The Drop Box in WebCT enables course information to be archived and aids in the efficiency of posting the grades and tracking student progress.

Directions for Submitting Assignments

1. Once in the selected course, click on the Assignments button on the left navigation bar.
2. You will now see a list of all of the available Drop Boxes for the course. Again, you may also be able to access the Assignment Drop Box from within the Learning Module.



3. Click the title of the assignment you wish to submit and you will see a window similar to the one below.
4. Click on 'Add Attachments'
5. Click on 'My Computer' to find the file you wish to submit, currently saved on your hard drive. Find the folder where you have saved your assignment (Make sure that at the bottom of the window under "File Types" or "Files of Type" you have "All Files" displayed. If "All Files" is NOT displayed, click the dropdown arrow and click All Files. Otherwise you may not see your file displayed depending on what kind of document you saved it as.)
6. Click on the document you want to submit, and click on 'Open'. You will see your upload progress in a small window that will open.
7. When upload is complete, you will then see your file listed directly above the 'Add Attachments' button.
8. At this time if you wish to upload additional files, you may do so simply by repeating steps 4-6. If you wish to add a comment for your instructor, you may do so in the text box provided.

Your instructor may ask you to adopt a *file naming standard* similar to what you see below, so be sure to confirm the manner in which your documents are titled for upload. This will ensure that your submissions are not confused with anyone else's when the instructor downloads them onto his/her hard drive. (note: your file name should not contain any spaces or characters):

CourseNumber_LastName_AssignmentName.

Example: MATH160_Smith_Assignment3

If you have saved your file as something else on your computer, be sure to properly name your file before submitting. To do so, right click on the file name to rename it.

9. A pop up will ask you if you are sure you wish to submit this assignment, click on 'yes', and you will receive a confirmation on your screen that your paper was submitted successfully.

At this point, you no longer have access to this Assignment Drop Box, meaning that you cannot delete the submitted assignment and resubmit. If you find that you have submitted the incorrect assignment, please contact the professor immediately. If necessary, the professor or technical support person can "reset" your box so that you can resubmit.

To see if the instructor has posted any comments or feedback to your assignment, click on Assignments, then on the Graded tab, then on the title of the assignment and any comments and feedback from the instructor will be visible on that page.

Grades

Grades may be posted in WebCT by the instructor and will be available for student access via the navigation bar in each course. Click on "My Grades" to view results of submitted assignments. Final course grades become available once all assignments have been graded by the instructor.

Please see each course syllabus for the grading scale.

Calendar

Calendar

Assignment due dates and any other pertinent course dates may be posted on the calendar by your instructor. You may also update the calendar for your own personal use. Calendar entries that you post will be private postings, meaning others do not see your entries.

Below is a view of the Calendar. To view a single day, click on the day you would like to view. To view an entire week, click on View Week for the week you would like to view. You can also configure the **global calendar** to your liking so that you can view entries from multiple courses at a glance.



Communication Tools

Discussion Board

WebCT provides several areas for online communication. The **Discussion Board** is one area that is generally used extensively. The Discussion Board utilizes what is called “asynchronous” communication, allowing you to sign in and contribute at a time that is most convenient for you. In other words, you are not required to be online at scheduled times. Check with your instructor to see how often he/she requires you to log in to check for new postings and materials, i.e. 5 of 7 days per week, once in a 48 hour period, etc. Logging in on a regular basis will ensure that you do not miss critical information or fall behind.

A green star indicator lets you know there are new messages that have not been viewed. You may access these by **clicking on the word ‘Discussions’** on the Navigation Bar or on the link within the Learning Module.

To create a discussion board message, click on the topic you wish to post a comment to, then click on ‘Create Message’, type your subject in the Subject line and type your message.



You may add attachments by clicking on the 'Add Attachments' button at the bottom. This is similar to adding attachments with an email system. Once you have selected your file, click 'Attach File' to complete the process. You may add more than one file by repeating this process.

