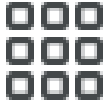


# Tech Snacks: Start of Semester Summer 2021

- Make sure your summer course has the correct dates on the Banner/MyInfo schedule. Because summer has so many different terms, errors can happen. Report any discrepancies to your Chair and/or the Registrar right away.
- If your Summer 2021 courses aren't showing up in "My Courses," click on the grid button in Brightspace and type "202150" into the search bar. Click the pushpin icon next to each 2021 course and unpin any old courses that you no longer want pinned in "My Courses." If you notice any discrepancies in the Summer courses you have access to, check with your Chair right away. 
- If you're teaching multiple sections of the same course, you can ask Jason Geer or Brittany Garden to merge sections, or to rename sections for you. If you are merging sections, don't do anything else with the courses until the merge process is complete (it will take overnight from when we merge the shells). Please send an email with the course numbers and sections you would like to merge.
- If you want to copy material from a previous course into your new semester course, do the following: go to the new course and click "Edit Course," then "Import/Export/Copy Components" and follow the prompts from there. Ask Jason or Brittany for assistance if needed.
- Update your course syllabus, upload it to the Content area and delete the old syllabus.
- Go to the "Edit Course" tab and select "Manage Dates." Update or add due dates, start dates, and end dates in the following areas:
  - Assignments
  - Announcements
  - Quizzes
  - Discussions
- Double-check any links to external videos or other resources to make sure they still work. Fix or replace any broken links. Click on your Brightspace profile name and click "View as Student" to see the course as a student would see it.
- Delete outdated Announcements. If you're re-using old Announcements, uncheck "Always Show Start Dates" in the editing window, otherwise old dates will show up and confuse students or make them think the course is on auto-pilot. Update "Welcome" and/or "Getting Started" messaging for the new course.
- Note that **courses are open to students starting one week before the official start of class**. You should try to at least have a welcome message and syllabus visible to students by then, as some students will start looking at their courses as soon as they open.
- Consider recording a short video introduction, especially for online-only courses. Talk about yourself, the objectives and structure of the course, and any other critical information that students should know going into the class. Brightspace's Video Note tool is ideal for recording yourself talking. Otherwise, Zoom, Webex, or Screencast-o-matic offer easy screen recording solutions. Contact Jason or Brittany if you need assistance.
- Talk to ITS ([helpdesk@msun.edu](mailto:helpdesk@msun.edu)) if you have special computer lab or classroom software needs for Summer 2021. Make sure any required software is up to date and working.
- Let OTLE know if you have any additional instructional technology needs, and we will coordinate with ITS to do our best to acquire needed equipment. A list of our current technologies for checkout is on the OTLE website under "Brightspace and Instructional Tech."
- Plan to attend a "Preparing Summer Courses" session the first week of May. We'll plan a few days for faculty to work through course design questions with us and peers (lunch included).
- This is a good time to back up critical files (e.g. electronic media). Make copies on your Z drive, external hard drives, thumb drives, or cloud services like Microsoft OneDrive.

## Organization

Each year, this is the number one area of student commentary in our Brightspace survey. Students appreciate it when instructors create a clear, consistent visual overview of the course schedule.

- ❑ **Create a visual schedule.** Make sure a clear timeline or calendar for the semester (even if it's tentative) is either in your syllabus or in the Course Documents section in Brightspace. [Here is a folder](#) with a few examples.
- ❑ **Use Brightspace modules in the Content area to reinforce your visual schedule.** Place or link everything that students need to see for your course into the respective Brightspace weekly or biweekly modules in the Content area--this includes Brightspace activities like Quizzes, Assignments, etc. If students have to check 3 or 4 different spots for each course every week to find their assignments, they will quickly lose track of what needs to be done.

See our [tutorial video on Organizing Course Structure](#) in Brightspace here (also accessible by visiting the "MSU-Northern OTLE" video library on YouTube).

- ❑ **Streamline file names.** If you upload files into the content area, try to make sure file names are clean and consistent. Names "like PPT4\_new(3).doc.docx" add unnecessary clutter and visual distraction.
- ❑ **Use Due Dates in Brightspace.** When due dates are set in for activities in Brightspace, students can see them in the Brightspace calendar. This helps immensely with student organization.

## Communication and Presence

This topic has also appeared frequently in comments in the student survey.

- ❑ **An Introduction.** The "Announcement" tool in Brightspace is a great place for you to establish immediate presence by introducing yourself and welcome students to the class. An introduction video or photo can really help establish a "face-to-face" connection. Brightspace has a built-in "Video Note Tool" for you to create a webcam-style video in your Announcements.
- ❑ **Ongoing Announcements.** The "Announcement" page in Brightspace is the first page your students will see when logging into your course throughout the semester. This tool allows you to check-in with your students regularly and will signal your presence in the course.
- ❑ **Set Clear Expectations for Communication.**  
Be as straightforward and upfront as possible with students about your expectations for communication. Let them know:
  - Your primary method of communication about important course matters (through Brightspace emails, Announcements, etc.). This information will let them know if they need to adjust their notification settings.
  - How you prefer to be contacted and when they can expect a response.
  - When and how to attend your office hours.