

**Features of the Online Course**



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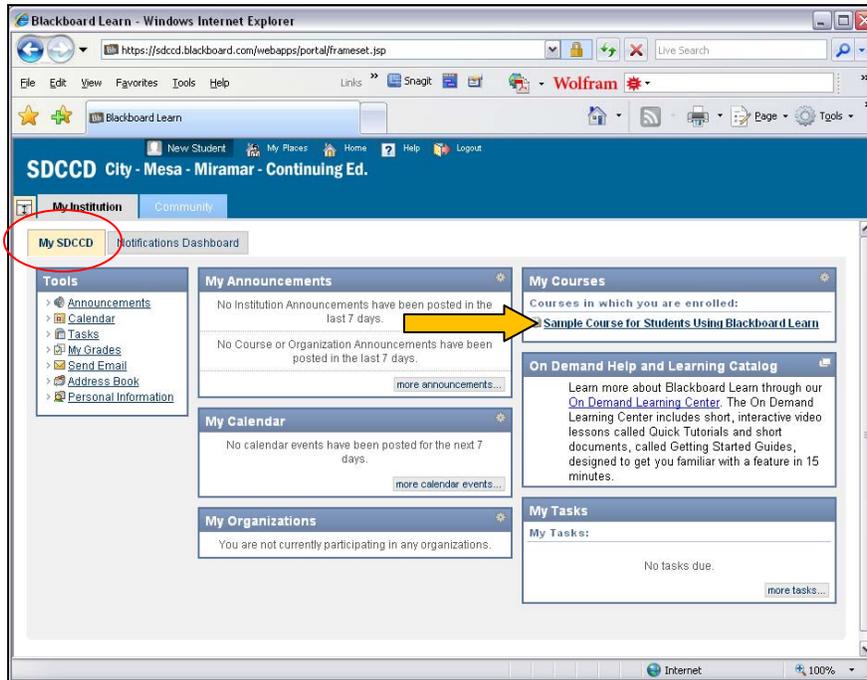
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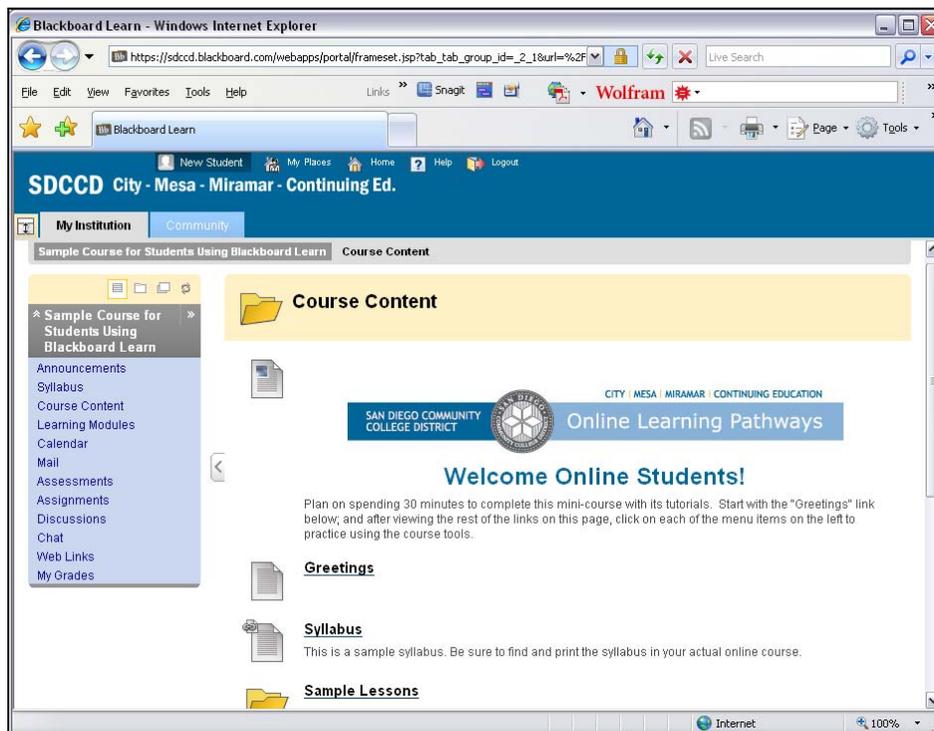
This guide provides a general overview of the major tools and features of Blackboard Learn 9.1. Which features to incorporate into their course and the arrangement of the Course Menu and Course Content Home Page as well as decisions about overall course design are up to each instructor.

