

Hi all!

Thank you very much for emailing me. If this is your first online class at Oakland Community College, it is very important that you complete the following at-home orientation material. I want to make sure you can “find the class” on the first day of instruction, January 11, 2010. PRINT THIS EMAIL and then do the orientation activities below and take notes on how each goes.

Although there are no required on-campus classes, if you are an inexperienced on-line class member, I encourage you to consider attending one of the orientations sessions offered by the Academic Technology Group. Visit the “Distance Learning” link on the College’s web page (<http://www.oaklandcc.edu/DL>) for the complete schedule, usually available about two weeks before the beginning of the term.

#### AT-HOME ORIENTATION ACTIVITIES

One of the purposes of orientation is to get comfortable with the online environment of the course. We are using a web-based course program called Blackboard. At your home computer, sign on to the course and look around. Here is some information to get you started: (Note: If you are using AOL, it is advised that you sign on to AOL and then minimize the AOL window and open up your browser--Internet Explorer or Netscape--separately.)

Open your browser (Internet Explorer or Netscape) and go to:

<https://oaklandcc.blackboard.com>

If you have used Blackboard before at OCC, you may notice that this a different URL. OCC has upgraded from Blackboard 6 to Blackboard 8. Please make note of the change.

This site can also be accessed by clicking the **Blackboard 8** login icon on the Distance Learning page (<http://www.oaklandcc.edu/DL>).

**Important!** Your Blackboard username and password are the same as your Online Services userID (lastname.firstname). To verify your Online Services userID go to the OCC web (<http://www.oaklandcc.edu>) and click the Online Services link on the horizontal menu then click the **What’s my username?** link on the Online Services main page.

If you need your Blackboard 8 / Online Services password reset, you will need to use the Self-Service Password Reset form. To change your password, go to:

<http://www.oaklandcc.edu/PWreset>

If you unable to reset your password using the form, you can drop by any Enrollment Services area on campus with valid identification and request that your Online Services password (this is the same password for Blackboard 8) be reset.

**Important!** The Student Technical Helpdesk is **NOT** able to reset Online Services / Blackboard 8 passwords for students. They can walk you through the self-service form, if needed.

If you need help with the self-service form or have other technical questions or issues, call 1-888-341-myIT (1-888-341-6948) or visit <http://www.oaklandcc.edu/myIT>. You will need to provide your first and last name **and** your student id *number* to receive assistance.

**Important!** Because Blackboard 8 uses your Online Services account information, you will need to update your email address through Online Services and it will automatically be loaded into Blackboard 8 for you within 24 business hours. To change your email address, go to:

<https://webreg.oaklandcc.edu/WebAdvisor/WebAdvisor?TOKENIDX=6560961791&CO NSTITUENCY=WBST&type=P&pid=CORE-XWECOS002E>

It is highly recommend that you update your email address within Online Services before the first day of class.

Click on the course title in the **My Courses** area of the main Blackboard page to access the site.

Now try the following activities and make notes about the results of each attempt. (This same material is also available at the course site in the “Orientation Files” under the “Assignments” tab. You'll see it when you get there). Also jot down any questions you have as you click around. Please don't worry if some of the following instructions sound confusing. Like many computer functions, they are much simpler in actuality than they are in written form.

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**“Announcements” tab:** I will keep in touch with you both here and on OCC email.

**“Faculty Information” tab:** Here is where you'll see the flaky picture of me. In real life, I look much thinner and younger. My regular office hours are posted here as well as in the syllabus.

**"Course Information" tab:** Click here and you will see an online version of our course syllabus and calendar. **MAKE A COPY OF THESE DOCUMENTS.** Even if your

computer crashes or you cannot connect for a day or two, **it is your responsibility to check the calendar and be familiar with the syllabus.**

**“Course Documents” tab:** Click here to hear my Welcome Message and to see several important semester information pieces.

**"Assignments" tab:** Click here and you will see a link called "Orientation Files." Clicking on that will lead you to this document in Microsoft Word format. If you don't have Word, you can download a viewer from the following site: <http://www.oaklandcc.edu/bb/support/download.htm>. All assignments for the course are detailed here. I may add additional information to clarify an assignment, but the requirements will not change. When you click on a particular assignment, make sure you scroll all the way down. I have also added links so you can post your assignment here.

