Setting Up Your Canvas Course

Dr. Jasmine Bryant, Director

CTLO

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Canvas Syllabus

The "Syllabus" page is where students look for course policies and important due dates

This page, once published, can be viewed by anyone with a Caltech Canvas account if they have the URL - an excellent way to share your course syllabus with students considering your course or with colleagues.

Do not post files to this page that you do not want made available to people NOT enrolled in your course (answer keys, problems, sets, etc.)

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Creating Pages

In addition to the Syllabus, you can create a page to say anything you want: a Welcome message, content you want students to read through, a schedule of lecture / homework / exams, etc.

Steps:

1. Click "Pages" in the left-hand navigation. This will take you to the "Front Page".

2. At the top of the page, click "View All Pages". This will give you a list of every page in your Canvas course, including when they were last edited.

3. To Create a new page, click +Page in the upper-right-hand corner.

4. Remember to "Save & Publish" when you are done editing your new page.

Home

Modules

Announcements

Discussions

People

Assignments

Grades

Pages

Files

Syllabus

Outcomes

Rubrics

Quizzes

Collaborations

Settings

View All Pages

+ Page

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Course Home Page / Selection and Design

This is the page that students will land on when they enter your course.

At the beginning of the course, you may want this to be a Welcome message page, syllabus page, or the course modules (course modules is the default now).

After the course is under way, it is best to [change the course home page](#) to a page that students need to visit the most (likely your modules page).

To set a new Home Page, open your course and click "Choose Home Page" in the right-hand navigation.

⊕ Choose Home Page

📊 View Course Stream

📢 New Announcement

👓 Student View

📊 View Course Analytics

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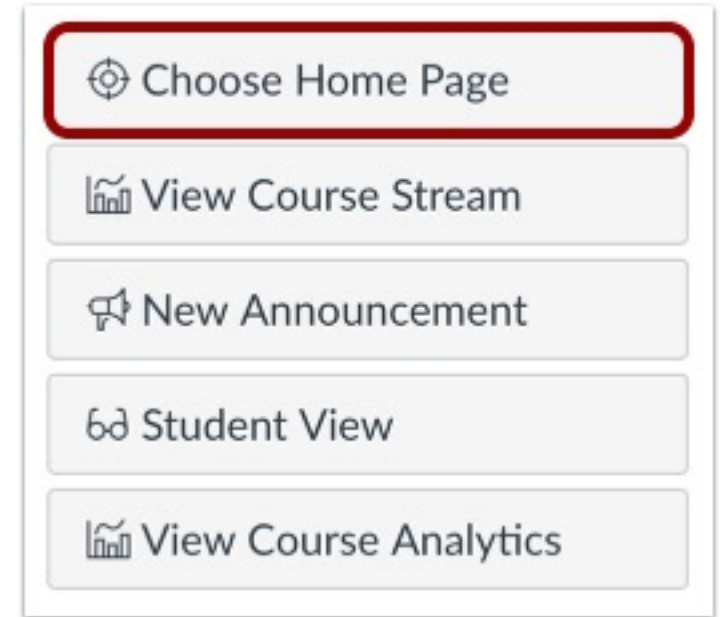
Course navigation

Each Canvas course has a left-hand navigation that you can customize.

Control which links appear in your course navigation, removing ones students won't need and adding those they will. To change, choose "Settings", then click the "Navigation" tab:

Drag

| Course Details | Sections | Navigation | Apps | Feature Options | Integrations |

Not visible to students

Select a Grade Posting Policy

The grade posting policy determines when students can see grades you enter in the course. You can choose a posting policy for the entire course or for individual assignments. If you select:

- A **manual posting policy** (recommended), assignment grades remain hidden from student view by default until you post grades for the assignment.