# Course Interface: Overview

Upon logging in to <https://sdccd.blackboard.com>, the **My SDCCD** page displays. Look for **My Courses** and click on the name of the course.



Once inside the course you will see the **Course Menu** on the left and a **Content area** in the main part of the page. Use the Course Menu to access all tools and content in a course. When you click on an item in the Course Menu, it appears in the content area in the center of the screen.



# Syllabus

Look for a **Syllabus link** on the **Course Menu** and/or the **Course Content Home page**. The instructor should have put the Syllabus in an obvious place. A Syllabus typically contains the following types of information:

- Instructor contact information and office hours.
- The objectives of the course.
- The academic policies of the institution, as well as policies regarding late assignments, make-up exams, etc.
- Grading policy
- A course outline, which includes important dates.
- An overview of course lessons.
- A list of required texts and recommended readings.

A complete online syllabus checklist can be found at <http://www.sdccdonline.net/faculty/resources>.

**To open the Syllabus, click its link.** Depending on the format, it may open in a program such as Word or Adobe Reader.

The instructor may have created the Syllabus using the **Syllabus Builder tool**. The syllabus may contain sections that can be expanded and collapsed. You can expand each section to view course information that is specific to that section. You can also print the syllabus allowing you to have a copy on hand for easy reference. To print, right-click on the screen and choose Print.

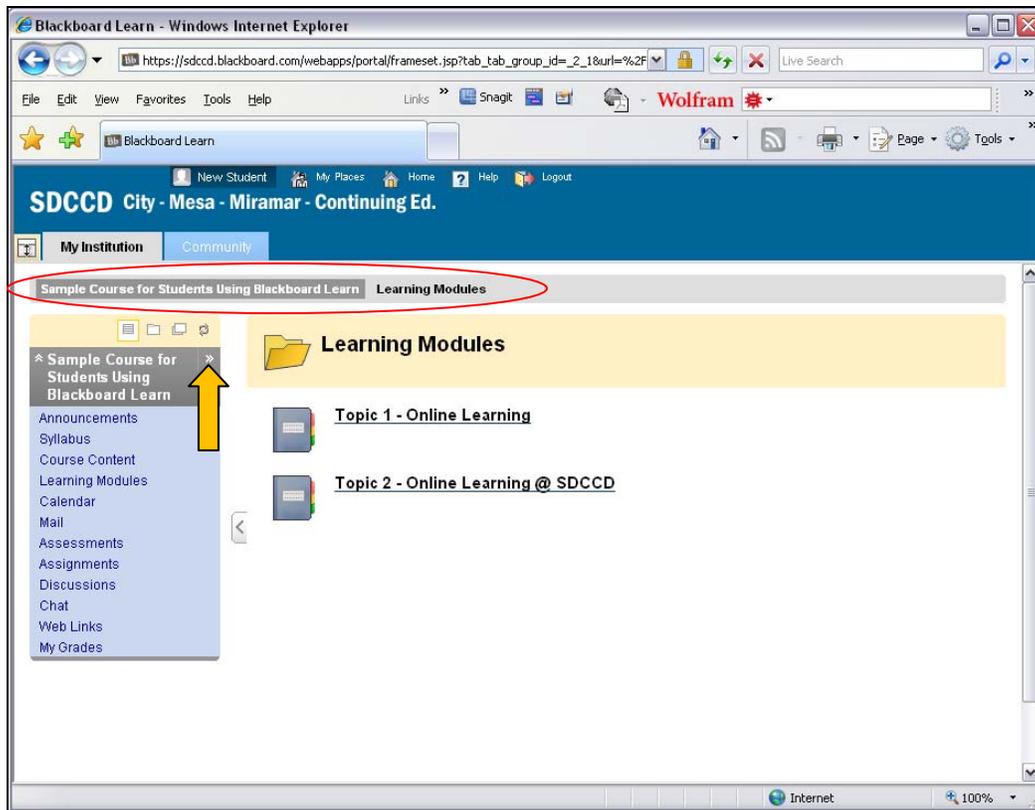
# Navigating through the Course Content

Content includes all material that is available in a course, such as learning modules, assignments, web links, and assessments. Content can also include communication tools, such as announcements, discussion topics or chat rooms. The Instructor chooses which course tools to display and which items to include on the course homepage.

