

Setting Up Your Canvas Course

Dr. Jasmine Bryant, Director

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

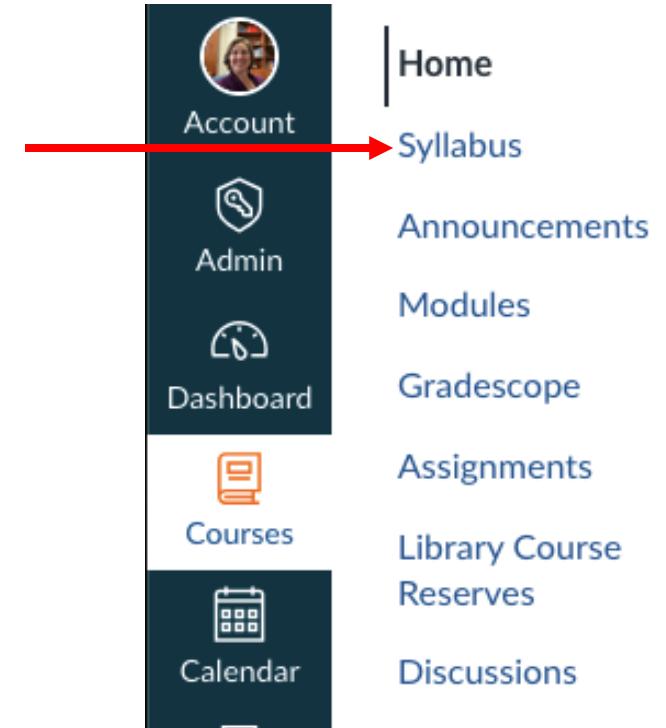
Canvas Syllabus / Canvas Course Index

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.)



[Home](#)[Syllabus](#)[Announcements](#)[Modules](#)[Gradescope](#)[Assignments](#)[Library Course](#)[Reserves](#)[Discussions](#)[Ed Discussion](#)[Piazza 1.3](#)[NameCoach](#)[Resources for Students](#)[People](#)[Grades](#)[Quizzes](#)[Rubrics](#)[Pages](#)[Collaborations](#)[Files](#)[Outcomes](#)[Settings](#)

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

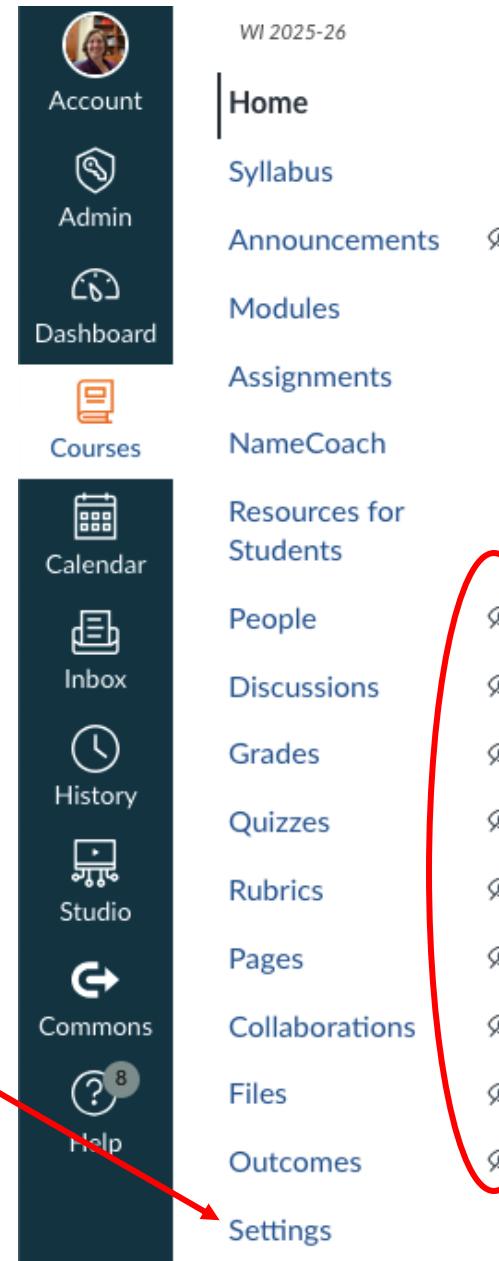
Course navigation

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:

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

Drag and drop to edit the menu

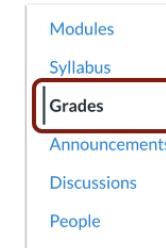


Select a Grade Posting Policy

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:

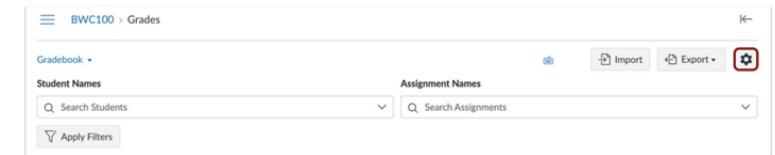
- A **manual posting policy** (recommended), assignment grades remain hidden from student view by default until you post grades for the assignment.
- An **automatic posting policy**, students can see assignment grades as soon as they are entered in the gradebook.

