

Setting Up Your Canvas Course

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Outline

Canvas syllabus

Course Home Page / selection and design

Course navigation

Select a grade posting policy

Modules and prerequisites / requirements

Assignments

Grades

Communicating

Student view

Publish your course

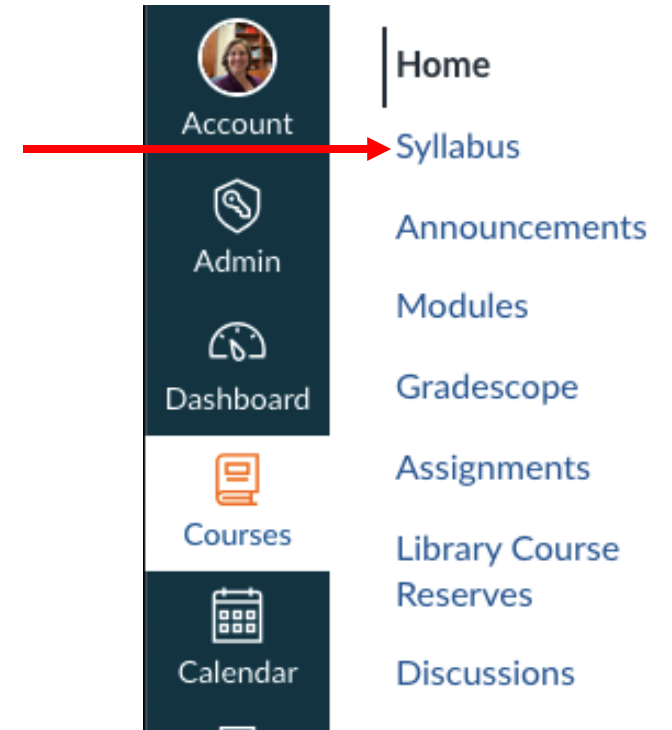
Canvas Syllabus / Canvas Course Index

The "Syllabus" page is where students look for course policies and important due dates. It's a special page in Canvas

This page, once published, can be viewed by anyone with a Caltech Canvas account through the Canvas Course Index – a great way to allow prospective students to view your course information.

https://caltech.instructure.com/search/all_courses/

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.)



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 list of pages in the Canvas course.
2. To Create a new page, click +Page in the upper-right- hand corner.



3. Remember to “Save & Publish” when you are done editing your new page.

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.