**"Discussion Board" tab:** This one houses many of our interactive functions. Click on the link named "Introduce Yourself to the Class." Read the assignment, which asks you to write a bit about yourself, your busy life, and your goals and expectations for the course. To post your information, click on the tab that reads "Start New Thread." Then in the text box provided, write your information. To preview your response, click on "Preview." To post it to the course site, click on "Submit." You may choose to write your intro in your regular word processing program first. Then when you are done (and spell checked) hit Ctrl + A to highlight what you wrote (the screen will turn black), then Ctrl + C to copy it (it won't look like anything happened, but it did), and then go to the typing box where you want to put this information at the course site, click the cursor so it appears in that box, then click Ctrl + V and what you typed before will appear! I recommend this method because if something happens at the site, you will lose what you typed, but if it's safe on your word processor, you won't!

When this is done, you will see a list of other submitted messages. Feel free to read them by clicking on the name in the FIRST column (other columns will bring up email forms) and if you have a comment or question about what you have read, click on the word "Reply" and then type. Please do start conversations with your classmates! Your response will appear in the discussion thread, and the original writer (and all members of the class) will be able to view it. Try this by replying to at least one other message posted. Return often to "meet" new people!

**“Groups” tab:** I will be putting you in groups when your peer review is due.

**“External Links” tab:** Go to the Purdue On-Line Writing Lab site and read one of the handouts.

**“Tools” tab:** This is where you can check your grade. You will see how this works when I assign points to the first Discussion Board response.

Finally, Finally, our course textbook is called *Dynamic Argument* by Robert Lamm and Justin Everett. I also suggest *Keys for Writers*, by Ann Raimes. You will need the *MLA*

*Handbook*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition also. However, if you have a handbook from another class, that should be sufficient. Both texts are available in the Royal Oak Campus Bookstore. Please check the Bookstore link from the OCC homepage (<http://www.oaklandcc.edu>) for instructions on ordering books online and for the store's hours. You may also try your luck in order online. Just make sure that you receive the correct editions of the texts.

## FAQ's:

### What are the minimum computer requirements for using Blackboard 8?

The following hardware and software are *recommended* specifications to work with version 8:

#### Platform:

- PC (Windows XP, Vista)
- Mac (10.3, 10.4, 10.5)

#### Hardware:

- 128 MB of RAM
- 2 GB of free disk space
- Sound card with speakers (for courses with multimedia)
- Ethernet or Wireless network card (for high-speed Internet connection) or 56K modem (for dial-up Internet connection)
- T1, DSL, Cable, or Satellite high-speed connection (56K dial-up will work, but the online course system will run slowly).

#### Software:

- **[\\*\\*Java JRE plugin](#)** (very important so that everything in the system works properly!)
- **[Microsoft Office Viewers and File Converters](#)** (for viewing and printing Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Visio files)
- **[Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)** (for viewing and printing PDF files)
- **[RealPlayer](#)** (for viewing streaming video or listening to streaming audio clips)
- **[QuickTime](#)** (for viewing QuickTime video)
- **[Flash Player](#)** (for viewing animations or using interactive content)
- **[Shockwave Player](#)** (for viewing animations or using interactive content)
- **[Windows Media Player](#)** (for viewing streaming video or listening to streaming audio clips)

#### **\*\*Get Java (very important!)**

1. To Download Java, go to <http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp>
2. Follow the instructions on the Java Downloads site.

3. When installing Java, follow the prompts to install the **Typical** Java installation.  
**Be patient during the install process!**
4. **Restart your computer** to complete the installation process.