Open Grades



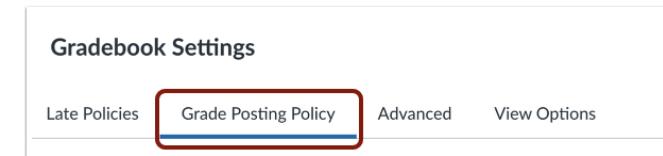
In Course Navigation, click the **Grades** link.

Open Gradebook Settings



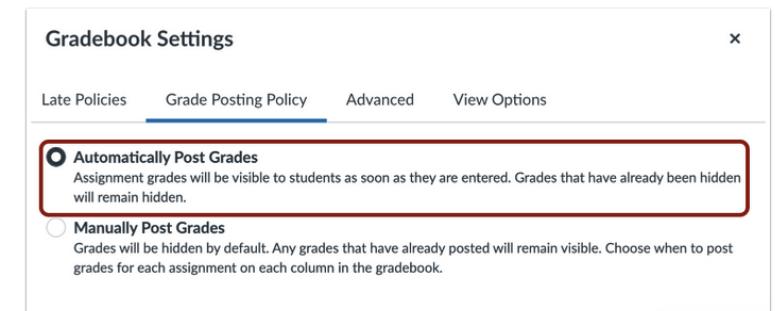
Click the **Settings** icon.

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
 - Welcome - START HERE!
 - Welcome to Chem 105b!
 - Syllabus
 - Syllabus and Course Policy Quiz
 - 0 pts Score at least 12.0
 - Assessment Survey
 - 23 pts
 - Getting to Know You Survey
 - 146 pts
 - Chem 105a Review Videos
 - Periodic Table

Modules and Prerequisites / Requirements

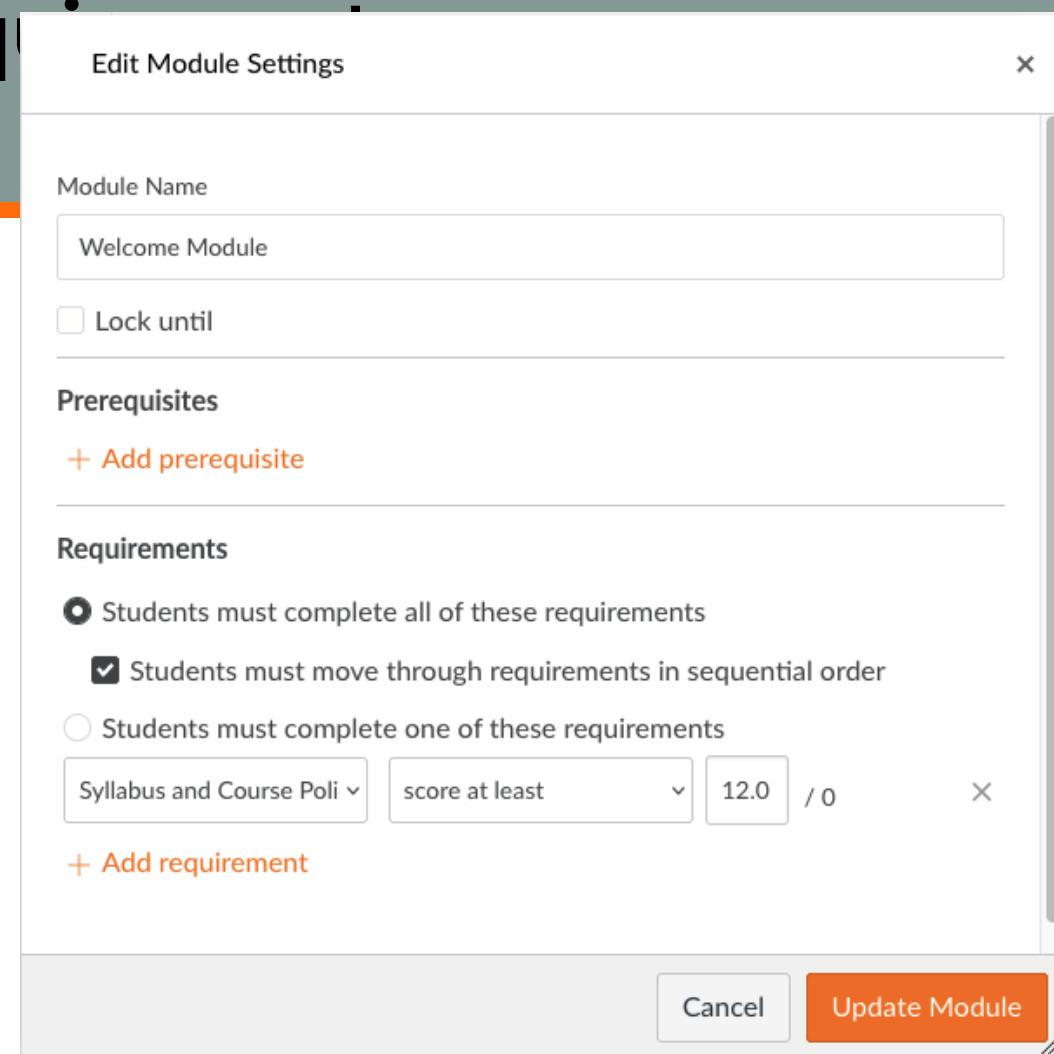
You can restrict how students move through these modules.