## Accessing Content in Different Course Tools

You can access areas of the course by clicking on each tool. For example, if the Learning Modules tool is available, you can access the Learning Modules by clicking that link in the Course Menu.

Instructors decide which course tools to display. The Course Menu is visible throughout the course. No matter where you are in the course, from the Course Menu, you can easily jump back to the main page of the course by the expand arrows next to the course title:



## Navigating Around the Course via "Breadcrumbs"

Your current location in a course appears in the breadcrumbs at the top of the screen. (See the area circled in red above.) Breadcrumbs also list the path of screens that you have visited. You can click a breadcrumb to return to a previous screen.

## Learning Modules

Learning modules contain related course content that is organized to specify a learning path. A learning path is meant to guide students through the content in order to achieve the learning module's objectives.

For example, a learning module may contain four content items. The first item may be an introduction and overview of the content in the learning module. The second and third content items could be links to articles and web sites with information about the course. The fourth content item may be an assignment pertaining to the information in the articles and web sites. There could also be a link to a discussion forum where students could post questions and comments about the learning module's content.

## Communicating

Communication tools such as e-mail, discussion forums and chat rooms are key components for instructor-student and student-student interaction and engagement. Instructors and students use these communication tools to exchange feedback, offer opinions, discuss the course material, and ask questions. Regular, effective, instructor-initiated communication is an accreditation requirement for distance education.

The following communication tools are available:

- **Announcements.** The Announcements tool allows instructors to place important information in a prominent location in a course. Announcements can also appear as pop-up messages.
- **Discussions.** The Discussions tool allows participants in a course to interact asynchronously on course-related topics. Instructors can evaluate the quality of the students' postings to the discussion board, just as they would evaluate classroom participation.
- **Blogs.** Instructors can create Course Blogs where all students can add entries and comment, Individual Blogs where a student can add entries and the other students can view and add comments, or Group Blogs as a way for group members to communicate and build upon each other's entries.
- **Wikis.** Instructors can create Wikis as an area of collaboration for all students or for groups. Contributions to the wiki can be made and modified by the students and the instructor can view the changes and see the individual contributions of each student.
- **Chat.** The Chat tool allows students and the instructor to chat with one another in real time while they are in the course. You can also use the Whiteboard feature in Chat to draw objects, enter text, import images, and create slide shows that can be viewed in real time.
- **Virtual Classroom.** The Virtual Classroom tool is another real-time communication tool that includes a Whiteboard and a Question Inbox as well as a text chat and is designed to be a place for an instructor to hold live lectures and discussions. This synchronous online environment enables participants to view links, share desktops and exchange files and can be recorded and archived.
- **Journals.** Journals are personal spaces for students to communicate privately with the instructor and are also used as a tool for students' individual reflection. Group journals can also be enabled by the instructor.
- **Messages.** Messages are private communication between the instructor and students within a course.

- **Email.** Instructors can send email to students in the course that will go to their external email accounts.
- **Notifications.** The Notification System enables users to receive notifications of events that occur such as a new assignment or a test due date.
- **Early Warning System.** Instructors can notify students when their performance or attendance requires a warning.

## Assessments

The Assessments tool is used to measure student learning outcomes and to gauge students' understanding of key concepts in a course. Point values are assigned to test questions and the results are recorded in the Grade Center.

There are three types of assessments in Blackboard Learn 9.1:

- Tests: online tests for which grades are assigned.
- Self tests: assessments for which students receive a grade but the grade is not recorded or counted towards their final grade in the course. Self tests are merely to give students the chance to test their knowledge and understanding of course content.
- Surveys: ungraded assessments used for polling purposes and evaluations.