**NOTE:** If you are using a **Macintosh**, go to <http://developer.apple.com/java/download/> for your Mac OS version.

### Which browser do I need to use Blackboard 8?

#### Recommended Browsers for Version 8.0

Browser	Windows XP	Windows Vista Desktop	Mac 10.3	Mac 10.4	Mac 10.5
Microsoft Internet Explorer 6	Compatible	<b>Certified</b>	Not Tested	Not Tested	Not Tested
Microsoft Internet Explorer 7	Compatible	<b>Certified</b>	Not Tested	Not Tested	Not Tested
Mozilla Firefox 1.5	Not Tested	Not Tested	Compatible	<b>Certified</b>	Not Tested
Mozilla Firefox 2.0	<b>Certified</b>	<b>Certified</b>	Not Tested	<b>Certified</b>	Not Tested
Apple Safari 2	Not Tested	Not Tested	Not Tested	<b>Certified</b>	<b>Certified</b>
Apple Safari 3	Not Tested	Not Tested	Not Tested	Compatible	Compatible

#### Key

<b>Certified</b>	fully tested and supported
<b>Compatible*</b>	key application areas tested
<b>Not tested</b>	specified Browser is not supported for the Operating System
<b>Provisional</b>	will test on Beta versions of new platforms and browsers. Certification

	is dependent on release by 3rd parties
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\* All configurations marked as *Compatible* and have undergone a limited engineering analysis to test areas of the online course system that may have browser issues.

### **AOL Users:**

If you use AOL as your Internet Service Provider (ISP), **do NOT use the AOL browser**. Minimize the AOL browser and open a compatible browser.

### **Download a Browser:**

To download a compatible browser, [Google](#) the browser and version (e.g., Firefox 1.5).

### **How do I participate in a Discussion Forum in Blackboard?**

Once you logon to your course site you simply click on the Communications button on the left side of your screen. Next, click on the forum name to post your response to the discussion topic. If you run into any problems using the Discussion Board, be sure to email your instructor.

### **The textbox is not working properly in Blackboard and I'm using Internet Explorer 7.**

#### **(I can't post to my Discussion Board)**

1. Click the Tools button in your course
2. Go to Personal Information
3. Click on Set Textbox Editor Option
4. Set to Unavailable
5. Click Submit

If the above recommendation didn't work and you are using Internet Explorer 7, the textbox editor may not work correctly if Blackboard is not listed as a trusted site.

1. Double click on globe icon or a red circle icon that appears in your status bar.
2. The Internet Security Properties box will appear. Click on the **Trusted Sites** icon. Now click on the **Sites** button to open the trusted sites box.
3. In the Trusted sites box, the URL for OCC Blackboard should appear. If not, please enter the URL (**<http://online2.oaklandcc.edu>**) and click **Add** button.
4. Uncheck the *Require Server Verification (https:) for all sites in this zone* option. Click **Close** and then click **OK**. Refresh your page when you are done.

### **How do I submit an assignment?**

To access and submit an assignment:

1. Click on '**Assignments**' and locate the assignment from the list.
2. Click on '**View/Complete Assignment:Title of assignment**'.
3. Read the assignment instructions and open and view any files attached to the assignment.
4. When you are ready to submit your assignment, enter a message in the '**Comments**' area and click on the '**File to Attach**' button to browse and upload your file.  
**Note:** You must type something in the comment field in order to submit the assignment.
5. To submit the assignment, click on the '**Submit**' button at the bottom of the page.  
**Helpful Tip:** If you would like to save your assignment and return to it a later time to submit it to your instructor, click on the 'Save' button and not on the '**Submit**' button.

### **How do I submit a SafeAssignment?**

**Note:** A SafeAssignment is different from a regular assignment in that it is submitted to a database in order to detect plagiarism.

To submit a SafeAssignment:

1. From a content area within a course, select the SafeAssignment and click '**View/Complete**'.
2. The '**Upload SafeAssignment**' page will appear.
3. Read the '**Terms of Use**' message.
4. Read the Instructions.
5. When you are ready to submit your assignment, enter a message in the '**Comments**' area and click on the '**File to Attach**' button to browse and upload your file.  
**Note:** You must type something in the comment field in order to submit the assignment.

4. Click '**Submit**'.

A lot to do; good luck! If you have questions as you experiment, be sure to email me. I look forward to meeting you--virtually or in person!

Best regards,

*Carolyn*