

CUSTOMIZE YOUR COURSE HOMEPAGE IN BRIGHTSPACE

Ms. Janice Florent, Technology Coordinator
Dr. Jason S. Todd, Director

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Homepages and Widgets



Image Credit: Image by Bodo Bertuleit from Pixabay

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Quality Matters

- QM Standard 8 - Accessibility & Usability
  - **8.1 - Course navigation facilitates ease of use.**
  - 8.2 - The course design facilitates readability.
  - 8.3 - Text in the course is accessible.
  - 8.4 - Images in the course are accessible.
  - 8.5 - Video and audio content in the course is accessible.
  - 8.6 - Multimedia in the course is easy to use.
  - 8.7 - Vendor accessibility statements are provided for the technologies used in the course.

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Intro to Physical Geography (Fall 2026)

Janice Florent
as Instructor

Help | Course Admin | Content | Discussions | Grades | Classlist | Simple Syllabus | Zoom | Activities | Groups | ePortfolio



Announcements

Hi Janice!



Welcome to this Intro to Physical Geography (Fall 2026) course.

I am Dr. Ima, your professor for this course. I suggest you take a few minutes to view some of the tutorial videos below that will help you familiarize yourself with Brightspace.

Content Browser

Bookmarks | Recently Visited

- Get Started Here!
- Get Help Here
- Our Virtual Spaces
- Module 1: Introduction to Physical Geography
- Module 2: Solar System

Updates

There are no current updates for Intro to Physical Geography (Fall 2026)

Quick Eval

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Homepages

Homepage



Purpose: The landing page for courses. Similar to a bulletin board where you can display useful information and resources for learners.

NavBar



Purpose: Easy way for you and your learners to access a wide variety of tools.

Course Banner



Purpose: Space to personalize your course image or display a message or information to learners.

Content



Purpose: A space to post and organize content within Brightspace. Create lessons, assignments, quizzes, etc. in an easy to navigate area for learners.

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Course Offering Information

- Change the name of your course



Image credit: "new name" by jflorent is dedicated to public domain under CC0 and is a derivative of image by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay

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Banner Image

- Choose from image library or upload your own
- Images are used in
  - My Courses Widget
  - Course Homepage image banner
  - Brightspace Pulse
- Automatically resized
  - Recommended size 2400 by 960 pixels

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Banner Image Text

- Customize text on homepage banner images
  - Course Name
  - Custom Value
    - Replace Strings allowed
      - For example, Hello {FirstName}, Welcome to {OrgUnitName}!
  - None

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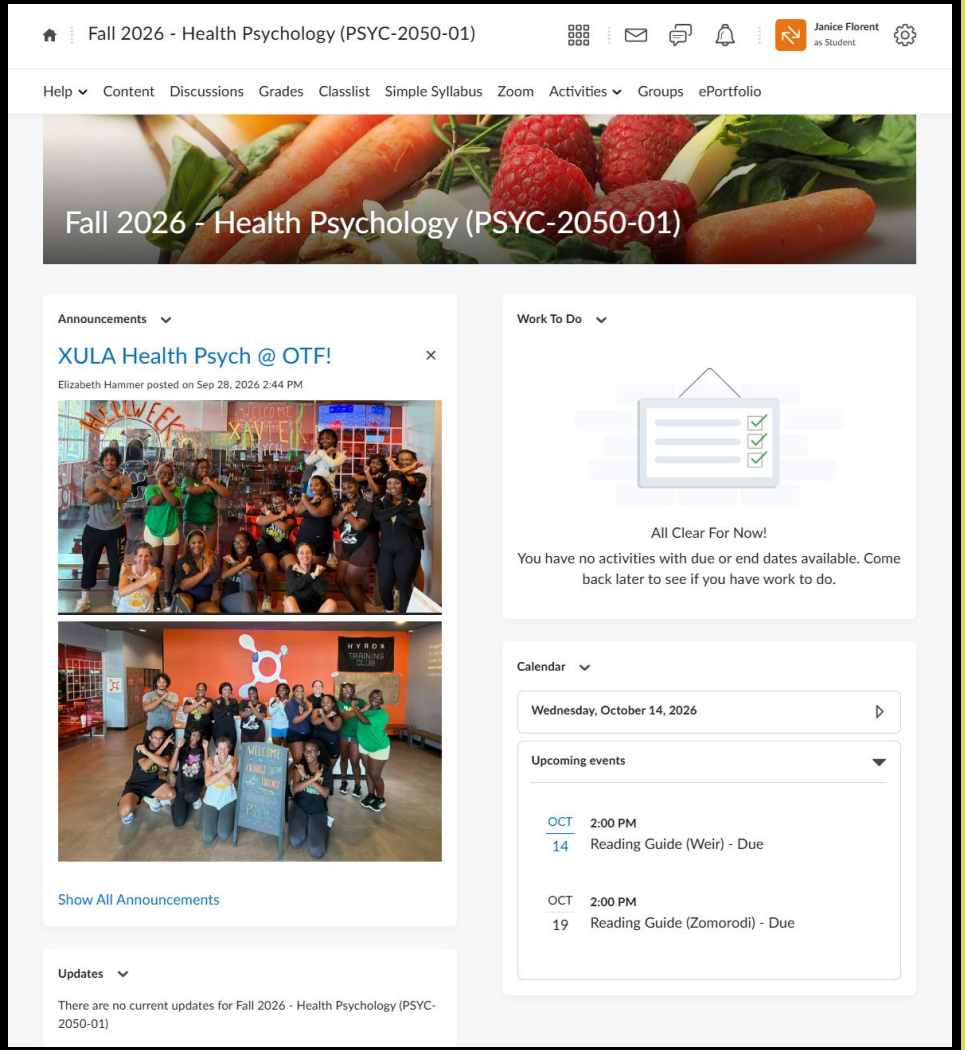
Homepage Layout

- The organization of the homepage.

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Homepage Layout

- Two Equal Panels



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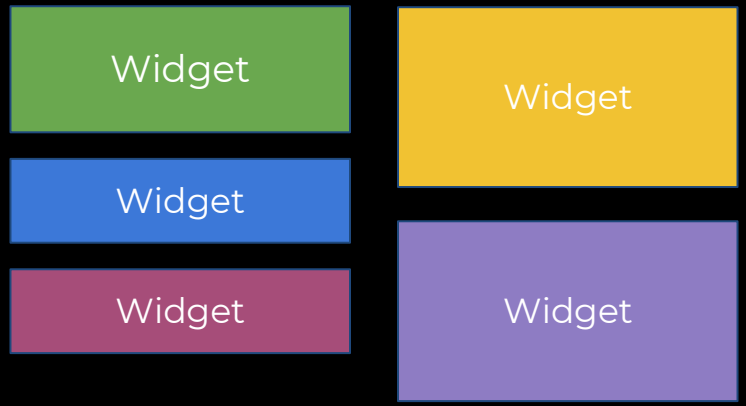
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Widgets

- “Building blocks” of homepages
- Live feeds of tools and external links



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System Widgets

- Built into Brightspace
- You cannot
  - Modify or delete
- You can
  - Choose the system widgets to place on your homepage
  - Change the location on course homepage
  - Customize display options

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Custom Widgets

- Built in the Brightspace Editor (or an external application)
- You choose what to put in the widget box



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System Widgets

Widget	Description
Announcements	Communicates important updates and information to users.
Calendar	Mini-calendar and a list of upcoming events.
Updates	Unread submission files, unevaluated assignment submissions, unread discussions posts, ungraded quizzes, quizzes that have not been attempted.
Work To Do	Provides learners with a summary of their assigned learning activities that are overdue or have an upcoming due date or end date. Only visible to users with the Student role.