The Instructor determines how assessments are presented:

- Some assessments are available only on certain dates, while others have unlimited availability. The availability of an assessment appears in the assessment listing. Students may also be able to submit more than one attempt for an assessment.
- Some assessments have a time limit, while others provide an unlimited amount of time. The amount of time to complete the assessment appears in the assessment listing as well as in the assessment itself. Instructors decide whether there is a penalty for going over the time limit.
- Sometimes questions appear all at once and sometimes they appear one at a time. Students may have the option of revisiting questions after they have saved an answer.
- For tests, students may receive their grade and feedback immediately or they may have to wait until after the Instructor releases the grade.

There are numerous types of questions that can be included in an Assessment and instructors are encouraged to use a variety of question types to encourage critical thinking:

Calculated Formula Questions	A Calculated Formula question contains a formula, the variables of which can be set to change for each user. The variable range is created by specifying a minimum value and a maximum value for each variable. Answer sets are randomly generated.
Calculated Numeric Response Questions	This question resembles a fill-in-the-blank question. The user enters a number to complete a statement. The correct answer can be a specific number or within a range of numbers.
Either/ Or Questions	Users are presented with a statement and asked to respond using a selection of pre-defined two-choice answers

Essay Questions	Essay questions require the Instructor to provide Students with a question or statement. Students are given the opportunity to type an answer into a text field. Sample answers can be added for users or Graders to use as a reference. These types of questions must be graded manually on the Grade Assessment page.
File Response Questions	Users upload a file from the local drive or from the Content Collection as the answer to the question. This type of question is graded manually.
Fill in Multiple Blanks Questions	This question type builds on fill-in-the-blank questions with multiple fill in the blank responses that can be inserted into a sentence or paragraph. Separate sets of answers are defined for each blank.
Fill in the Blank Questions	Fill in the Blank answers are evaluated based on an exact text match. Accordingly, it is important to keep the answers simple and limited to as few words as possible. Answers are not case sensitive, but are evaluated based on spelling.
Hot Spot Questions	Users indicate the answer by marking a specific point on an image. A range of pixel coordinates is used to define the correct answer. Hot Spot refers to the area of an image that, when selected, yields a correct answer.
Jumbled Sentence Questions	Users are shown a sentence with a few parts of the sentence as variables. The user selects the proper answer for each variable from drop-down lists to assemble the sentence. Only one set of answers is used for all of the drop-down lists.
Matching Questions	Matching questions allow Students to pair items in one column to items in another column. Instructors may include a different numbers of questions and answers in a Matching question.
Multiple Answer Questions	Multiple answer questions allow users to choose more than one answer. The number of answer choices is limited to 20.
Multiple Choice Questions	Multiple-choice questions allow the users a multitude of choices with only one correct answer. In multiple-choice questions, users indicate the correct answer by selecting a radio button. The number of answer choices is limited to 20.
Opinion Scale/ Likert Questions	Question type based on a rating scale designed to measure attitudes or reactions. This type of question is popular to use in surveys in order to get a comparable scale of opinion. Users indicate the multiple choice answer that represents their attitude or reaction.
Ordering Questions	Ordering questions require users to provide an answer by selecting the correct order of a series of items.
Question Metadata	Instructors have the option to create categories, keywords, Learning Objectives, and Levels of Difficulty for questions to help organize them for future use.
Quiz Bowl Questions	Quiz Bowl questions are a way to add fun and creativity to tests, such as self assessments or in-class contests. The user is shown the answer and responds by entering the correct question into a text box.
Random Block	Random Blocks enable the Instructor to use a random selection of questions from a Pool. Be aware that it is not possible to add a Random Block of questions from another Test or Survey.

Short Answer Questions	Short Answer questions are similar to essay questions. The length of the answer can be limited to a specified number of rows in the text box.
True/ False Questions	True/False questions allow the user to choose either true or false. True and False answer options are limited to the words True and False.

## Assignments

Students can use the Assignments tool to view, complete, and submit assignments that instructors create. The instructor includes instructions and point values and decides whether the student needs to submit a separate file and send it back to the instructor. The instructor responds individually to each student's assignment by including comments in the assignment area and/or by attaching files with feedback. The assignment grade is automatically transferred to the Grade Center.

