

Course Structure: Guided Discussion

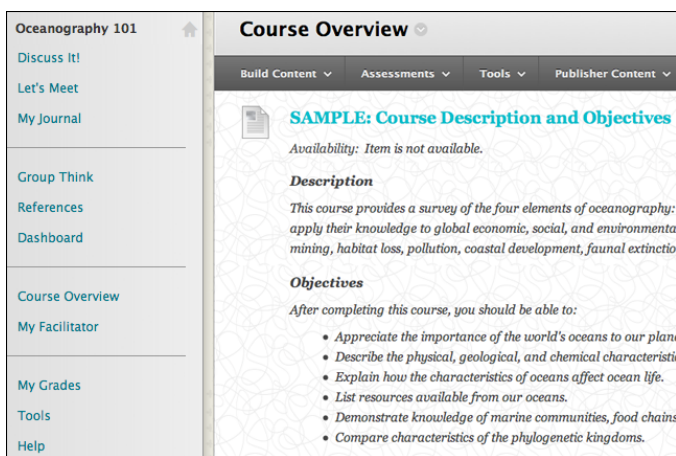
Guided discussion is an active learning technique that encourages students to reflect on their own experiences, explore alternative ways of thinking, connect to a topic, and improve analytical skills.

As students participate, they demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the course topics, promoting a deeper comprehension of the material. You can use guiding questions to help students create content together, allowing you to become a facilitator of information rather than the lecturer.

While much of the class discourse takes place in the **Discuss It!** forums, small teams of students working in **Group Think** increases students' interactivity with each other as they construct, rather than acquire, knowledge. Students can reflect on the course content and communicate privately with you in **My Journal**.

This course structure works well for intermediate and advanced humanities and social science courses in where students can expand their basic knowledge through conversation.

What does the course menu look like?



Using your course menu

The following table describes the content area and course tools included in the Guided Discussion course structure.

Content Type	Description
Discuss It!	Most of your interaction with students will occur in the Discuss It! forums. You can create gradable discussion forums and threads to use as the basis of your students' formal grades. Create questions that allow students to showcase their deeper understanding of course material and practice basic thinking skills.
Let's Meet	Use the live, text-based chat feature in Let's Meet for additional class meetings, real-time interaction in asynchronous courses, and virtual office hours. As thought-provoking discussions arise in Discuss It! , schedule chat sessions so

Content Type	Description
	students can continue the conversations live. Follow up the session with discussion questions that help students expand on the solutions and opinions offered.
My Journal	In their My Journal entries, ask students to reflect on the discussions and their experiences. Because this is private communication with you, students can receive feedback about their writing before they post in discussions or let you know how they feel the discussions are progressing. As you communicate with and get to know your students individually, they may feel more at ease in the course discussion forums.
Group Think	Create private, collaborative workspaces in Group Think for smaller sections of students to build knowledge together. For example, each group can research a theory and then show the rest of the course members how to apply it across situations. You can change the composition and size of groups for new projects throughout the semester. After each small group develops their ideas in their own group's discussion board, the class can reconvene in Discuss It! and share their varying perspectives.
References	In the References content area, you can share guidelines for participation in Discuss It! and offer additional resources to interested students who want to learn more. Direct students toward recommended reading and Internet articles that may help them formulate opinions about the questions posed in the discussion forums.
Dashboard	The customizable Dashboard module page provides students with an overview of current course information such as Announcements, My Calendar, To Do, What's New, and My Tasks.
Course Overview	In the Course Overview content area, provide materials that students can access throughout the semester. Include a syllabus or other basics, such as how discussion posts are graded, textbook information, and important dates. If chat sessions are mandatory, be sure to list dates so students can adjust their schedules.
My Facilitator	Create profiles for yourself, other instructors, teaching assistants, and guest lecturers participating in your course in My Facilitator. Include contact information such as email addresses, phone numbers, office hours, and location.
My Grades	Students can see the status of their gradable discussion posts and other assignments on their My Grades pages.
Tools	Give students access to all available course tools on a single page. Add commonly used course tools to the course menu for easy access.
Help	Blackboard Help contains searchable how-to information. Students in need of additional assistance should contact the institution's computing help desk.

Customize the course structure by renaming, removing, hiding, or adding content areas and links to tools.