

FACULTY-TO-CLASS COMMUNICATION

INTRODUCTION

The first thing most students see when they enter a course is the Announcements feature. Announcements set the tone for a course and can be used to bring all the components of a course together. They are also a great way to welcome students to your class. Likewise, posting announcements throughout your course is a good way to stay in touch with your students and increase your presence in the course. Posting regularly increases your interactions with students and makes them feel connected to you as the instructor.

MAKING THE MOST OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Creating an inviting and personable welcome message is one of the easiest ways to use the Announcements feature to connect with students and to start the class on a good note.

It's recommended that your welcome message includes the following:

- A friendly greeting
- A personal introduction
- The name of the course, along with a short description of what students will learn
- Contact and office hours information
- References to helpful discussion forums in the course (e.g., Ask the Instructor, Raise Your Hand)
- Instructions for beginning the course (e.g., "To get started, go to the Content page and...")

You might also use your welcome note to:

- Tell students the actual course start date (as opposed to the preview start date, if applicable).
- Introduce the first lesson or suggest an icebreaker discussion.
- Note special aspects of the course (e.g., writing emphasis, major projects).
- Show where students come from geographically using a map, graphic, or another media element.
- Explain any pertinent policies, exams, or quizzes.
- Introduce any additional instructors or guest lecturers students can look forward to.
- Point out any known issues at the start of the course (e.g., "Because we're making small changes, please do not print anything until the actual course open date...").

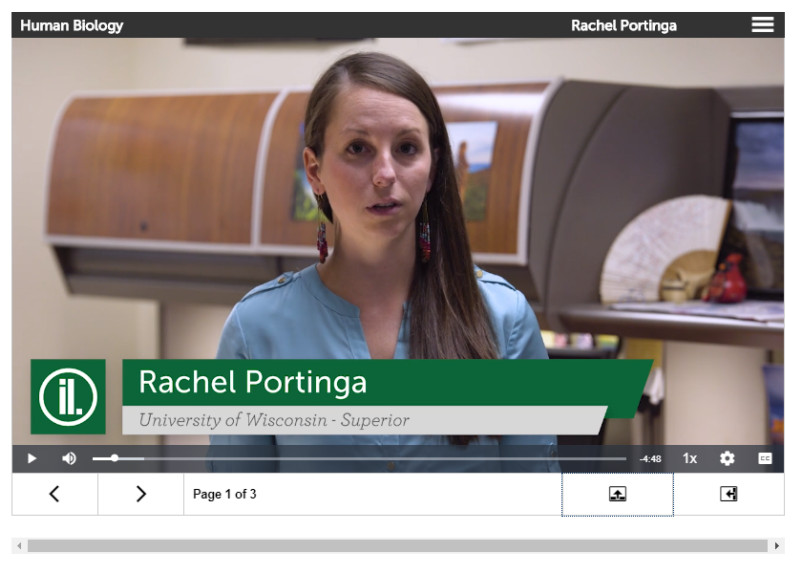
Meet Your Course Facilitator and Student Success Coach

Welcome to Human Biology: U200-115

We are glad you have selected this course for your academic and professional enrichment!

Course Author: Rachel Portinga, MS

About the Course Facilitator: Rachel Portinga, MS



ADDITIONAL TYPES OF FACULTY-TO-CLASS COMMUNICATION

Here are some additional ways you might use announcements to communicate with your class:

- Cheer students on during big projects or before exams, especially after the first week.
- Expand on lesson commentaries.
- Make last-minute changes to assignments or deadlines.
- Present graphics to spark discussion or illustrate concepts.
- Stress the importance of discussions in the online environment.
- Introduce upcoming exams, readings, projects, or other activities.
- Announce that grades are posted.
- Share job opportunities.
- Announce technical issues or mistakes in assignment directions or grading.
- Share reminders and resources about plagiarism.
- Initiate the setup of virtual meetings and groups.
- Send holiday greetings.
- Explain how to begin and conduct special assignments.
- Post general comments on the class's performance on certain assignments.
- Post last-minute resources (e.g., audio to accompany lectures or assignments).
- Solicit suggestions or feedback.
- Remind students about penalties for submitting late assignments.
- Connect current events or news stories to the course content.
- Note important upcoming events related to the field.
- Congratulate students reaching milestones or receiving honors (e.g., upcoming graduations).



Foster a Positive Learning Environment

Consistently and effectively using announcements can significantly enhance the online learning experience and create a climate of well-being for all of your students.

There are a variety of ways you can regularly communicate with your students. Using strategies like these can greatly enhance the online learning experience and ensure that students stay informed, motivated, and engaged throughout the course.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Best Practices for Communicating with Students in Online Classes](#) by Northwestern University
- [Effective Communication: Faculty and Students with Disabilities](#) by University of Washington
- [Strategies for Improving Instructor-Student Communication in Online Education](#) by University of Massachusetts Lowell