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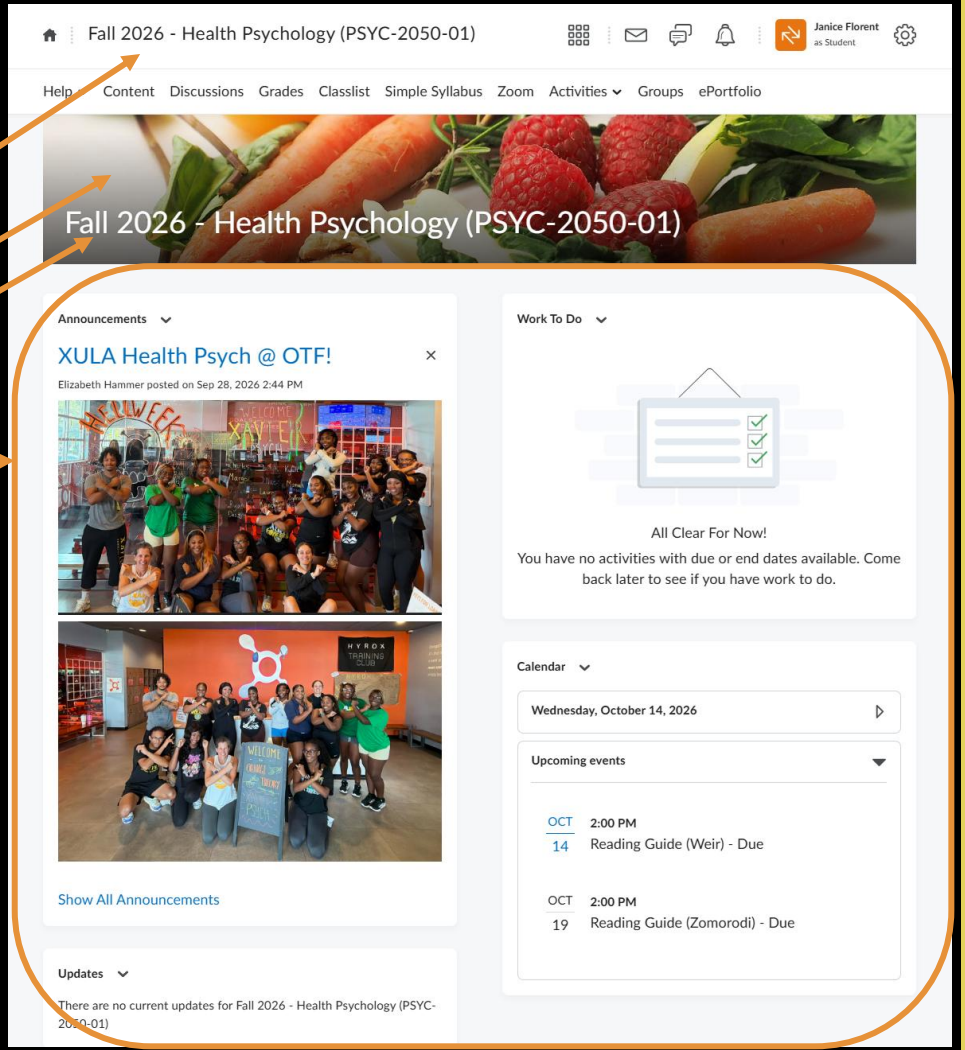
System Widgets

Widget	Description
Activity Feed	The feed is a way to engage with your learners, with the opportunity to have a more casual format. You have the option to allow learners to comment in the feed. You can post reminders, course news, time sensitive/course sensitive updates, and it may be an easier way for you to create assignments.
Content Browser	Browse course content, view recently visited topics, and view bookmarked topics from your course homepage.
Quick Eval	Offers evaluators a single location to view learner submissions, including assignments, quizzes, and discussions to easily access and grade all submissions. Only visible to users with the Instructor role.

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Course Homepage

- Course name
- Banner image
- Banner text
- System widgets
  - Announcements
  - Updates
  - Work To Do
  - Calendar



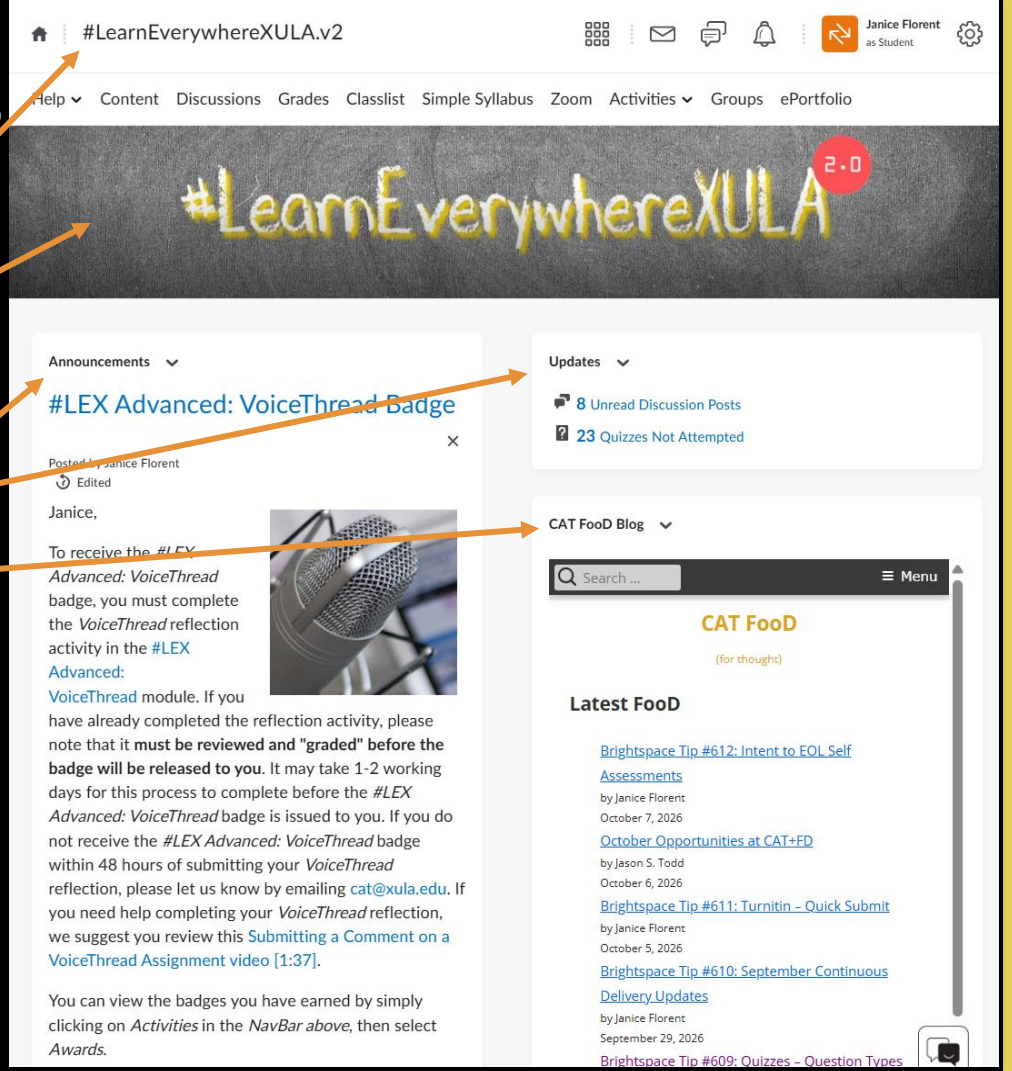
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Course Homepage

- Course name
- Banner image
- System widgets
  - Announcements
  - Updates
- Custom Widget



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Homepages & Widgets in Action



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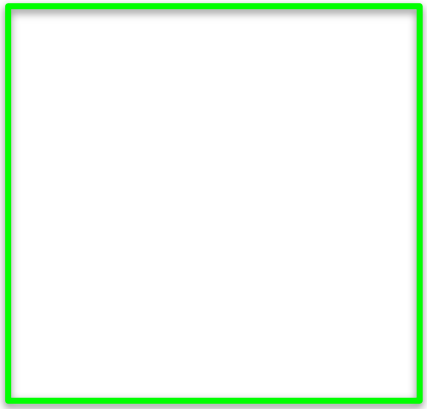
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Check-in

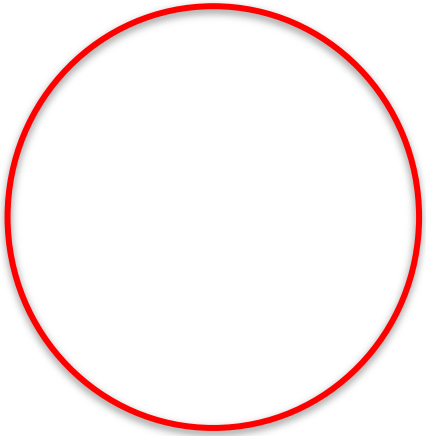
(Square, Triangle, or Circle)