 Import Existing Content

 Import from Commons

 Choose Home Page

 View Course Stream

 New Announcement

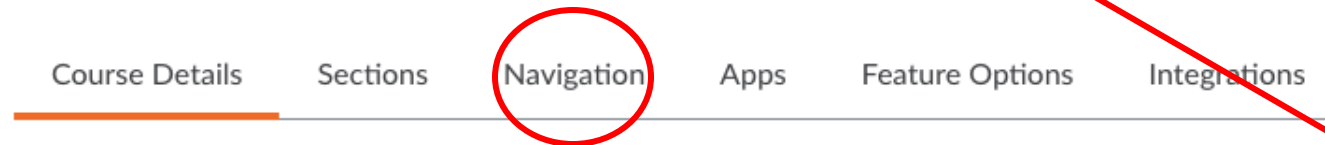
 Course Analytics

 View Course Notifications

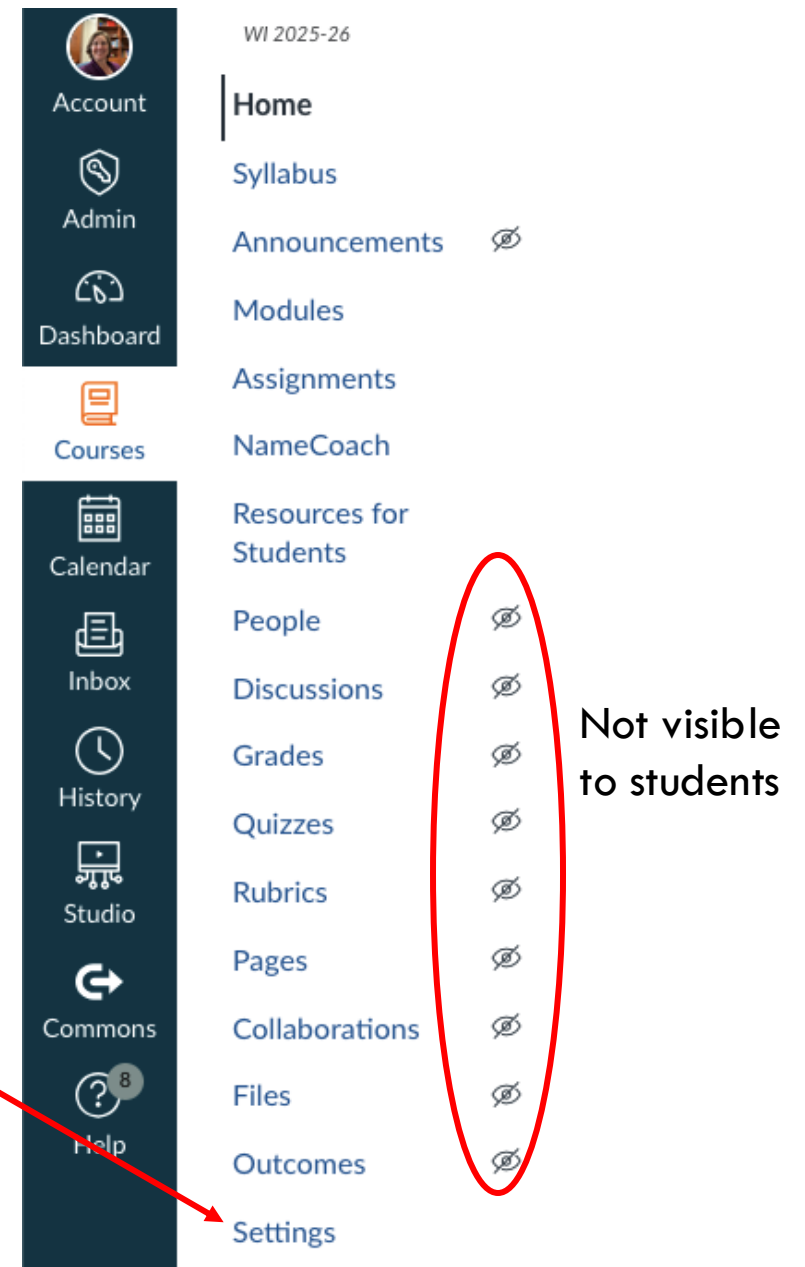
Course navigation

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 and drop to edit the menu

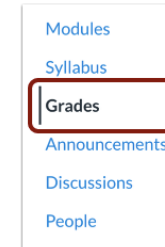


Select a Grade Posting Policy

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:

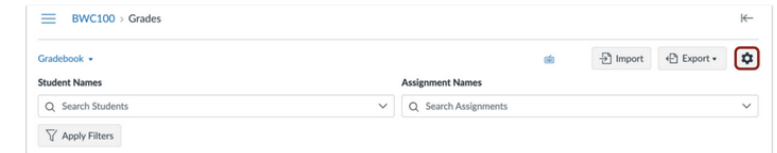
- A **manual posting policy** (recommended), assignment grades remain hidden from student view by default until you post grades for the assignment.
- An **automatic posting policy**, students can see assignment grades as soon as they are entered in the gradebook.

Open Grades



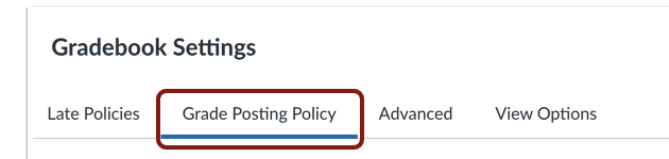
In Course Navigation, click the **Grades** link.

Open Gradebook Settings



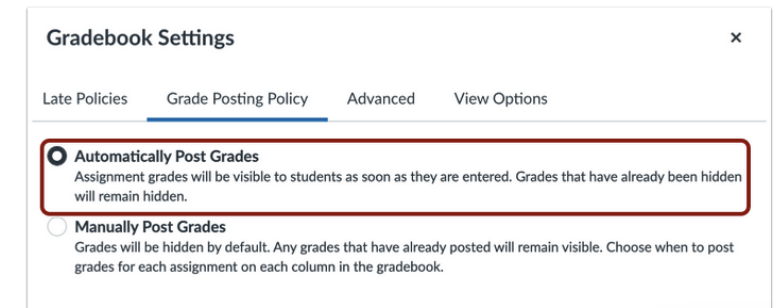
Click the **Settings** icon.