After students complete an assignment, they can either save it as a draft or submit it. If students submit an assignment, the Instructor can grade it and provide feedback. If an assignment does not require a grade, the instructor marks it as complete.

- If an instructor allows it, students can revise their submission even after they have submitted it.
- Instructors can set the option to grade anonymously, where student identifying information is hidden.

Each assignment has a due date. If the instructor allows it, students can submit an assignment after the due date but it will be marked late. However, the instructor may not allow students to submit an assignment after the due date; in that case, the assignment is marked missed.

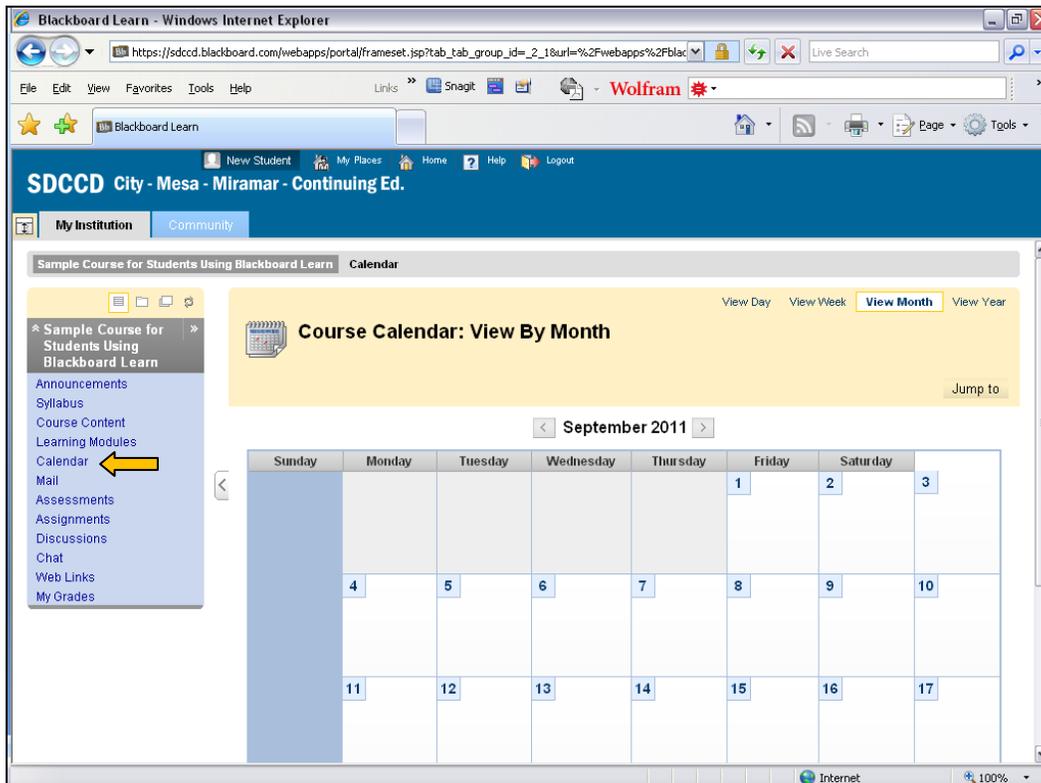
The instructor can set evaluation criteria using the Rubric tool. Using rubrics helps students prepare to meet the requirements of an assignment and to understand their score on an assignment.

The screenshot displays the 'Upload Assignment: Chapter 1 Worksheet' interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'Introduction to Oceanography - Section 2', 'Assignments - Chapter 1 Worksheet', and 'Upload Assignment: Chapter 1 Worksheet'. The main title is 'Upload Assignment: Chapter 1 Worksheet'. Below the title are buttons for 'Cancel', 'Save as Draft', and 'Submit'. The interface is organized into three numbered sections:

- 1. Assignment Information:** This section contains fields for 'Name' (Chapter 1 Worksheet), 'Instructions' (Download the worksheet and add your responses after reading Chapter 1 in your textbook.), 'Due Date', 'Points Possible' (30), and 'Assignment Files' (Chapter 1 Worksheet [\[Chapter 1 Worksheet\]](#)).
- 2. Assignment Materials:** This section includes a 'Submission' area with a rich text editor (Visual Editor: On), an 'Attach File' section with 'Browse for Local File' and 'Browse for Content Collection Item' buttons, and a 'Comments' text area.
- 3. Submit:** This section contains buttons for 'Submit', 'Save as Draft', and 'Cancel'. Below these buttons is a small instruction: 'Click Save as Draft to save changes and continue working later. Click Submit to finish. Click Cancel to quit without saving changes.'