Squared with my thinking



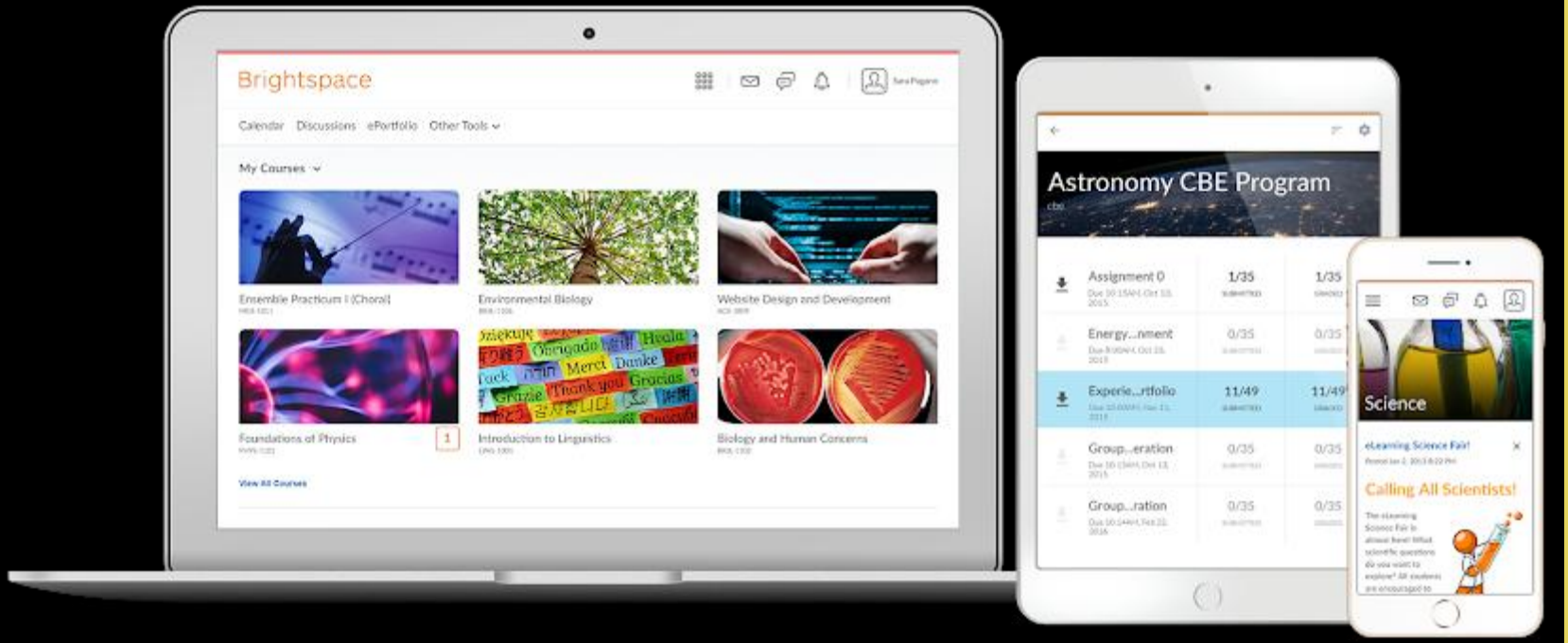
Gained three key/important ideas



Question still circling in my mind

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Responsive Design



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Pulse

Mobile app that **can help learners stay connected and on track** with their courses in Brightspace.

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Announcements

#LEX Advanced: VoiceThread Badge

Posted by Janice Florent
• Edited

Janice,

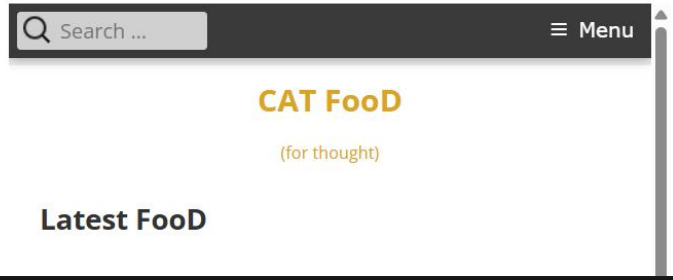


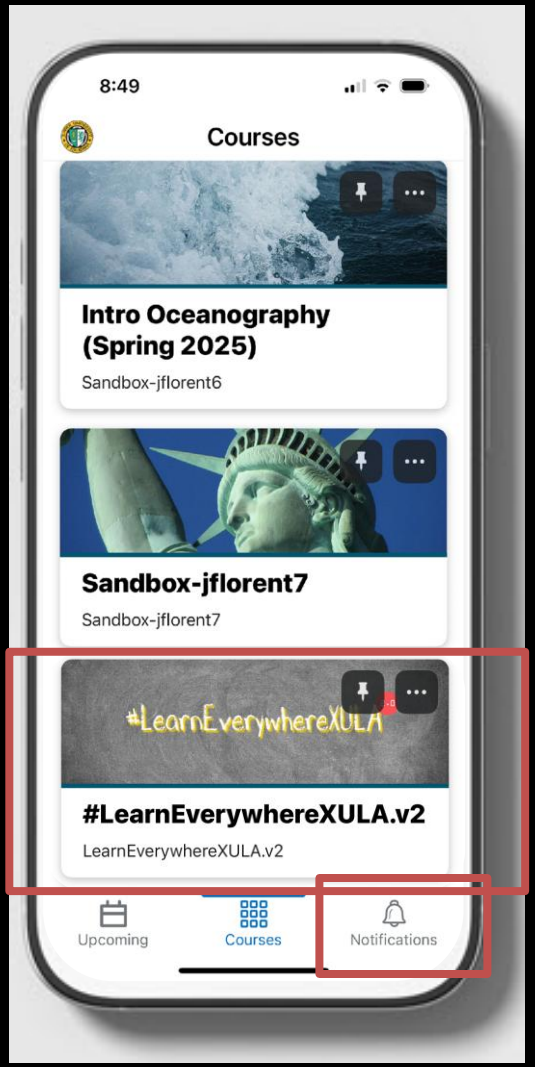
To receive the *#LEX Advanced: VoiceThread* badge, you must complete the *VoiceThread* reflection activity in the #LEX Advanced: VoiceThread module. If you have already completed the reflection activity, please note that it **must be reviewed and "graded" before the**