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).



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".

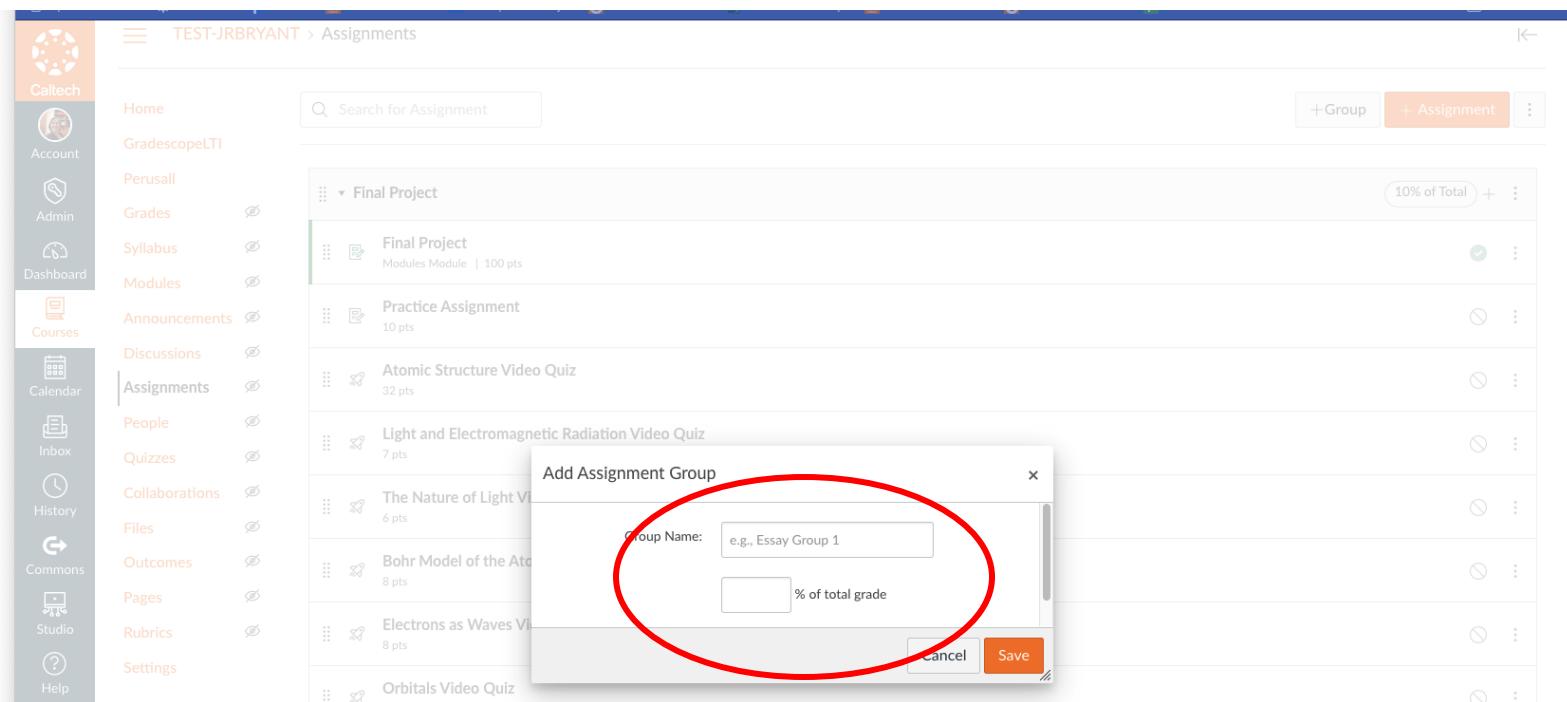


The screenshot shows the GradeScope LTI interface for a course titled "TEST-JRBRYANT". The left sidebar contains links for Home, Account, Admin, Dashboard, Courses, and Calendar. The main content area is titled "Assignments" and shows a list of assignments under a group named "Final Project". The assignments listed are "Final Project" (100 pts), "Practice Assignment" (10 pts), and "Atomic Structure Video Quiz" (32 pts). The top right of the page has a toolbar with buttons for "+ Group" (circled in red), "+ Assignment", and a three-dot menu. A search bar and a "10% of Total" button are also visible.