View Grade Posting Policy



Click the **Grade Posting Policy** tab.

Post Grades Automatically

























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

▼ Week 1	
Week 1 (Aug. 22 - 28) - Intro to Course and Kinetics	
 Week 1 Module Objectives	
 Week 1 Due Dates and Assignments	
 Crystal Violet Reaction	
 Crystal Violet Reaction Video Quiz 0 pts	

▼ Welcome Module		Complete All Items
Welcome - START HERE!		
 Welcome to Chem 105b!		
 Syllabus		
 Syllabus and Course Policy Quiz 0 pts Score at least 12.0	<input type="radio"/>	
 Assessment Survey 23 pts		
 Getting to Know You Survey 146 pts		
 Chem 105a Review Videos		
 Periodic Table		

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

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

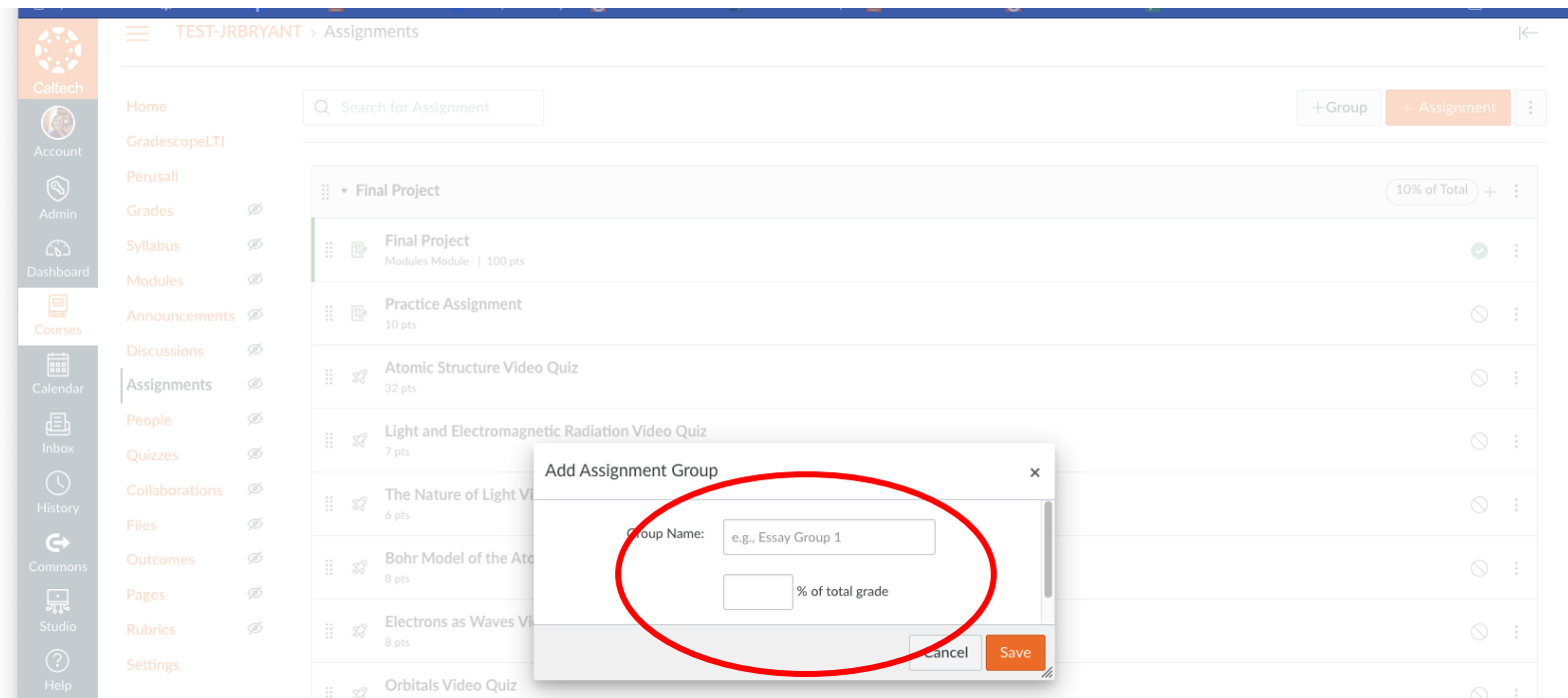
In "Assignments", create an "Assignment Group".