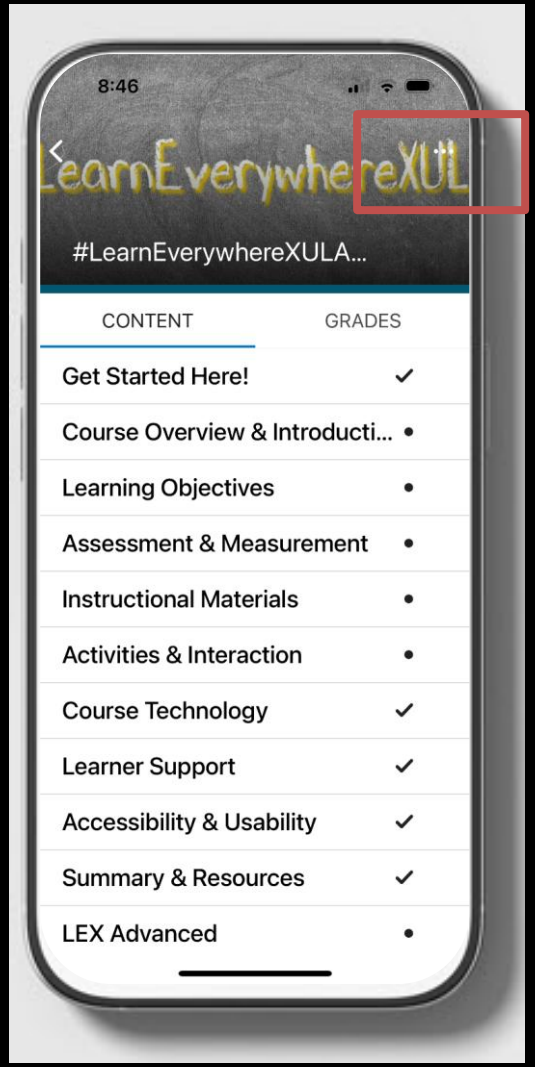
Updates

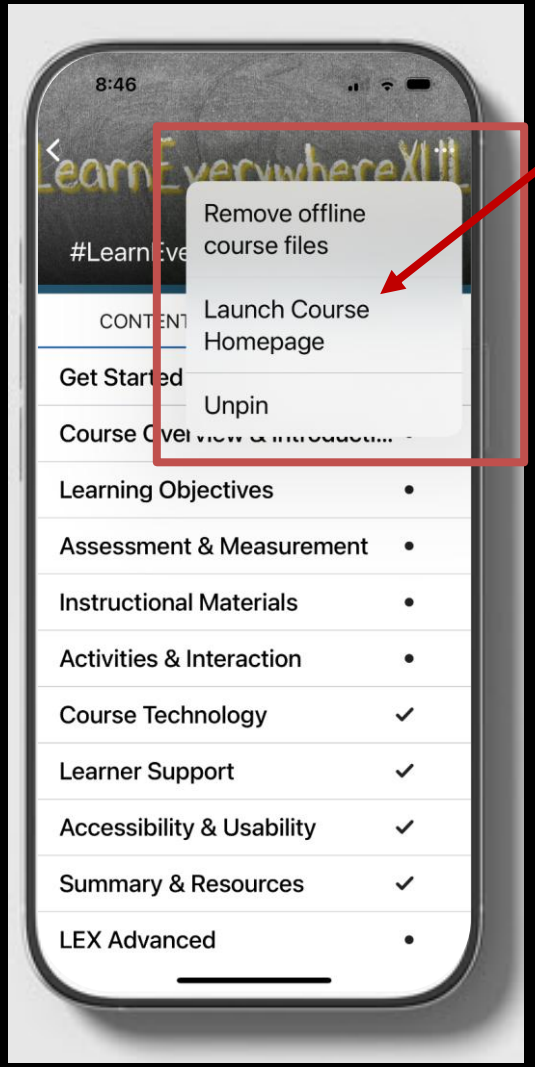
21 Quizzes Not Attempted

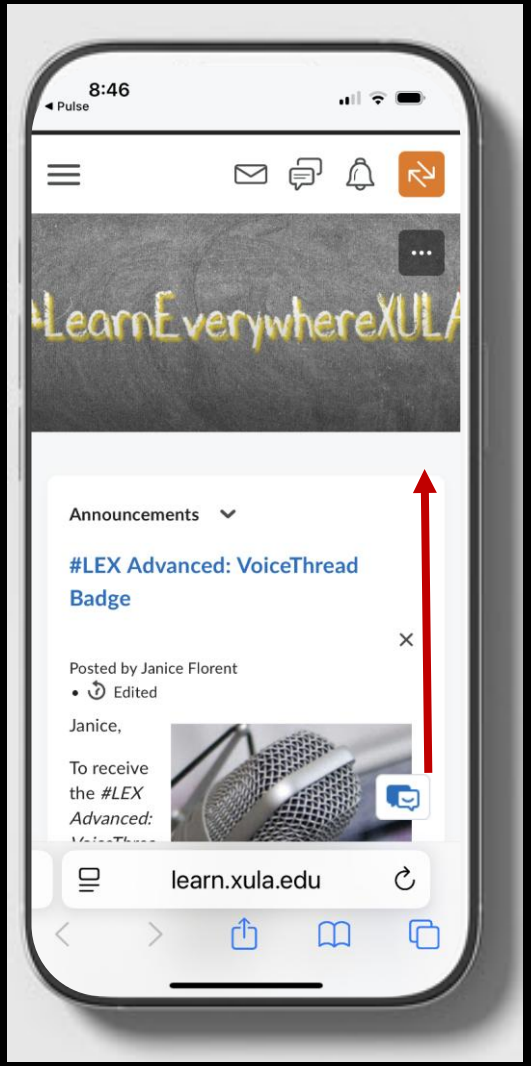
CAT FooD Blog

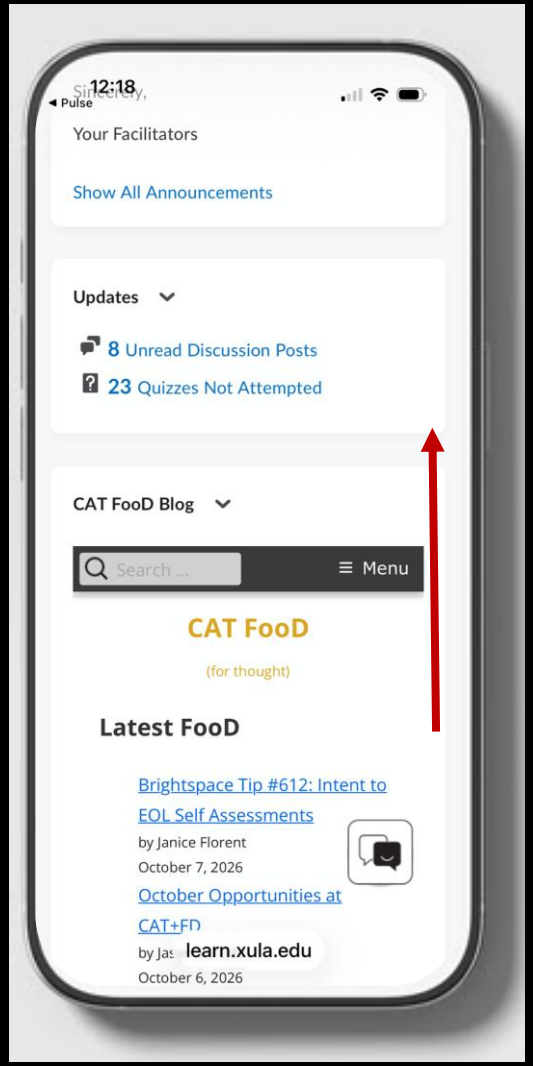


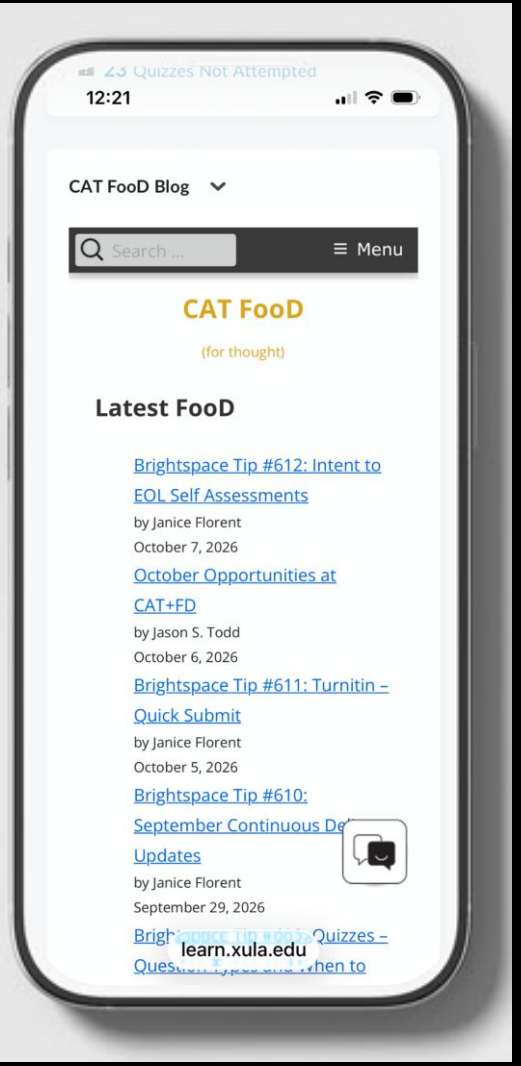

8:49
Courses
Intro Oceanography (Spring 2025)
Sandbox-jflorent6
Sandbox-jflorent7
Sandbox-jflorent7
#LearnEverywhereXULA
#LearnEverywhereXULA.v2
LearnEverywhereXULA.v2
Upcoming
Courses
Notifications

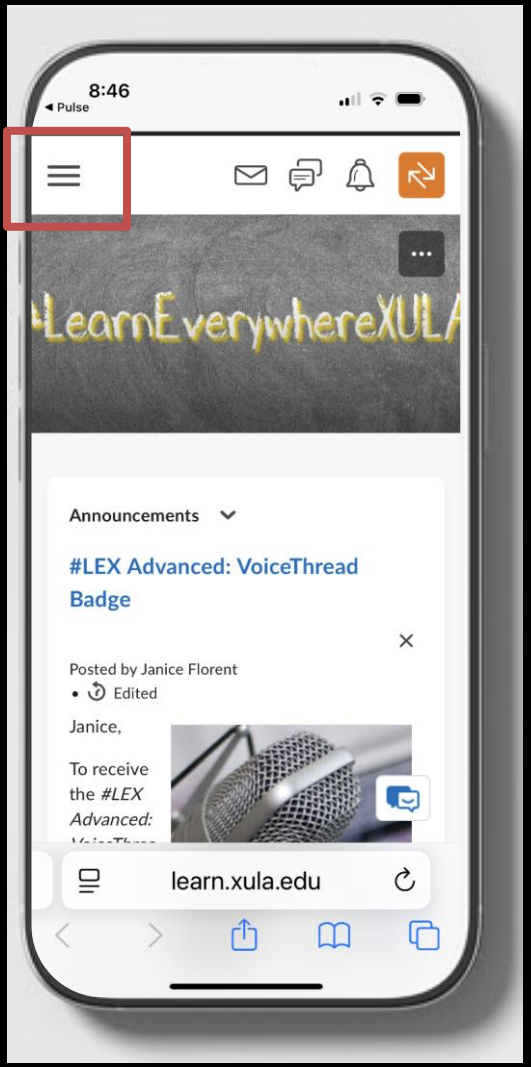

8:46
#LearnEverywhereXULA...
CONTENT
GRADES
Get Started Here!
Course Overview & Introducti...
Learning Objectives
Assessment & Measurement
Instructional Materials
Activities & Interaction
Course Technology
Learner Support
Accessibility & Usability
Summary & Resources
LEX Advanced

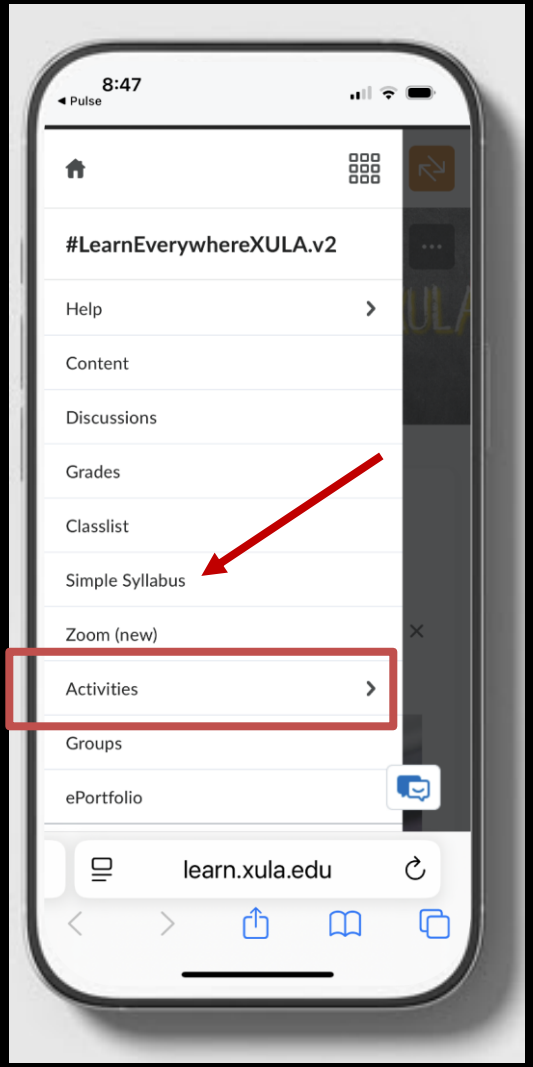

8:46
Remove offline course files
Launch Course Homepage
Unpin
Learning Objectives
Assessment & Measurement
Instructional Materials
Activities & Interaction
Course Technology
Learner Support
Accessibility & Usability
Summary & Resources
LEX Advanced