Assignment	Points	Status	Actions
Final Project	100 pts	Completed (green checkmark)	...
Practice Assignment	10 pts	In Progress (grey circle)	...
Atomic Structure Video Quiz	32 pts	In Progress (grey circle)	...

Weighting Grades

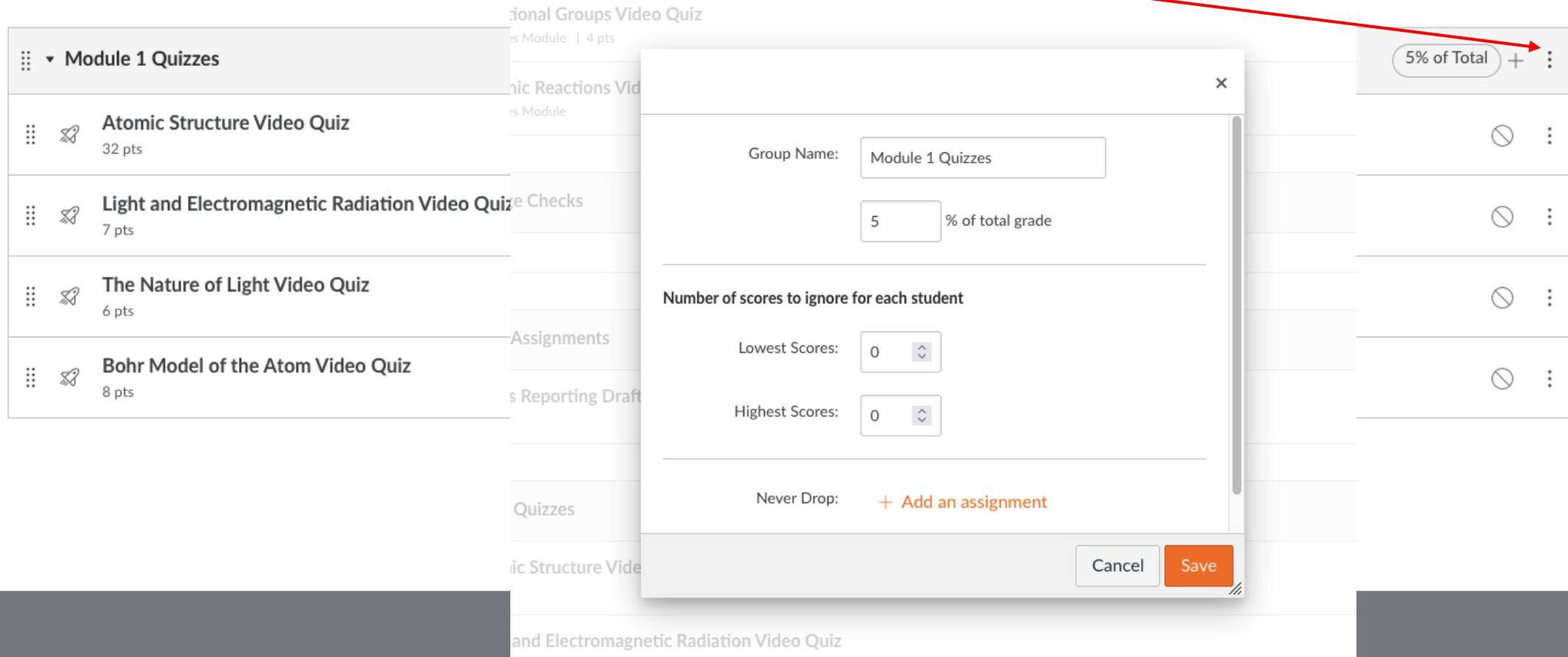
Name your group and assign the course weighting as a percentage. Already existing assignments can be dragged or moved to this new category.



The screenshot shows the 'TEST-JRBRYANT > Assignments' page in the GradescopeLTi interface. The left sidebar contains various course management links: Caltech, Account, Admin, Dashboard, Courses, Calendar, Inbox, History, Commons, Studio, and Help. The 'Assignments' link is currently selected. The main area displays a list of assignments under the 'Final Project' category, including 'Final Project' (100 pts), 'Practice Assignment' (10 pts), 'Atomic Structure Video Quiz' (32 pts), 'Light and Electromagnetic Radiation Video Quiz' (7 pts), 'The Nature of Light VI' (6 pts), 'Bohr Model of the Atom VII' (8 pts), 'Electrons as Waves VII' (8 pts), and 'Orbitals Video Quiz'. A modal dialog box titled 'Add Assignment Group' is overlaid on the page. It has a text input field labeled 'Group Name:' with the placeholder 'e.g., Essay Group 1' and a percentage input field labeled '% of total grade'. A red circle highlights the 'Group Name:' input field. At the bottom of the dialog are 'Cancel' and 'Save' buttons.

