FACULTY-TO-CLASS COMMUNICATION

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
extended
campus

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. We recommend that welcome messages include the following:

- A friendly greeting
- An introduction to yourself, with personal notes if you like
- Name of the course, along with a description of its general purpose
- Contact and office hours information
- References to helpful forums in the discussions area (e.g., Ask the Instructor, Raise Your Hand)
- Instructions for entering the course (e.g., "*To get started, go to the Content page and . . .* ")

You might also use the welcome note to:
- Indicate 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 text, maps, or Wordles.
- Explain the pre-course entry pledge and quizzes, if used.
- Introduce an assistant instructor or a guest lecturer students can look forward to.
- Point out early issues (e.g., "Because we're making small changes, please do not print anything until the actual course open date . . . ").
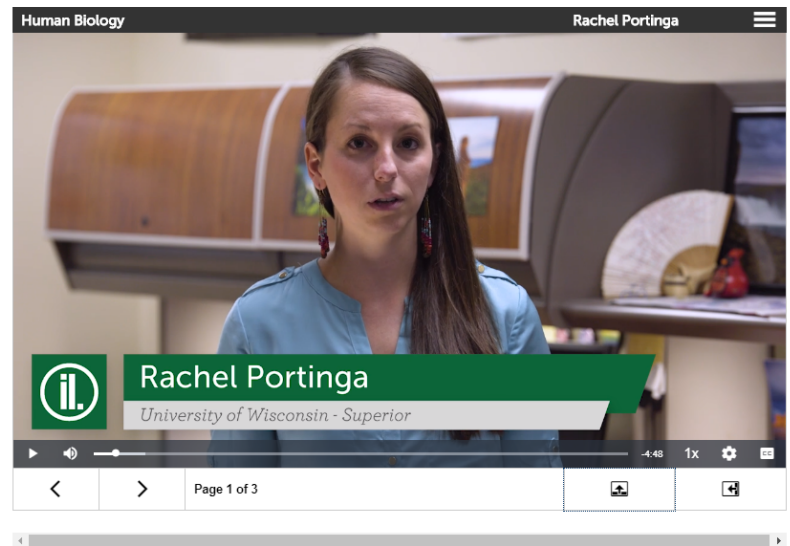
Meet Your Course Facilitator and Student Success Coach

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

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ADDITIONAL TYPES OF FACULTY-TO-CLASS COMMUNICATION

- Cheer students on, especially after the first week, during big projects, before exams, etc.
- Add to lesson commentaries.
- Make last-minute changes to assignments or deadlines.

- Present interesting relevant graphics to spark discussion or illustrate concepts.
- Stress the importance of discussions, etc., in the online environment.
- Introduce upcoming exams, heavy reading, survey windows, etc.
- Announce that grades are posted.
- Share job opportunities.
- Announce technical issues, mistakes in directions or grading, etc.
- Call attention to items of special relevance (e.g., ANA Code of Ethics, APA style, top 10 resume mistakes, etc.).
- Share reminders and resources about plagiarism (with reference to program policies already spelled out in the syllabus).
- Initiate or rectify the setup of virtual meetings and groups.
- Send holiday greetings.
- Explain how to begin and conduct special assignments (e.g., wiki assignments).
- Post general comments on the class's performance on certain assignments.
- Post last-minute resources (e.g., audio to accompany lectures or assignments, articles, tables).
- Solicit suggestions or feedback.
- Remind class about penalties for late assignment submission.
- Connect national events to course content.
- Note events related to important figures in the field.
- Congratulate students reaching milestones or receiving honors (e.g., upcoming graduations).
- And more!

> Using announcements consistently and effectively can create a climate of well-being for all participants.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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