The screenshot shows the Caltech Gradescope LTI interface. On the left is a sidebar with navigation links: Home, GradescopeLTI, Perusall, Grades, Syllabus, Modules, Announcements, Discussions, and Assignments. The main header shows 'TEST-JRBRYANT > Assignments'. Below the header is a search bar labeled 'Search for Assignment'. On the right side of the header, there are three buttons: '+Group' (circled in red), '+ Assignment', and a three-dot menu icon. The main content area displays a list of assignments under the heading 'Final Project' (10% of Total). The list includes: 'Final Project' (Modules Module | 100 pts), 'Practice Assignment' (10 pts), and 'Atomic Structure Video Quiz' (32 pts). Each item has a three-dot menu icon to its right.

Final Project		10% of Total	
Final Project	Modules Module 100 pts		✓
Practice Assignment	10 pts		⊘
Atomic Structure Video Quiz	32 pts		⊘

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

▼ Module 1 Quizzes

Atomic Structure Video Quiz

32 pts

Light and Electromagnetic Radiation Video Quiz

7 pts

The Nature of Light Video Quiz

6 pts

Bohr Model of the Atom Video Quiz

8 pts

Group Name: Module 1 Quizzes

5 % of total grade

Number of scores to ignore for each student

Lowest Scores: 0

Highest Scores: 0

Never Drop: + Add an assignment

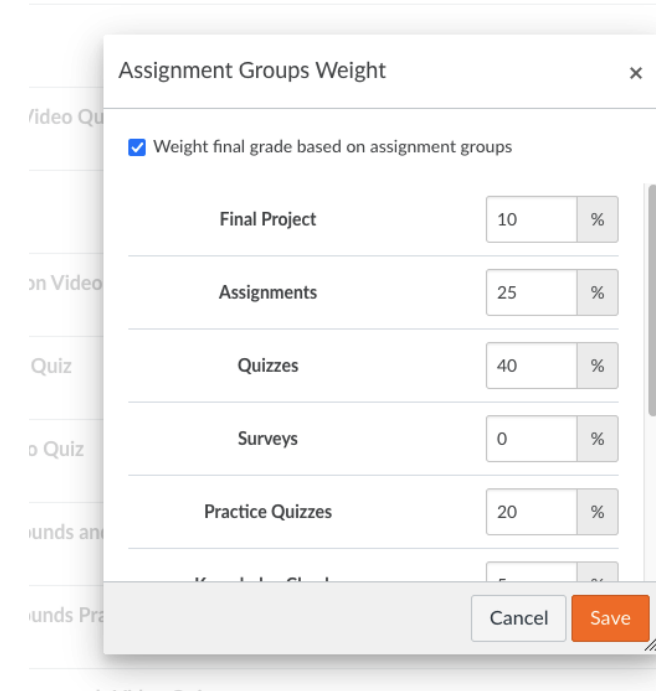
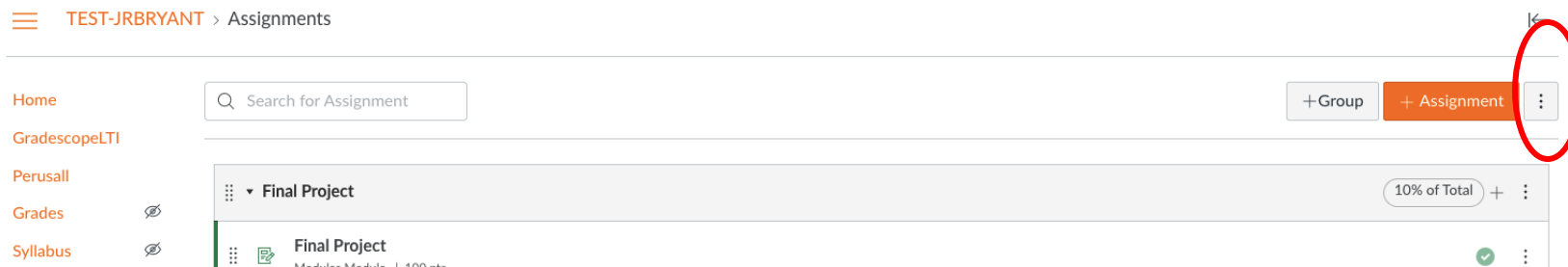
Cancel Save

5% of Total +

Repeat the Process

For each category of assignments in your course, create an assignment group and specify 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.