Dropping Scores

To drop scores, choose “edit” in the assignment group



Group Name:

5 % of total grade

Number of scores to ignore for each student

Lowest Scores:

Highest Scores:

Never Drop: + Add an assignment

Cancel Save

Atomic Structure Video Quiz
32 pts

Light and Electromagnetic Radiation Video Quiz Checks
7 pts

The Nature of Light Video Quiz
6 pts

Bohr Model of the Atom Video Quiz
8 pts

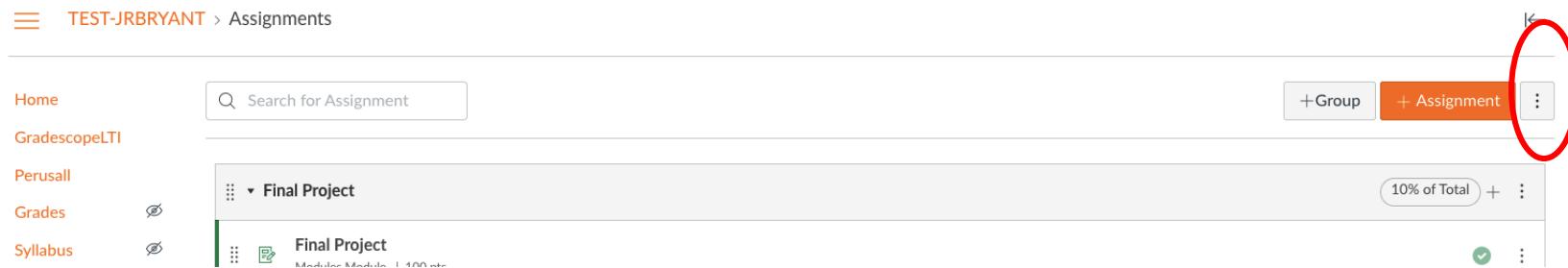
Quizzes

and Electromagnetic Radiation Video Quiz

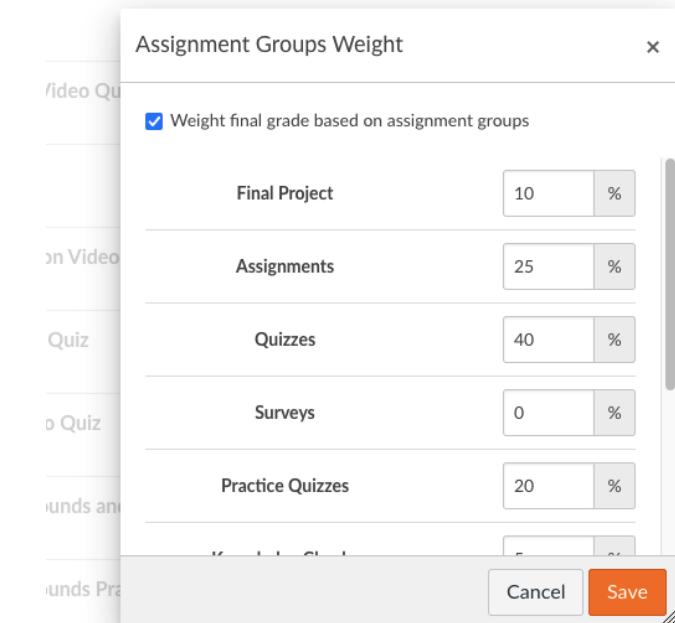
Repeat the Process

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%



The screenshot shows the Canvas Assignments page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Gradescope LTI, Perusall, Grades, and Syllabus. Below the navigation bar is a search bar labeled "Search for Assignment". To the right of the search bar are three buttons: "+Group", "+Assignment", and a three-dot menu icon. The three-dot menu icon is circled in red. Below the search bar, there is a list of assignment groups. The first group is "Final Project" with a sub-item "Final Project". To the right of the "Final Project" group is a button labeled "10% of Total" with a plus sign, and a three-dot menu icon. The second group is "Final Project" with a sub-item "Final Project".



The screenshot shows the "Assignment Groups Weight" dialog box. At the top, there is a checkbox labeled "Weight final grade based on assignment groups" which is checked. Below the checkbox is a table with six rows, each representing a category and its weight. The categories and their weights are: "Final Project" (10%), "Assignments" (25%), "Quizzes" (40%), "Surveys" (0%), "Practice Quizzes" (20%), and "Video Quizzes" (0%). At the bottom of the dialog box are "Cancel" and "Save" buttons.