- An **automatic posting policy**, students can see assignment grades as soon as they are entered in the gradebook.
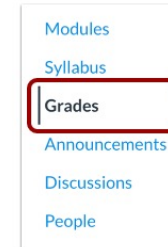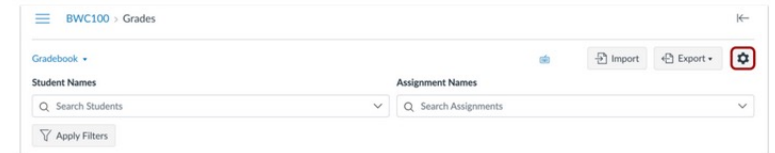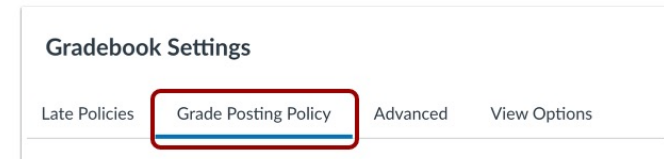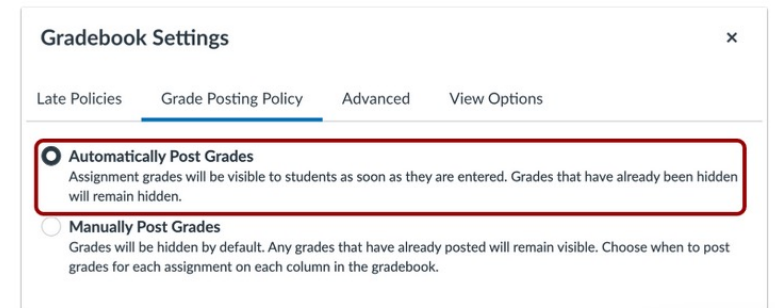
Modules and Prerequisites / Requirements

Decide how you will organize content. We recommend using clearly-titled modules, so it is clear to students where to find important information.

Start with a "Welcome – Start Here" module

Organize other content by week, unit, or type

Modules and Prerequisites / Requirements

You can restrict how students move through these modules.

Do you want students to complete a quiz after they read an assignment?

Do you want students to submit an assignment before they can unlock the next unit?

Consider setting module requirements or prerequisites:

1. Click the module three-dot menu and choose "Edit"

2. Select prerequisites (what students must do before the module to unlock it) or requirements (what students must do to move on).

Edit Module Settings ✕

Module Name

Welcome Module

☐ Lock until

Prerequisites

+ Add prerequisite

Requirements

◉ Students must complete all of these requirements

☑ Students must move through requirements in sequential order

◯ Students must complete one of these requirements

Syllabus and Course Poli ⌄ | score at least ⌄ | 12.0 | / 0 | ✕

+ Add requirement

Cancel | Update Module

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A Note About Course Content

FERPA is a law that protects student privacy.

You are not allowed to post any material in your Canvas course that contains names and / or images of students who are not enrolled in the course (such as videos you or someone else recorded during the pandemic that students appear in).

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Assignments

Assignments can be built and graded in Canvas or can be linked to external tools like Gradescope.

Quizzes can be created in Canvas that can be automatically graded (great for pre-class knowledge checks), manually graded (like homework assignments), or a mixture of both.

Larger projects can also be graded using complex matrix-like rubrics simply and quickly in Canvas Speedgrader.

Gradescope is an excellent tool for grading exams and problem sets.