TEST-JRBRYANT > Grades

Gradebook ▾

Import

Export ▾

Student Names

Assignment Names

Search Students

Search Assignments

Apply Filters

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 U A ✎ T² ⋮

Attended Film Screening?	Out of 0
-	✓ ✕ Ungraded Excused

0 words </> ↗ ⋮

☐ Do not count this assignment towards the final grade

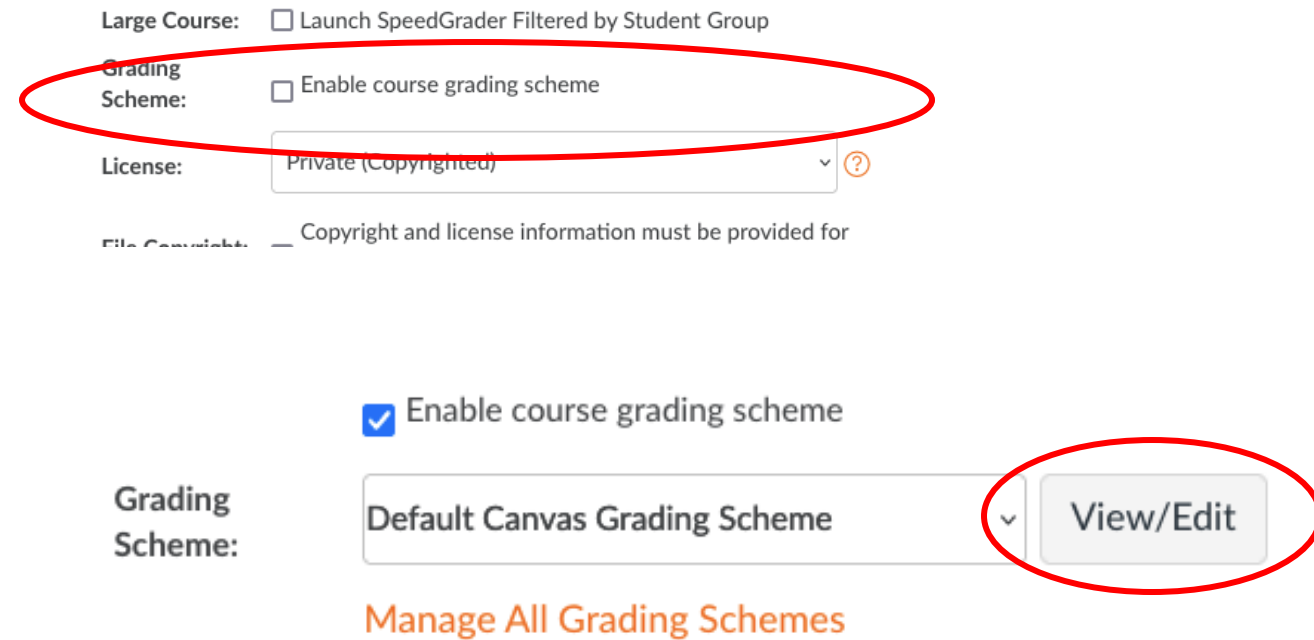
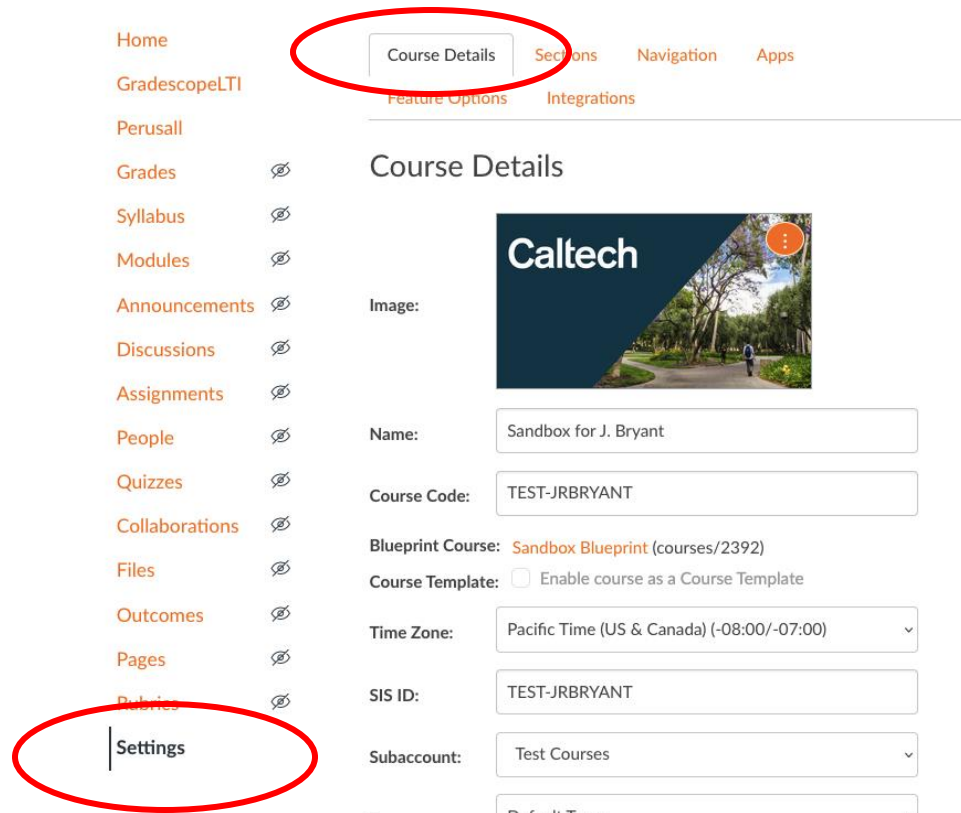
Submission Type