Assignment Group	Weight
Final Project	10 %
Assignments	25 %
Quizzes	40 %
Surveys	0 %
Practice Quizzes	20 %
Video Quizzes	0 %

Gradebook

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

TEST-JRBRYANT > Grades ←

Gradebook Import Export Settings

Student Names **Assignment Names**

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.

The screenshot shows the Canvas Gradebook interface. At the top, the assignment name is set to "Attended Film Screening?". Below the assignment name are standard editing tools: Edit, View, Insert, Format, Tools, and Table, followed by a font size dropdown (12pt), a Paragraph dropdown, and various text styling icons (B, I, U, A, etc.).

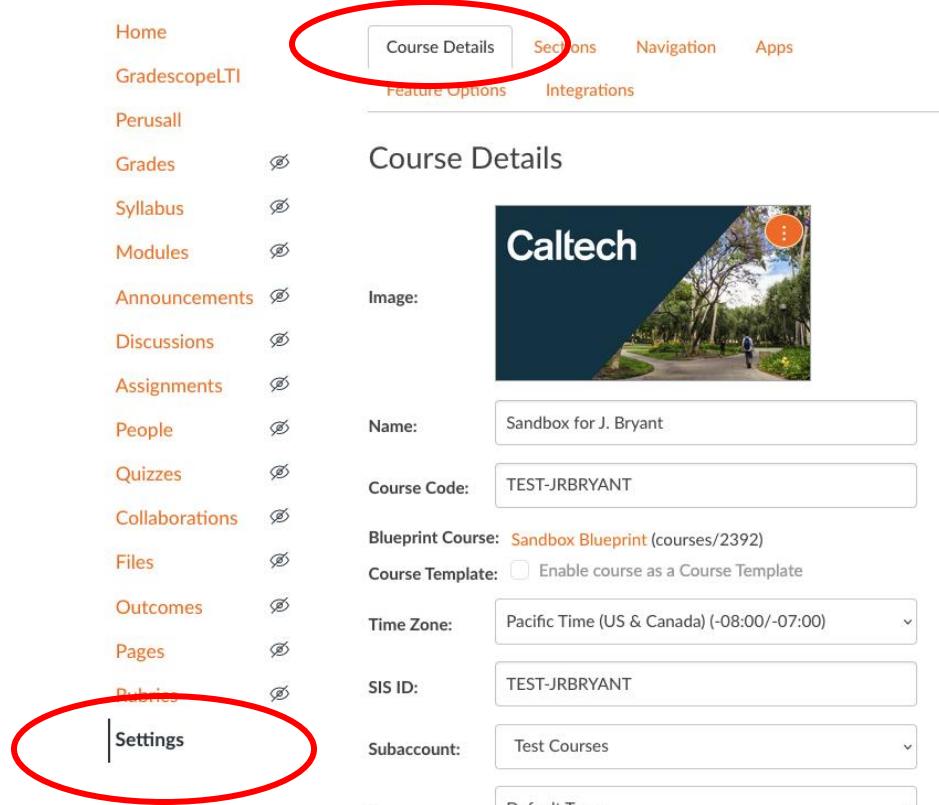
The assignment table is displayed, with the first column header "Attended Film Screening?" and the first row showing "Out of 0". A dropdown menu is open over the grade cell, listing four options: a green checkmark, a red X, "Ungraded", and "Excused".

At the bottom of the gradebook interface, there is a checkbox labeled "Do not count this assignment towards the final grade" and a "Submission Type" dropdown set to "No Submission".

How to display course grades as letters

In “Settings” → “Course Details”

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



Home
GradescopeLTI
Perusall
Grades
Syllabus
Modules
Announcements
Discussions
Assignments
People
Quizzes
Collaborations
Files
Outcomes
Pages
Rubrics
Settings

Course Details

Image: 