Consider creating "Assignment Groups" to weight scores and / or drop scores automatically.
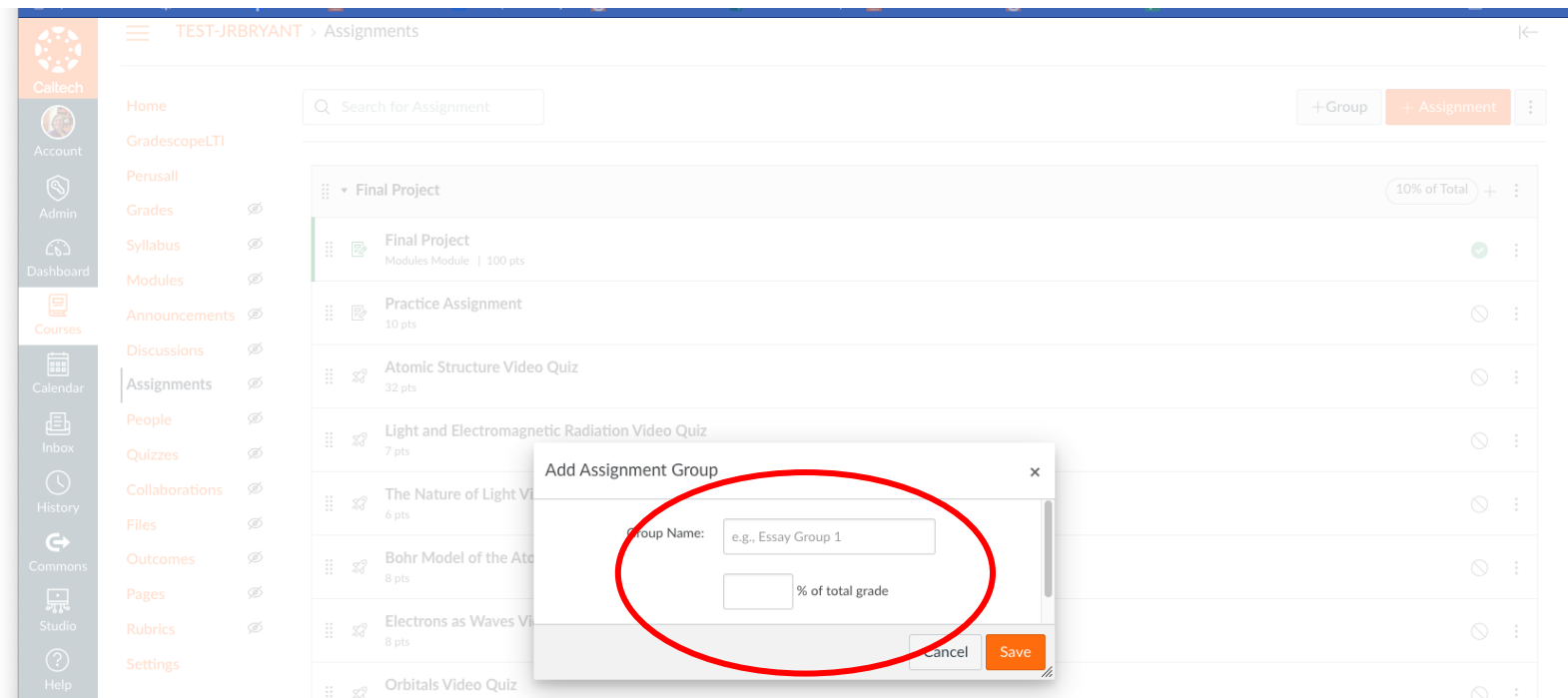
Weighting Grades

In "Assignments", create an "Assignment Group".

Weighting Grades

Name your group and assign the course weighting as a percentage. Already existing assignments can be dragged or moved to this new category.

Dropping Scores

To drop scores, choose "edit" in the assignment group

Repeat the Process

For each category of assignments in your course, create and assignment group and specific the percentage. Ungraded assignments (like surveys) can be assigned to a group with 0% weighting or simply marked as "ungraded" in the settings for the assignment.