No Submission

How to display course grades as letters

In “Settings” → “Course Details”

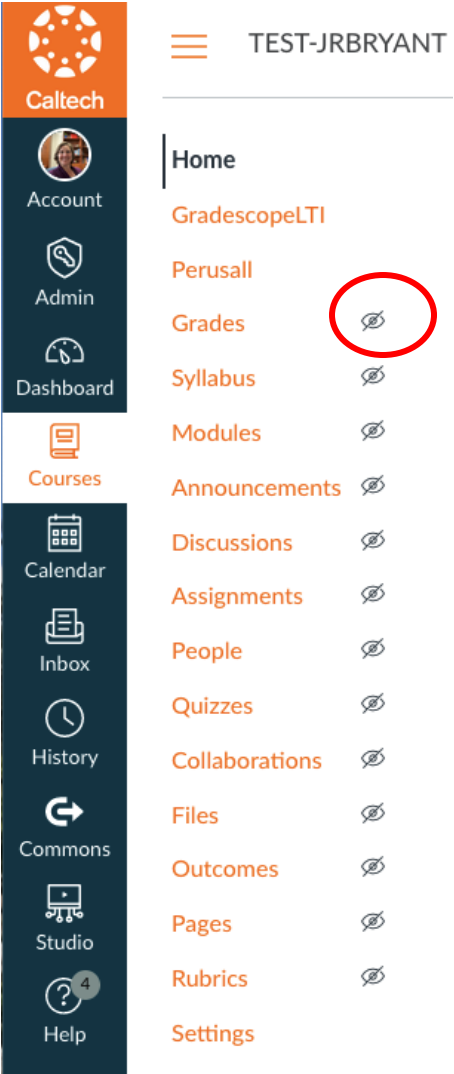
Scroll down and check the box “Enable course grading scheme”



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

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

Drag and drop items to reorder them in the course navigation.

Home	
GradescopeLTI	⋮
Perusall	⋮

Drag items here to hide them from students.
Disabling most pages will cause students who visit those pages to be redirected to the course home page.

Grades <i>This page can't be disabled, only hidden</i>	⋮
New Analytics <i>Page disabled, won't appear in navigation</i>	⋮
Syllabus <i>Page disabled, will redirect to course home page</i>	⋮
Modules <i>Page disabled, will redirect to course home page</i>	⋮

Drag and drop items to reorder them in the course navigation.