Name: Sandbox for J. Bryant

Course Code: TEST-JRBRYANT

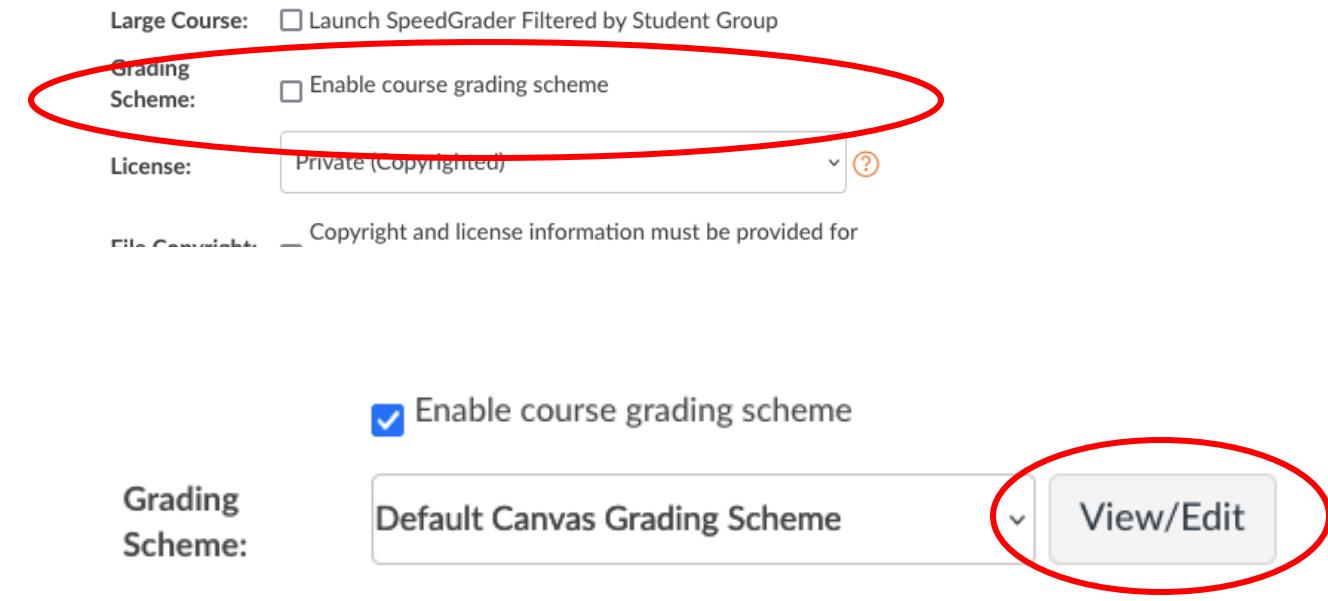
Blueprint Course: Sandbox Blueprint (courses/2392)

Course Template: Enable course as a Course Template

Time Zone: Pacific Time (US & Canada) (-08:00/-07:00)

SIS ID: TEST-JRBRYANT

Subaccount: Test Courses



Large Course: Launch SpeedGrader Filtered by Student Group

Grading Scheme: Enable course grading scheme

License: Private (Copyrighted) [?](#)

Copyright and license information must be provided for

Enable course grading scheme

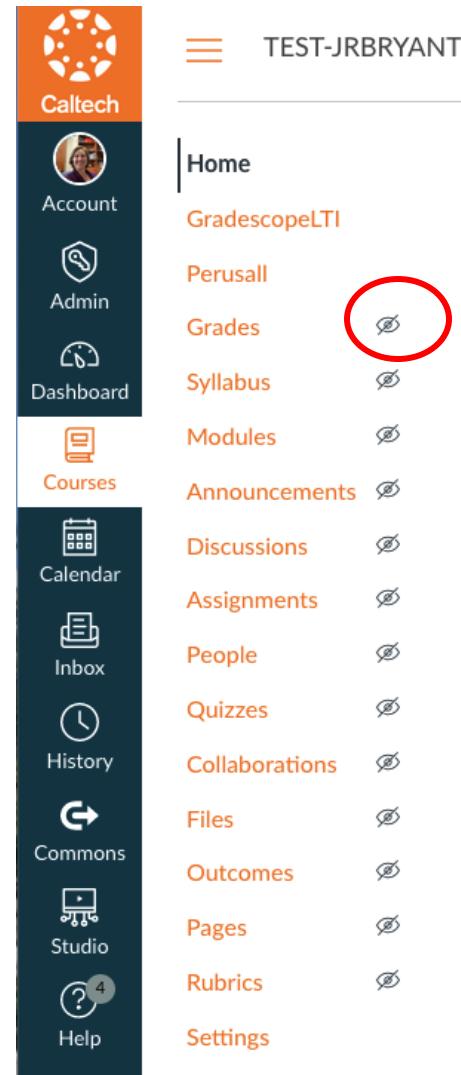
Grading Scheme: Default Canvas Grading Scheme [View/Edit](#)

[Manage All Grading Schemes](#)

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

CTLO

Don't forget to make grades visible to students



TEST-JRBRYANT

- Home
- GradescopeLTI
- Perusall
- Grades** 
- Syllabus 
- Modules 
- Announcements 
- Discussions 
- Assignments 
- People 
- Quizzes 
- Collaborations 
- Files 
- Outcomes 
- Pages 
- Rubrics
- Settings

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

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

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	⋮

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.