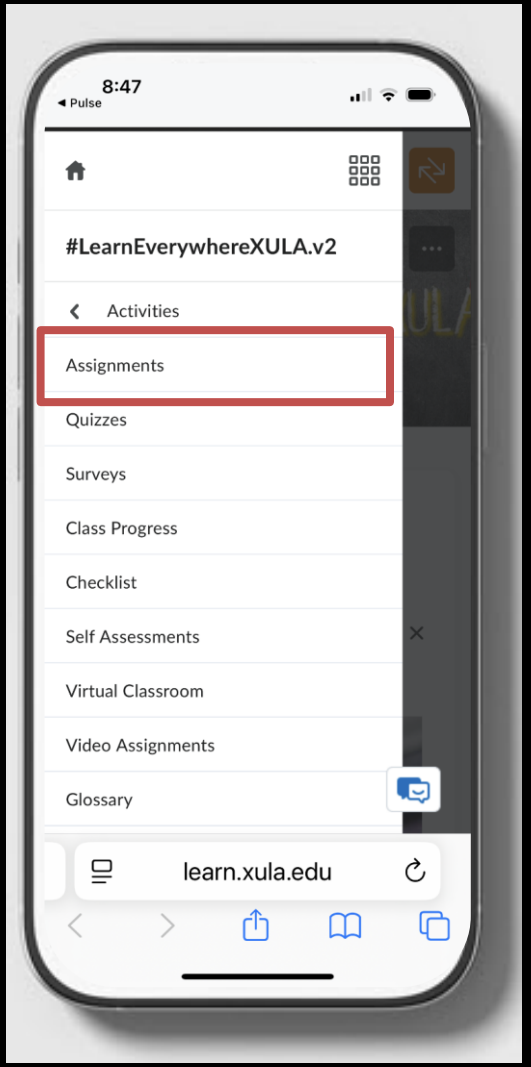

8:46
Pulse
LearnEverywhereXULA
Announcements
#LEX Advanced: VoiceThread Badge
Posted by Janice Florent
Edited
Janice,
To receive the #LEX Advanced:
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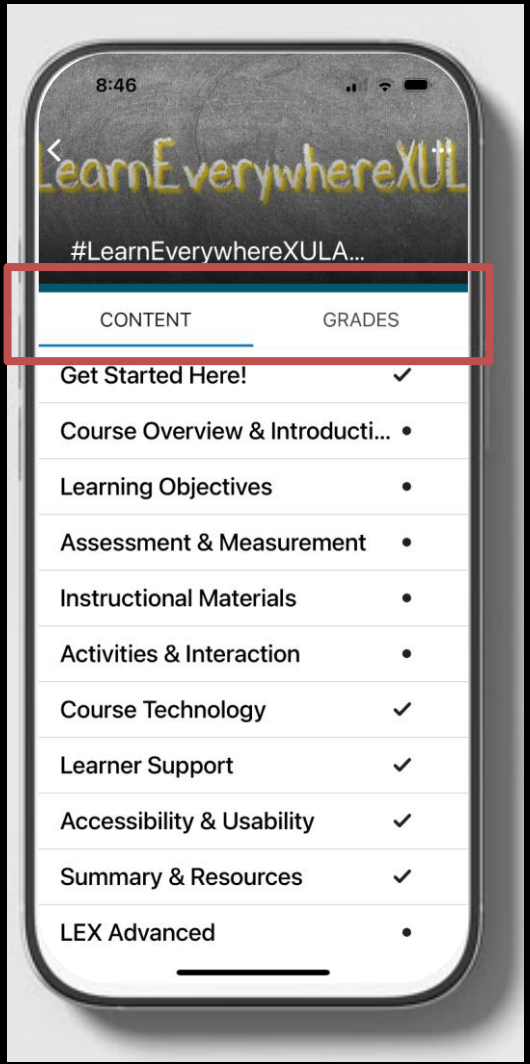

12:18
Pulse
Your Facilitators
Show All Announcements
Updates
8 Unread Discussion Posts
23 Quizzes Not Attempted
CAT FooD Blog
Search ...
Menu
CAT FooD
(for thought)
Latest FooD
Brightspace Tip #612: Intent to EOL Self Assessments
by Janice Florent
October 7, 2026
October Opportunities at CAT+FD
learn.xula.edu
October 6, 2026

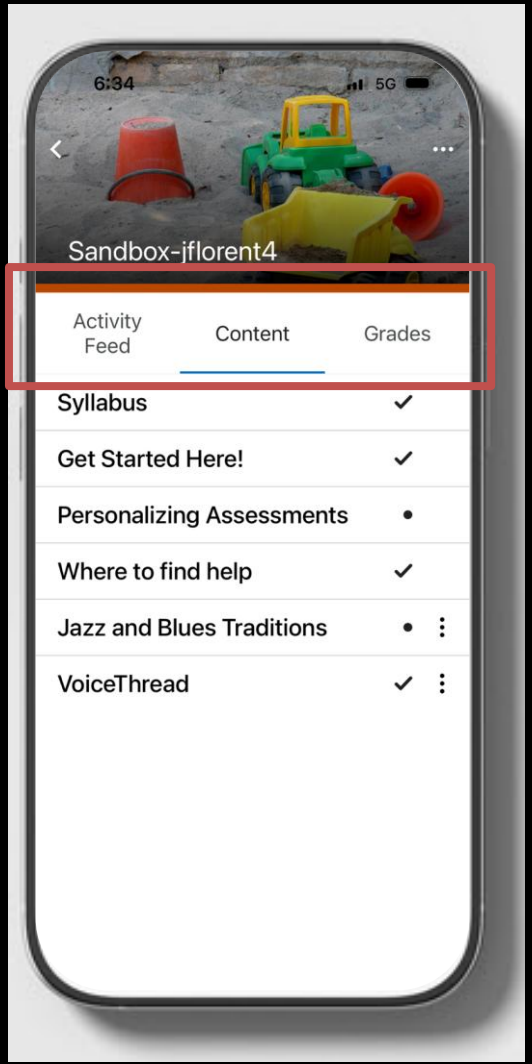

12:21
CAT FooD Blog
Search ...
Menu
CAT FooD
(for thought)
Latest FooD
Brightspace Tip #612: Intent to EOL Self Assessments
by Janice Florent
October 7, 2026
October Opportunities at CAT+FD
by Jason S. Todd
October 6, 2026
Brightspace Tip #611: Turnitin – Quick Submit
by Janice Florent
October 5, 2026
Brightspace Tip #610:
Updates
by Janice Florent
September 29, 2026
learn.xula.edu


8:46
Pulse
#LearnEverywhereXULA
Announcements
#LEX Advanced: VoiceThread Badge
Posted by Janice Florent
Edited
Janice,
To receive the #LEX Advanced:
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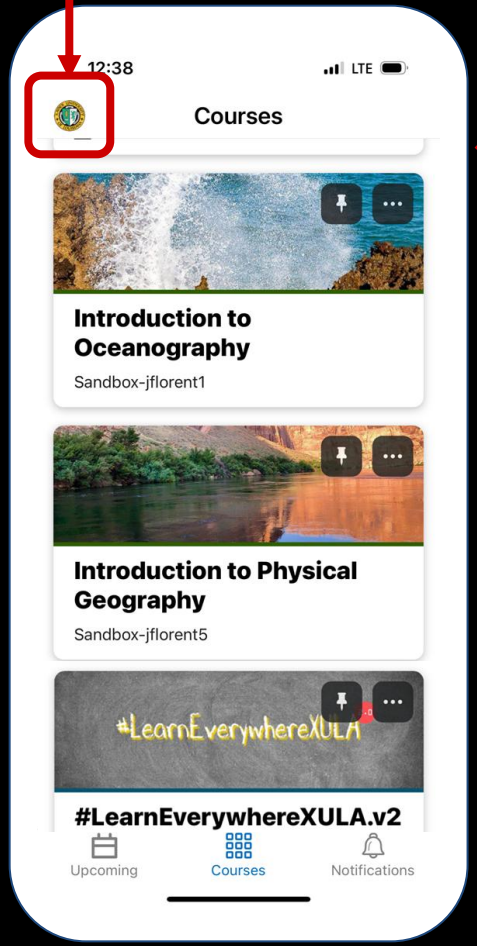