To review your settings, click the three-dot menu on the "assignments" page and choose "Assignment Groups Weight". Note that Canvas allows your total to exceed 100%
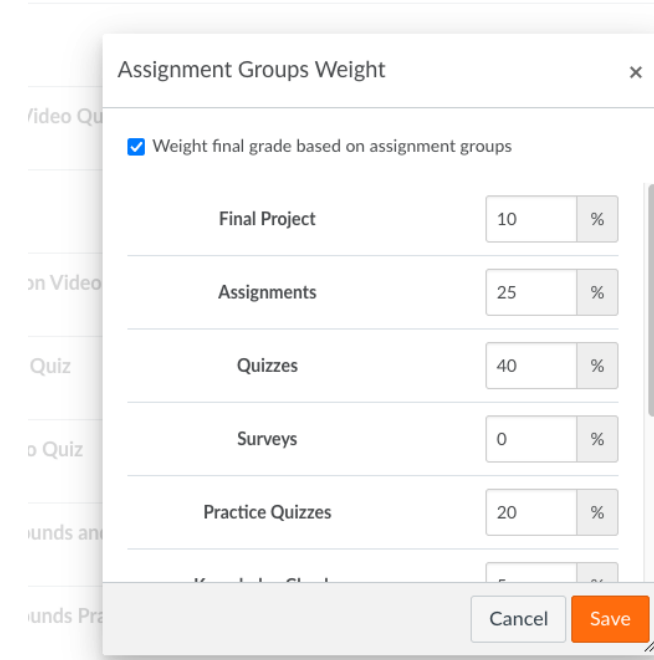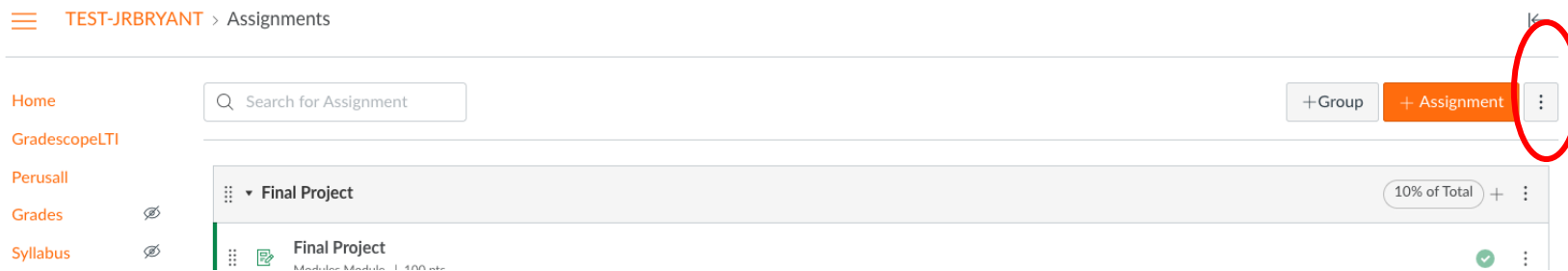
Gradebook

The Canvas Gradebook will break down overall scores by assignment group and weighted total.

Student Name	Assignments 25% of grade	Quizzes 40% of grade	Surveys 0% of grade	Practice Quizzes 20% of grade	Knowledge Checks 5% of grade	Imported Assignments 0% of grade	Module 1 Quizzes 5% of grade	Total
Test Student	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	⚠ 92%

Create Tracking Columns

You can use the Canvas Gradebook to track completion (rather than just scores), even for non-assignment categories. For example, let's say you want the gradebook to display whether or not a student attended an optional event:

1. Create a "no submission assignment" (Assignments → +Assignment).

2. Choose "Complete / Incomplete in "Display Grade as".

3. Select "No submission" for submission type.

Assignment Name

Attended Film Screening?