New Analytics	⋮
<i>Page disabled, won't appear in navigation</i>	⋮
Syllabus	⋮
<i>Page disabled, will redirect to course home page</i>	⋮

CTLO

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

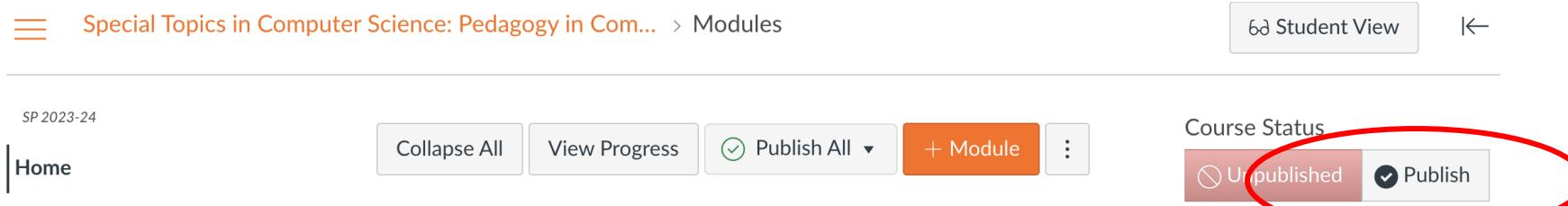
63 Student View ←

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:



Special Topics in Computer Science: Pedagogy in Com... > Modules

SP 2023-24

Home

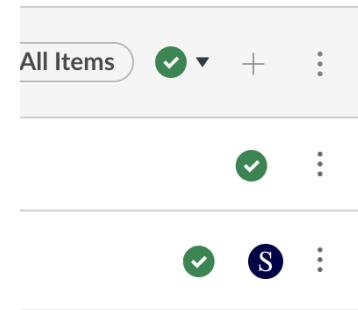
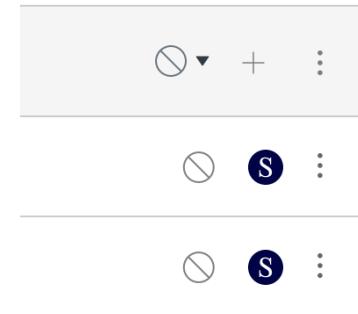
60 Student View

Course Status

Unpublished Published

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

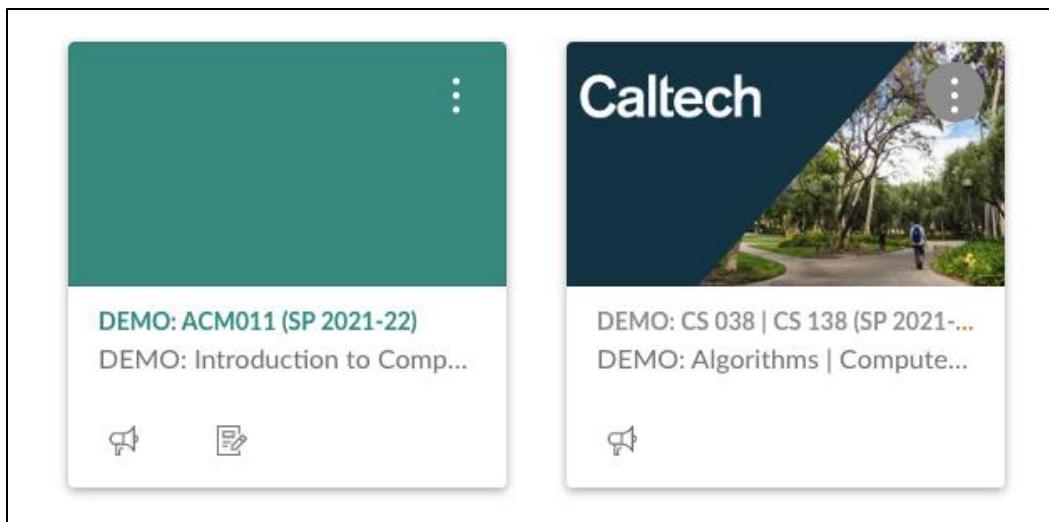
FERPA is a law that protects student privacy.

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



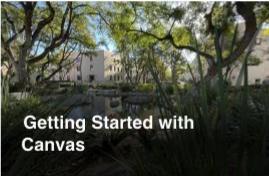
DEMO: ACM011 (SP 2021-22)
DEMO: Introduction to Comp...

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

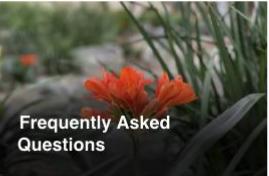
Canvas at Caltech



Log in to Canvas



Getting Started with Canvas



Frequently Asked Questions



Canvas Resources

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](#).

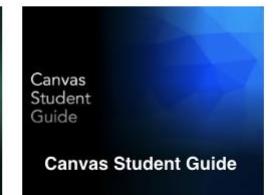
Additional Resources



Get Started with Gradescope



Course and Syllabus Design Resources



CTLO Course Design Resources

Canvas Student Guide

Canvas Student Guide

Canvas

CTLO

Questions?

CTLO