8:47
Pulse
#LearnEverywhereXULA.v2
Help
Content
Discussions
Grades
Classlist
Simple Syllabus
Zoom (new)
Activities
Groups
ePortfolio
learn.xula.edu

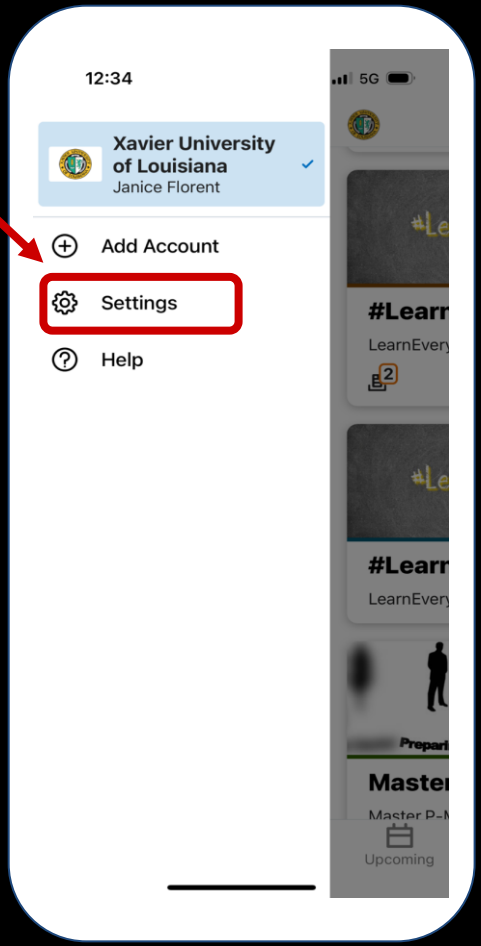

8:47
Pulse
#LearnEverywhereXULA.v2
Activities
Assignments
Quizzes
Surveys
Class Progress
Checklist
Self Assessments
Virtual Classroom
Video Assignments
Glossary
learn.xula.edu

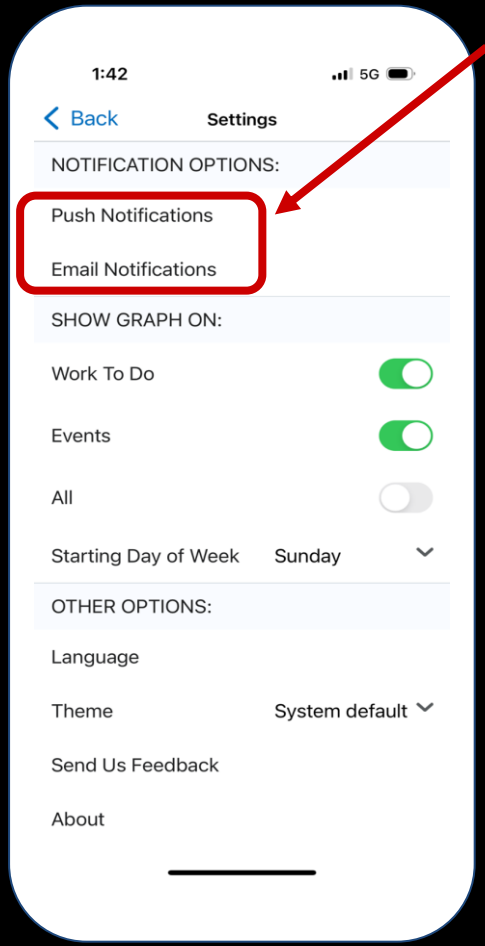

8:46
LearnEverywhereXUL
#LearnEverywhereXULA...
CONTENT
GRADES
Get Started Here!
Course Overview & Introducti...
Learning Objectives
Assessment & Measurement
Instructional Materials
Activities & Interaction
Course Technology
Learner Support
Accessibility & Usability
Summary & Resources
LEX Advanced


6:34
5G
Sandbox-jflorent4
Activity Feed
Content
Grades
Syllabus
Get Started Here!
Personalizing Assessments
Where to find help
Jazz and Blues Traditions
VoiceThread

Pulse App - Settings







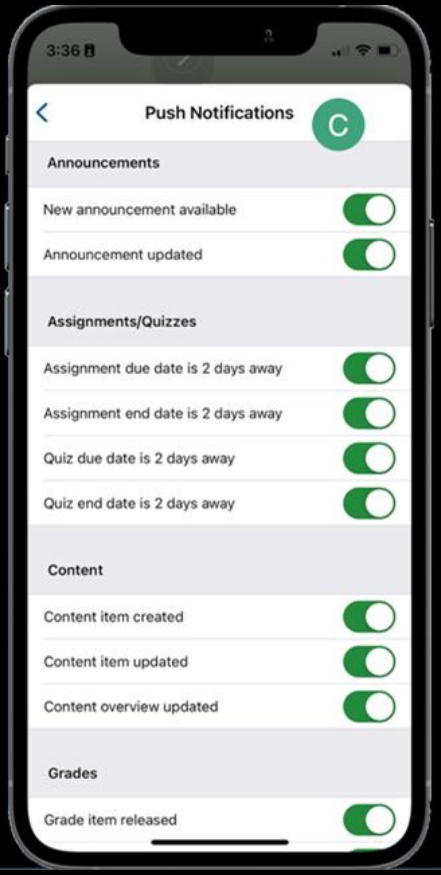
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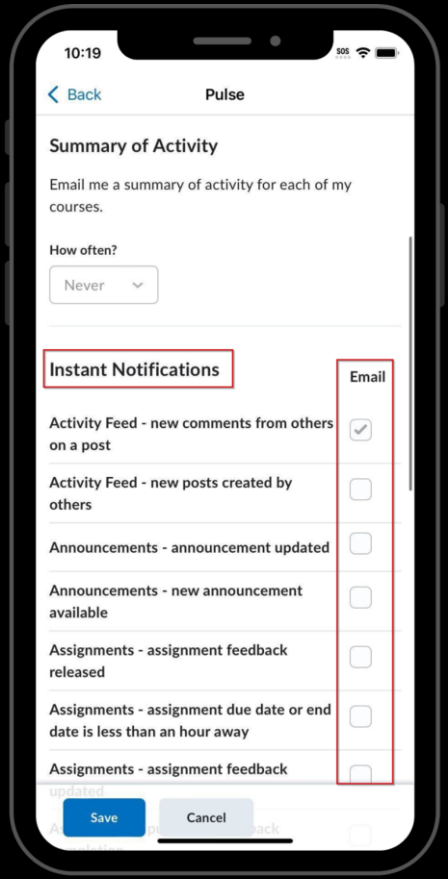
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Pulse App - Notifications





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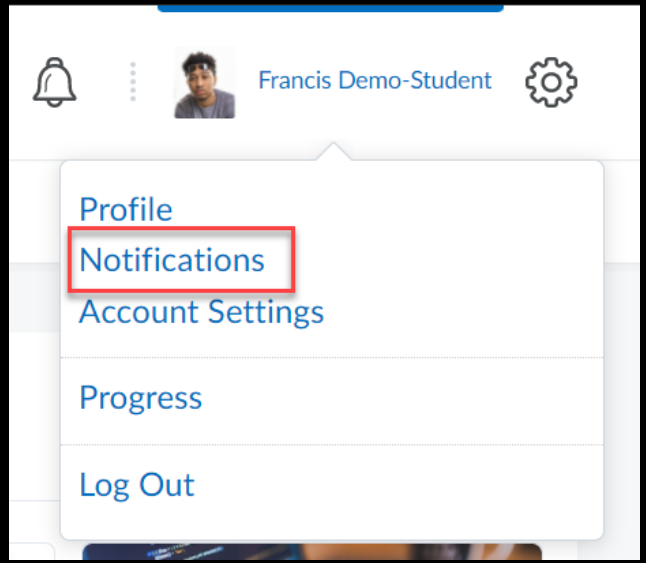
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Notifications

- Notification preferences
  - Learners control how they receive information about course activity
  - Learners can customize which actions in Brightspace will trigger a notification



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Intro to Physical Geography (Fall 2026)

Janice Florent
as Instructor

Help | Course Admin | Content | Discussions | Grades | Classlist | Simple Syllabus | Zoom | Activities | Groups | ePortfolio

Hi Janice, Welcome to Intro to Physical Geography (Fall 2026)!

Announcements

Hi Janice!



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I am Dr. Ima, your professor for this course. I suggest you take a few minutes to view some of the tutorial videos below that will help you familiarize yourself with Brightspace.