Once you have finished composing your message (*don't forget to include a greeting with the person(s) name and a closing with your name at the end*), you may click Preview or Post.

Note: It is strongly recommended that you create your message in MS Word first and then copy and paste it into the text box, especially if your post is lengthy. There is not a spell or grammar check in WebCT, and the text box may 'time out' if you take too long to compose your message, causing you to lose all of your work.

There will probably be several topics of discussion in each course. There should also be discussion areas for Announcements, Cyber Lounge, and Technical Issues. These areas are created to keep topics separate for easier reading and archival. *Please be cognizant of the topic area in which you are posting.*

You, your colleagues, or your professor may post a message anytime to be viewed by all those who have access to the course. If an individual posts a question, and three others post answers or replies to that question, these four "posts" comprise what is known as a "thread" of conversation. The phrase, "**threaded discussion,**" refers to threads of conversation, each focused on a particular topic.



You can sort the discussion board two ways: threaded and unthreaded. Threaded sorts the discussions by topic and then date. Unthreaded sorts by date only. If someone refers to the number of a posting and you cannot remember in which thread it was located, you can switch to the “Threaded” view to find it.

You can also **mark your Discussion Board messages as read or unread.** You can compile messages to save on your hard drive or print. To do any of these options, select the messages you want by clicking in the box next to the messages. Then scroll down to the bottom and click on either Mark as read, Mark as unread or Create Printable View (to Compile – this can then be saved as a file.)

Discussion threads are saved throughout the entire course so that you can view any missed discussions at any point during the course.

Chat

Another area of communication on WebCT is **Chat.** Synchronous or “real time” communication can take place in one of the chat rooms. Professors may use this to offer “Virtual Office Hours” or you may use the Chat area to discuss a topic in real time with your classmate or team if your instructor has enabled this tool. Please be aware that the Chat area does not typically work behind a firewall, so if you are a graduate student trying to access from your work environment you may not be able to do so.

Who’s Online

Another communication tool now available within WebCT is an instant messaging feature called ‘Who’s Online’. This is a synchronous communication tool and allows you to interact with other students, your professors and support personnel who happen to also be logged in to WebCT. You can see who is online on the right-hand navigation bar of your main WebCT course page. Here you will see a listing of courses, each followed by a number in parens. This number is the indicator of how many people are logged in at that moment in that course. Simply click on a course title listed there, and the names of those online will be displayed. Select a person you wish to contact by check marking a box, and click ‘Send Chat Invitation’. Type your message in the box, send it and await a reply.

Mail

This is the WebCT e-mail system. You can access this by selecting the Mail button on the left navigation bar. If there is a green star displayed, this indicates that you have new mail awaiting.



WebCT Mail is similar to other e-mail systems in that it has Inbox, Outbox and Draft folders. You can create and delete folders for your messages as well. Similar to the Discussion Board, you can view your messages Read or Unread. This is an internal email system, meaning emails are delivered to recipients when they log into WebCT.

To send a message, click on Create Message, click the 'Browse for Recipients' button to choose who you want to send the message to. Hold down the Control button to select more than one person, then click Select. (If you are sending the message to everyone, perhaps a better venue would be the Discussion Board.)

At this point it is very similar to the Discussion Board: Type your subject in the Subject line, type your message in the text box. When you are finished, you may click Preview, Send or Save Draft.

You can have this e-mail forwarded to your USD email account by clicking on the Forward Mail button (indicated by the arrow in the previous illustration.) Follow the directions given on WebCT. ***NOTE:** you cannot forward your WebCT email to any other outside email account such as Yahoo or Hotmail, you can only forward it to your @sandiego.edu account at this time.

Getting Started

This basic introduction to WebCT should get you started. Start exploring in WebCT today. If you experience technical challenges, check the WebCT Resources & Orientation for Students course first. If you can't find an answer there, contact your instructor or technical support person for assistance. The more you use WebCT, the more you will feel comfortable navigating within this environment.

Technical Assistance: iTeam@sandiego.edu
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