

Discussions

Quick-Start Guide: MMC Brightspace

Use Discussions to create an online space for your students to engage with you and their classmates. Robust discussions build community, and give students a voice outside the in-person classroom. Discussions can be used for assessment and attached to the gradebook, or as a tool to collect student questions and feedback.

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Discussion structure



Forum

Forums are required and act as “folders” that provide an organizational layer to discussions. Students cannot respond at the forum level. For example, an instructor could create a “Weekly Reading Responses” forum, and each week’s responses would be a topic (see below) within that forum.

Topic

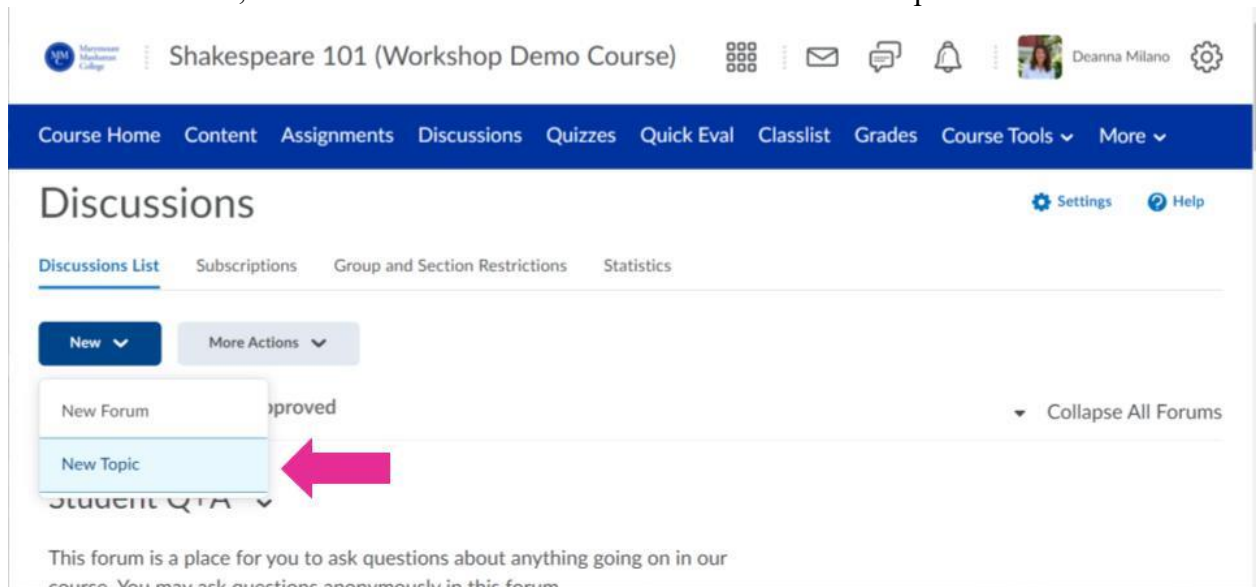
Topics provide instructions, and where the conversation lives. Topics can inherit settings from a forum or can be set independently.

Thread/Reply

Threads and Replies are the students (and your) conversation in action. Students create threads based on topic prompts, and interact with the material and their peers.

Create a Discussion Topic

1. From Discussions, click on the blue “New” button and select “New Topic.”



2. Select an existing forum from the drop down menu, or create a new forum. Remember, all discussion topics must live within a discussion forum.
3. Title your discussion topic, and type your prompts or discussion questions in the description box.

A screenshot of the "New Topic Details" form in Brightspace. The form has three main sections: "Forum", "Title", and "Description". The "Forum" section has a dropdown menu currently set to "Reading Discussions" and a link to "[New Forum]". A pink callout bubble points to this section with the text "Choose existing forum or create new forum here." The "Title" section has a text input field. A pink callout bubble points to it with the text "Title of your discussion." The "Description" section has a rich text editor with various formatting tools (bold, italic, underline, link, etc.). A pink callout bubble points to the text area with the text "Your discussion prompt or questions go here." At the bottom of the form are four buttons: "Save and Close", "Save and New", "Save", and "Cancel".

4. You can create additional settings by checking any of the following:
 - a. *Allow anonymous posts* - students will be able to create anonymous posts

- b. *A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the topic* - use this setting if you want to review and approve each student thread and reply before it becomes visible to the class
 - c. *Users must start a thread before they can read and reply to other threads* - use this setting if you want students to create their own thread before seeing the posts of others
5. Save and close.

Attach a Discussion to Gradebook

1. From within a Discussion Topic, navigate to the Assessment tab.
2. From the grade item drop down menu, link to a previously created grade item. Alternatively, create a new grade item for the discussion topic.
3. Enter a number of maximum points in the “Score out of” field.
4. Save and close.

The screenshot shows the Brightspace interface for editing a discussion topic titled "Romeo and Juliet". The "Assessment" tab is active. A pink callout bubble points to the "Grade Item" dropdown menu, which currently shows "-- No grade items exist --". Below the dropdown is a "[New Grade Item]" link. The "Score Out Of" field is circled in pink. At the bottom, there are buttons for "Save and Close", "Save and New", "Save", and "Cancel".

Additional Resources and Support

- **Brightspace help pages**
 - [Create and manage discussion forums](#)
 - [Getting started with discussions](#)
 - [Moderating discussions](#)

■ [Assessing discussions](#)

● **Brightspace video tutorials**

- [Discussions video playlist](#) - includes short videos on creating a forum, creating a discussion topic, moderating discussions, grading discussions, and more

● **Brightspace Open Office Hours**

- Come ask questions during our open office hours - no need to make an appointment ahead of time
- Thursdays starting August 26, 10-11:30am
- [Zoom link](#)

● **Contact us**

- Email brightspace@mmm.edu with questions or to set up a one on one consultation