Content Browser

Bookmarks | Recently Visited

- Get Started Here!
- Get Help Here
- Our Virtual Spaces
- Module 1: Introduction to Physical Geography
- Module 2: Solar System

Updates

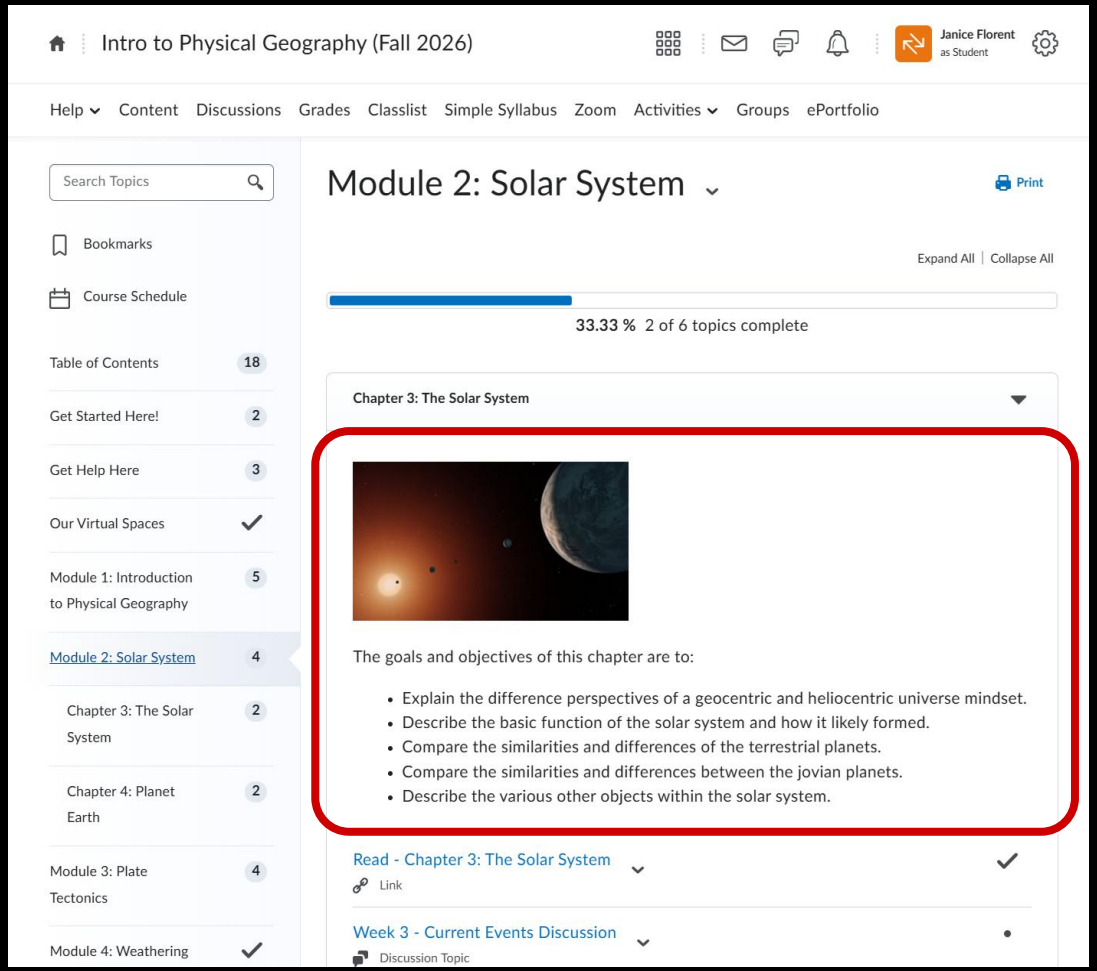
There are no current updates for Intro to Physical Geography (Fall 2026)

Quick Eval

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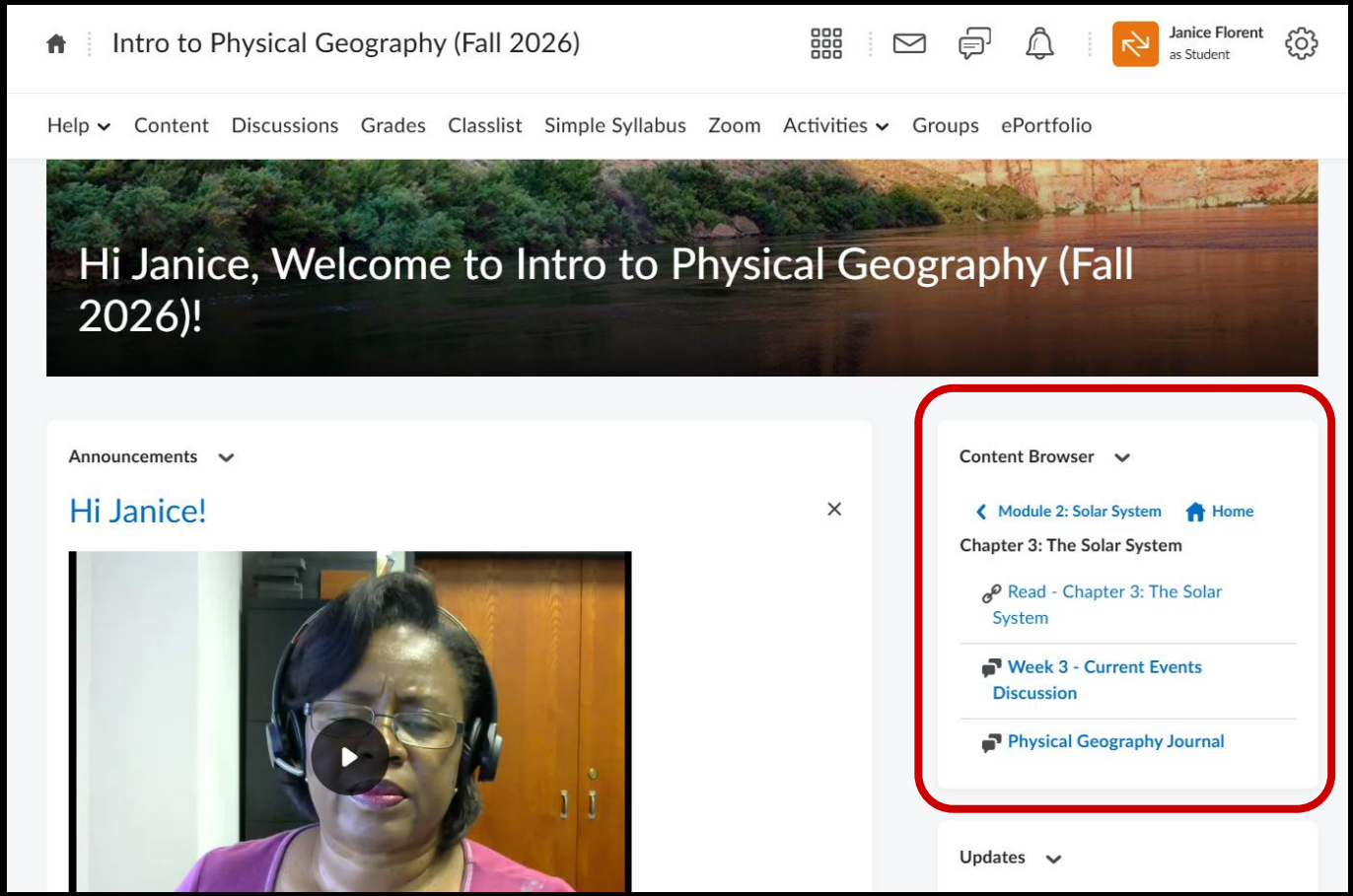
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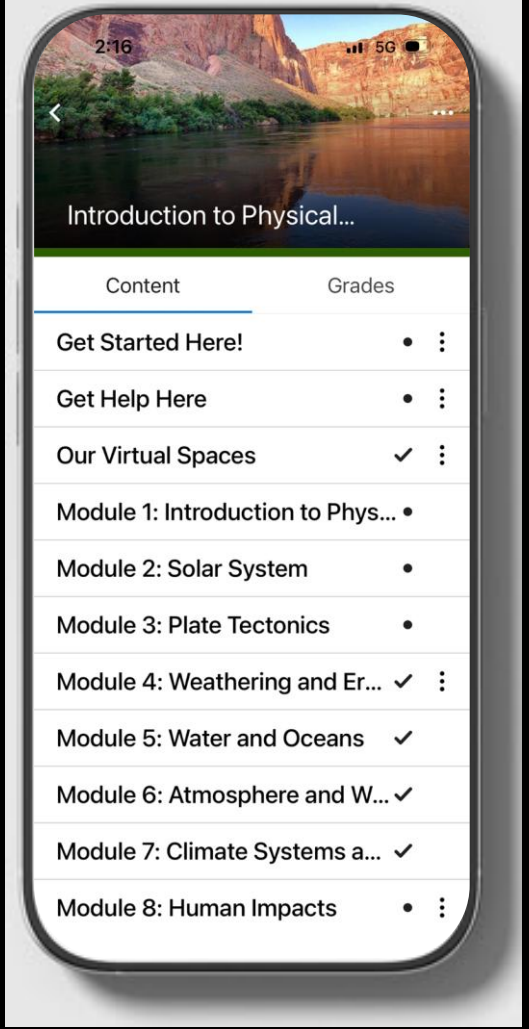
NOTE: Module and Submodule descriptions are not shown in Content Browser widget. Learners may miss important information placed in module and submodule descriptions.