Edit   View   Insert   Format   Tools   Table

12pt ∨   Paragraph ∨ | **B**   *I*   U̲   A ∨   ✎ ∨   T² ∨ | ⋮

Attended Film Screening?
Out of 0

–   ∨   →

✓

✕

Ungraded

Excused

0 words   </>   ↗   ⋮
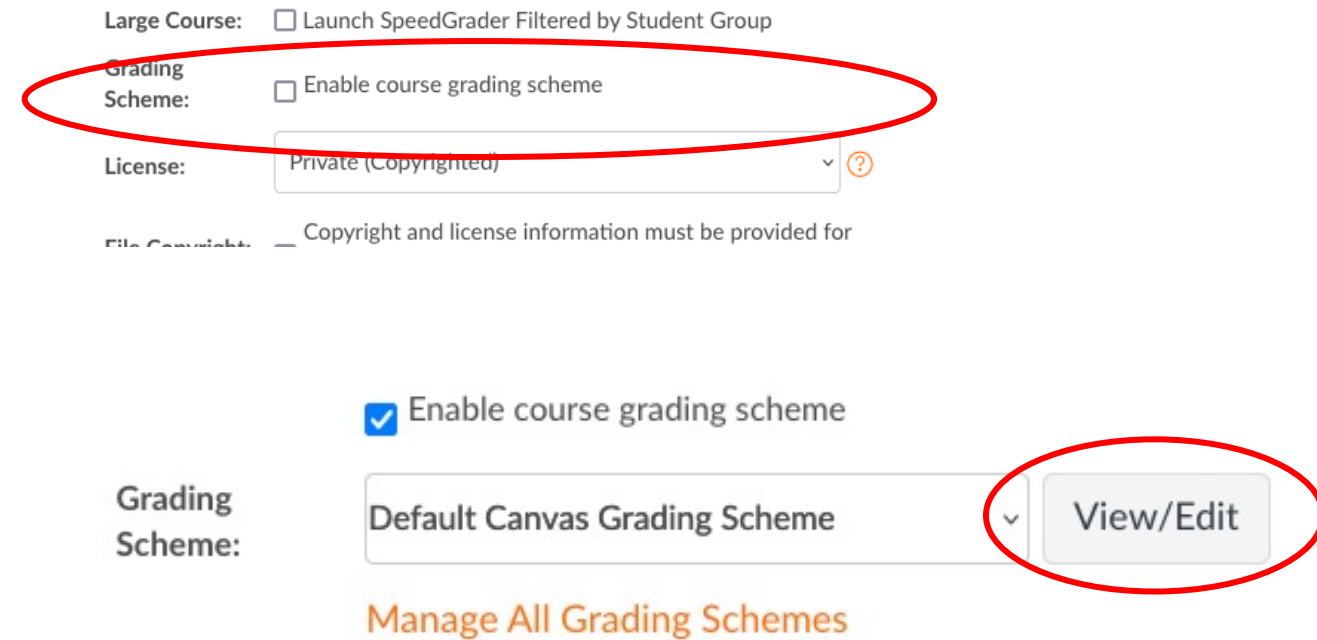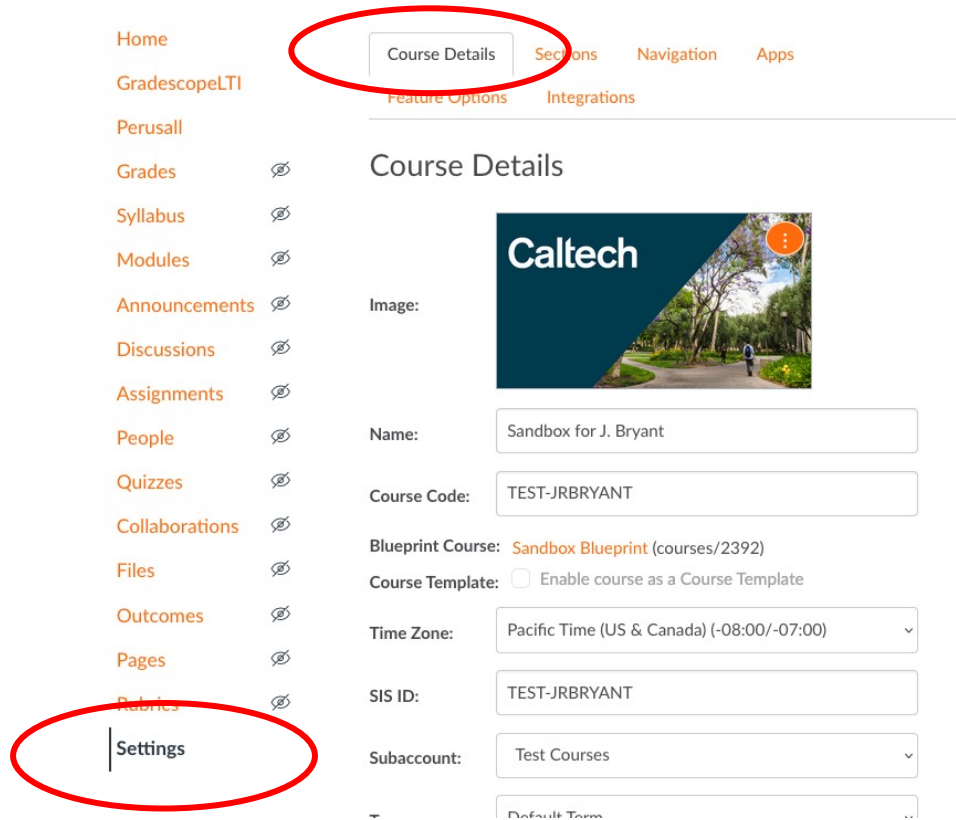
☐ Do not count this assignment towards the final grade

Submission Type   No Submission   ∨

How to display course grades as letters

In "Settings" → "Course Details"
Scroll down and check the box "Enable course grading scheme"

Be sure to click "Update Course Details" when you are done.