Home	
GradescopeLTI	⋮
Perusall	⋮
Grades	⋮

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Syllabus <i>Page disabled, will redirect to course home page</i>	⋮

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.

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

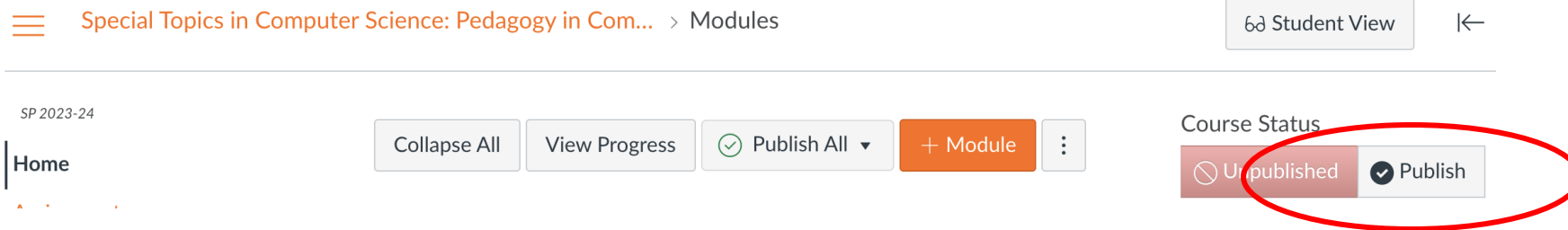


This can help you determine if you have forgotten to publish something, if the content and order are clear, etc.

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

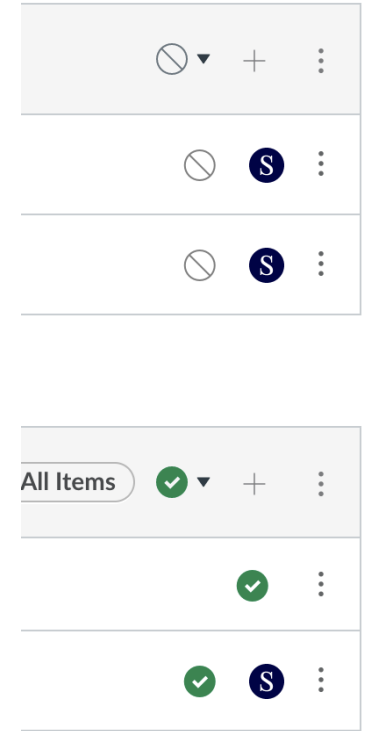
Publish Your Course

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!



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).



Resources


Resource page: canvas.caltech.edu

Demo Courses




DEMO: ACM011 (SP 2021-22)
DEMO: Introduction to Comp...









DEMO: CS 038 | CS 138 (SP 2021-...
DEMO: Algorithms | Compute...



Canvas at Caltech



CANVAS

Canvas Resources

FAQ

EdTech Updates

Caltech Canvas Course Index

Get Help

December 17, 2025 12:00 pm

Setting Up Your Canvas Course-Zoom

Online Event

Learn how to maximize Canvas features and get tips for setting up your Canvas course before it is available to students. We'll cover creating modules, quizzes, and pages as well as setting up your gradebook.

RSVP HERE

Don't forget to attend our Gradescope 101 Zoom in January - [RSVP Here](#)


Canvas (hosted by Instructure) is the official learning management system of Caltech. Canvas simplifies course management tasks: publishing course materials, grading, communicating with students, and more. Students can use Canvas to access course content, submit assignments anytime, anywhere and collaborate with peers and instructors. Canvas is FERPA-compliant and is connected to registrar records for course enrollments.

Recommended browsers for Canvas (and educational technology in general): Chrome, Edge, Firefox


- Safari has known issues, so if you are encountering a problem, it can be helpful to change to one of the above browsers.
- If you are using a recommended browser and still have issues, check that you have the most recent update.
- Learn more about supported browsers [here](#).

Find Caltech's policy about teaching remotely [here](#).

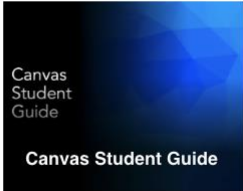
Additional Resources




Get Started with Gradescope



CTLO Course Design Resources



Canvas Student Guide



CTLO

Questions?