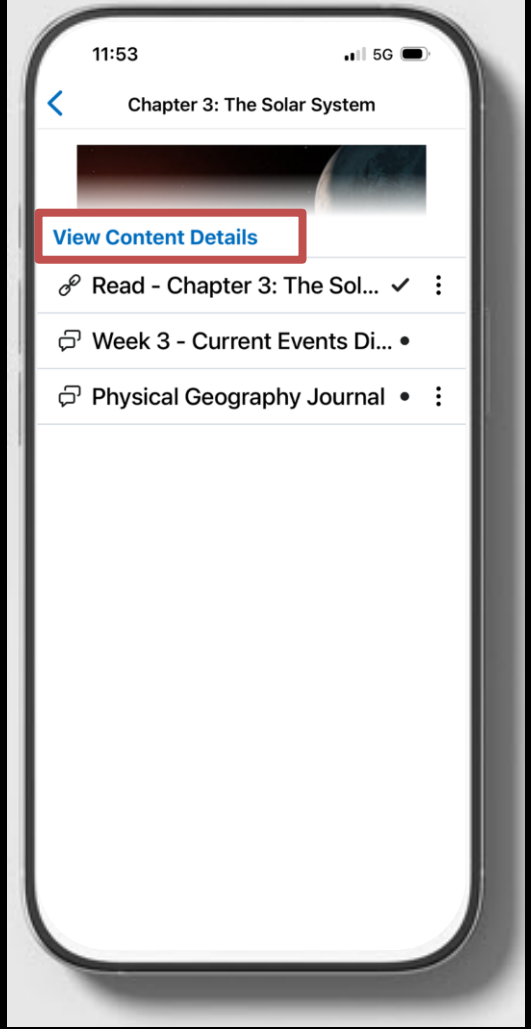
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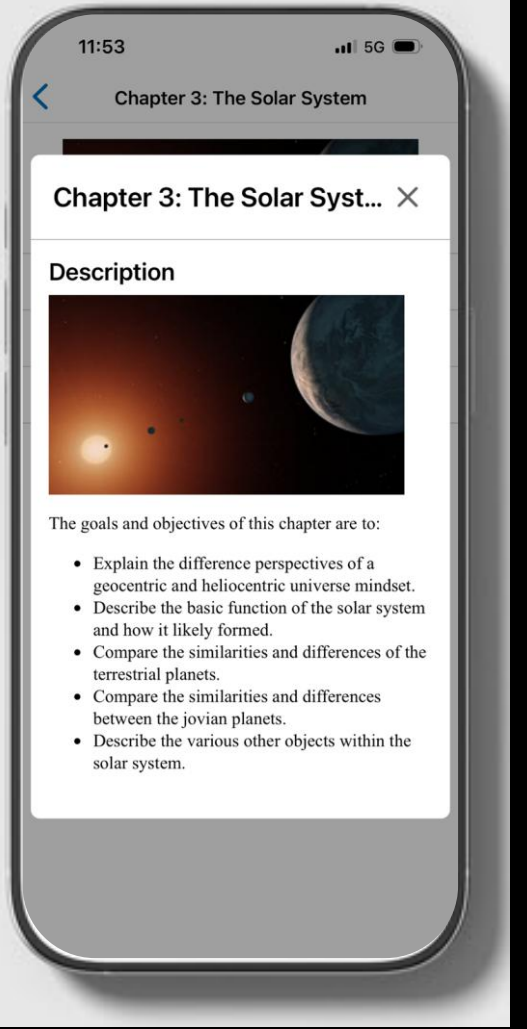


NOTE: Module and Submodule descriptions are not shown in Content Browser widget. Learners may miss important information placed in module and submodule descriptions.

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2:16
5G
Introduction to Physical...
Content
Grades
Get Started Here!
Get Help Here
Our Virtual Spaces
Module 1: Introduction to Phys...
Module 2: Solar System
Module 3: Plate Tectonics
Module 4: Weathering and Er...
Module 5: Water and Oceans
Module 6: Atmosphere and W...
Module 7: Climate Systems a...
Module 8: Human Impacts


11:53
5G
Chapter 3: The Solar System
View Content Details
Read - Chapter 3: The Sol...
Week 3 - Current Events Di...
Physical Geography Journal


11:53
5G
Chapter 3: The Solar System
Chapter 3: The Solar Syst...
Description
The goals and objectives of this chapter are to:
Explain the difference perspectives of a geocentric and heliocentric universe mindset.
Describe the basic function of the solar system and how it likely formed.
Compare the similarities and differences of the terrestrial planets.
Compare the similarities and differences between the jovian planets.
Describe the various other objects within the solar system.

Widgets

- Effective widgets serve two purposes
  - Navigation
    - Quick access to frequently used course features
  - Communication
    - Up-to-date information and just-in-time resources

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Homepage Design Tip #1

- Recommended banner image
  - 2400 by 960 pixels
  - No text in the image



Credit: Image by Ronile from Pixabay

Good choice for banner image



Credit: Image by stinne24 from Pixabay

Poor choice for banner image

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Homepage Design Tip #2

- Strive for minimal scrolling
  - Reduces cognitive effort
  - Makes the content more digestible
  - Helps users more easily find what they need



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Homepage Design Tip #3

- Put your most important information where learners scan first
  - Users typically start in the top left and work their way right and down as they catch relevant words
  - The least looked at part of any webpage is the bottom right



Image Credit: WOCinTech Chat / CC BY 2.0

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Homepage Design Tip #4

- Activity Feed widget
  - Use the Basic Homepage layout and add Activity Feed widget to large panel
  - Ensure the large panel does not include other widgets
    - Widgets placed below the Activity Feed can become lost as the feed grows



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Homepage Design Tip #5

- Drip-Feeding
  - Reduce clutter on homepage by scheduling content delivery
  - Use availability dates where appropriate
    - For example, enter **start** and **end** dates for Announcements
    - Serves as added benefit when copying courses



Image Credit: image by Buntysmum from Pixabay

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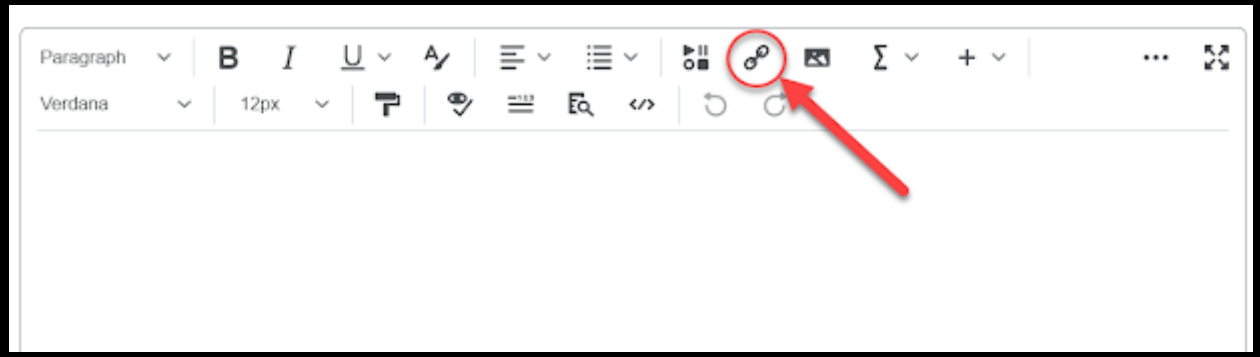
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Homepage Design Tip #6

- Custom Widgets
  - Utilize Quicklinks in widgets where you are directing learners to course content



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Potential Pitfall #1

- Content Browser widget
  - Module descriptions
    - Learners may miss important information in the description when navigating course using this widget



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Potential Pitfall #2

- Use the Announcements widget or the Activity Feed widget
  - **DO NOT** use both



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Potential Pitfall #3

- Activity Feed widget
  - Messages **CANNOT** be copied to another course
    - If copying messages is important, use Announcements widget instead
  - Assignment option
    - Assignments can be copied to another course but will have to be relinked



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Potential Pitfall #4

- Too many widgets
  - Don’t clutter your homepage



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I see value in customizing my course homepage.





Image Credit: Thumbs Up Circle and Thumbs Down Circle by Dennis Martin from OpenClipArt

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Brightspace Tip #594: Course Design Suggestions

Janice Florent • August 10, 2026 • Leave a comment

I usually get a lot of questions from faculty related to setting up their Brightspace courses. In the spirit of starting the academic year with less stress, I offer the following infographic with course design suggestions to reduce your course setup and management stress:



Search ... Search

BRIGHTSPACE

BRIGHTSPACE DOCUMENTS

- Guide to Taking Tests in Brightspace
- Record, Upload, and Share Video on YouTube

BRIGHTSPACE FAQ

- Respondus LockDown Browser FAQ
- Respondus Monitor FAQ
- VoiceThread FAQ
- ePortfolios FAQ

PODCAST

Teaching, Learning, and Everything Else

Conversation #124: Jon Ippolito on the IMPACT RISK of AI
September 23, 2025
31 minutes

Conversation #123: Wendy Gaudin on Writing and Publishing
May 6, 2025
36 minutes

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Workshop Slides, Recording, & Resources

https://catwiki.xula.edu/homepages

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