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Don't forget to make grades visible to students

Go to Settings → Navigation and drag "Grades" up to the course navigation area:

Students can't see their grades if this symbol is shown

Communicating

Canvas has multiple ways to communicate with students: announcements, discussions, inbox, chat, new analytics.

Announcements help you reach a large number of students at once

Discussions within Canvas provide an integrated system for you and your students to start and contribute to discussion topics.

Canvas Conversations uses the Inbox/Messages within the Global Navigation area to deliver and send messages in multiple formats between instructors and students – send to one or all students.

The Chat tool can be used for real-time conversation with course users. Any user in the course can participate in a chat conversation and view all chat content.

New Analytics can be used to communicate to students who are missing an assignment, scored poorly (or well), etc.

Be sure to tell students how you will communicate with them and what notification settings they should use.

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Student View

When your course is ready to show to students, take a few extra minutes first to view it in Student View
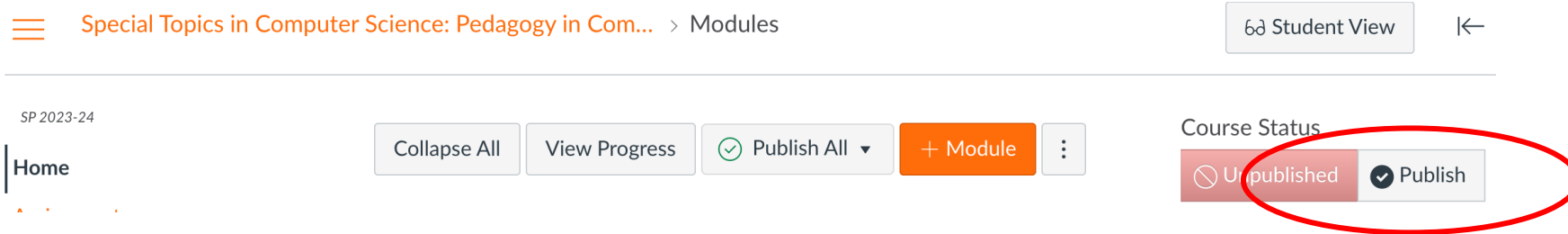

TEST-JRBRYANT › Modules

🔍 Student View |←

This can help you determine if you have forgotten to publish something, if the content and order are clear, etc.

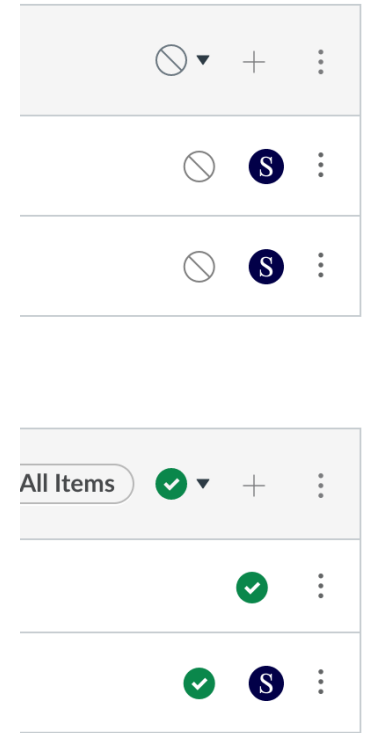(Your "Student View" test identity shows up in your course as "Test Student")

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Publish Your Course

Your students won't be able to interact with any part of your course until you publish the entire course:

Individual items in your modules AND your modules must be published, too.

If there isn't a green check by it, students can't see it!

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Resources

Resource page: canvas.caltech.edu

Demo Courses

Questions?

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