## Calendar

Instructors can provide students with reminders of dates for course events and tasks. Instructors decide whether to activate the course Calendar as a tool on the **Course Menu**. View calendar entries by month, week, or day. The calendar tool is useful for keeping students on track with meeting course deadlines.



## Discussions

The Discussions tool provides asynchronous communication between instructors and students. With the Discussions tool, students and instructors can post and read messages. By default, discussion messages are presented in threads, which are a series of replies to the same subject, allowing you to follow the discussion.

With the Discussions tool, students can:

- Read messages posted by instructors and students.
- Create a printable view of messages to print or download.
- Post messages relating to a particular question or idea that can be viewed by the entire class.
- If working collaboratively on a project, discuss ideas with other members in their group.
- Receive feedback on ideas from other students.
- Receive a grade based on participation in a discussion topic.

Here is an illustration of Discussion topics showing class activity. To view the participation by the instructor and students, click on the Forum title.

Discussion Board can contain one or more forums. For each forum, the page displays the total number of posts, the number of unread posts, and the number of users who have participated in the forum.

Forum <sup>B</sup>	Description	Total Posts	Unread Posts	Total Participants
<b>Oceans in the News</b> <sup>A</sup>	Each week please post a link to a relevant news article related to oceanography or marine biology. Add the week number to your title.	6	0	6
<b>Surf's Up: Wave Dynamics and Wind Waves</b>	This forum will hold our discussions on wave terminology, relevant websites, and questions.	11	<b>10</b> <sup>C</sup>	4
<b>Pick an ocean....</b>	Soon each of you will "explore" an ocean and share your research. This can be a partner activity if you choose. If you have an idea of which ocean (or which aspect of an ocean if you prefer a more specific topic) or who you want to work with, respond to this post by Friday.  Deciding on a topic will become a graded discussion post at the end of the month.	8	<b>8</b>	5

<sup>A</sup> **Forum title:** Click the forum title to view the messages. Forums containing unread posts appear in bold.  
<sup>B</sup> **Total Posts / Total Participants:** View data on the number of posts and participants.  
<sup>C</sup> **Unread Posts:** The **Unread Posts** column provides one-click access to the forum's unread messages.

## Illuminate Live Classroom (Blackboard Collaborate)

Instructors also have the option of using the Illuminate Live Classroom tool that is embedded into their Blackboard Learn 9.1 course tools. With Illuminate, instructors use Internet audio and if they have a webcam, can be seen by students via video. SDCCD Online Learning Pathways offers Illuminate training for faculty who want to use this state-of-the-art web conferencing tool to provide virtual office hours, live lectures, or engage with their students in real time. Illuminate sessions can be archived for later viewing.

## Messages

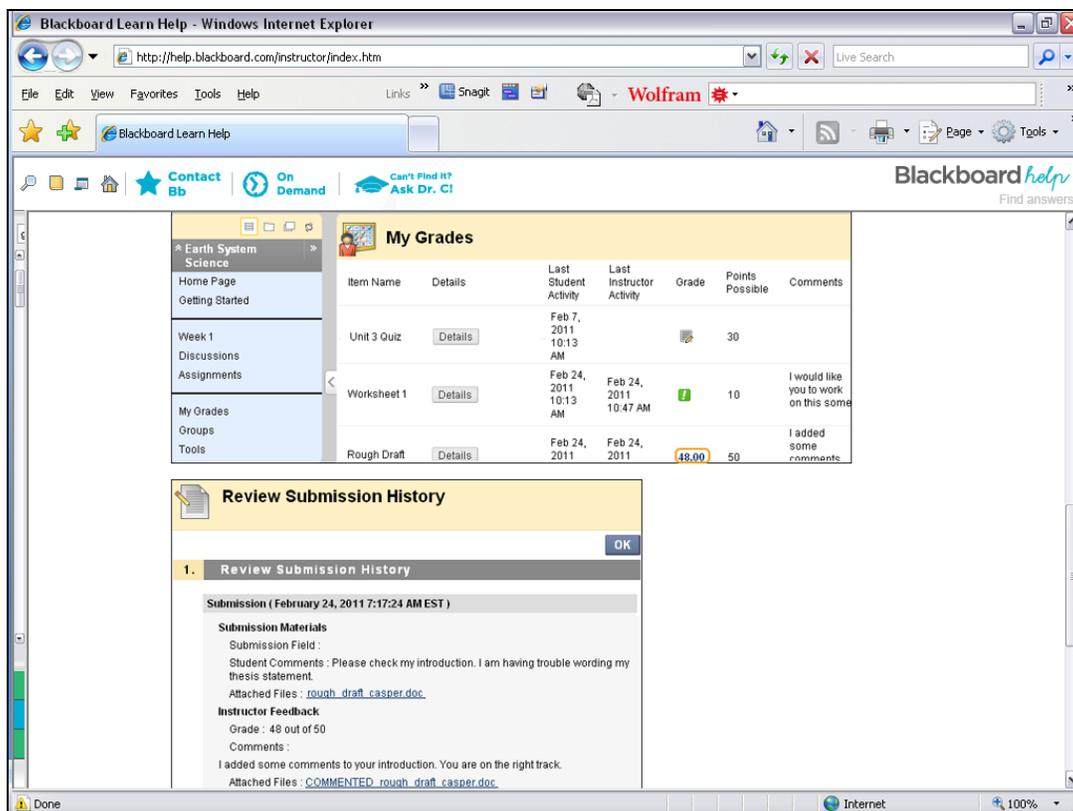
The Messages tool is internal to the Blackboard Learn 9.1 system. All messages are sent, received, and stored within the course. This allows students and faculty to communicate with other users enrolled in the same course. Instructors have the option to add the Messages link on the Course Menu. Course evaluators who gain access to a course will not see any messages that were sent prior to their "enrollment" in the course.

## Email

Instructors control whether to enable the Email tool as a link on the Course Menu. Emails go to a student's personal email address that is on file with the Registrar's Office. Personal email addresses are kept private and not visible to course members unless he or she changes the Privacy Options under My Places > Personal Information. Blackboard Learn keeps no record of sent emails.

## My Grades

The My Grades screen displays all released grades in the course, including grades for Assessments, Assignments, and Gradable Discussions. In addition to providing a grading score, instructors have the option of providing feedback



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Blackboard Learn 'My Grades' page. The browser title is 'Blackboard Learn Help - Windows Internet Explorer' and the address bar shows 'http://help.blackboard.com/instructor/index.htm'. The page features a navigation menu on the left with options like 'Home Page', 'Getting Started', 'Week 1', 'Discussions', 'Assignments', 'My Grades', 'Groups', and 'Tools'. The main content area is titled 'My Grades' and contains a table with the following data:

Item Name	Details	Last Student Activity	Last Instructor Activity	Grade	Points Possible	Comments
Unit 3 Quiz	<a href="#">Details</a>	Feb 7, 2011 10:13 AM			30	
Worksheet 1	<a href="#">Details</a>	Feb 24, 2011 10:13 AM	Feb 24, 2011 10:47 AM	10	10	I would like you to work on this some
Rough Draft	<a href="#">Details</a>	Feb 24, 2011	Feb 24, 2011	48.00	50	I added some comments

Below the table is a 'Review Submission History' section with an 'OK' button. It shows a submission for 'Rough Draft' on February 24, 2011, at 7:17:24 AM EST. The submission materials include a student comment: 'Please check my introduction. I am having trouble wording my thesis statement.' and an attached file 'rough\_draft\_casper.doc'. The instructor feedback shows a grade of 48 out of 50 and a comment: 'I added some comments to your introduction. You are on the right track.' with an attached file 'COMMENTED\_rough\_draft\_casper.doc'.