



University of Montana – Helena College of Technology: Online Orientation

Welcome to the University Of Montana Helena College Of Technology's Online Classes Orientation. Through UM-Helena College of Technology Online you will be able to access your internet courses along with others throughout the other campuses of the Montana University System. The online courses are offered through the online Learning Management System called Blackboard. This application allows instructors and students to actively engage in the educational process.

If after reading through this orientation document you need additional support please contact the UM-Helena IT Department at 444-5560 or 444-0819 in regards to blackboard password and log in issues. You may also contact the UM-Helena Office of Online Learning at 444-3813 for guidance associated with online education. If you are having problems with anything related to your course material i.e. assignments, quizzes, exams or course content please contact your instructor.

Please also take the time to visit the Online Blackboard User Guide found at

<http://umhelena.edu/online/docs/UMHBlackboardUserGuide.pdf> . At this link you will find links to other important and helpful information that will assist you in having a successful and rewarding online experience. Additional quick tutorials may be found within your blackboard shell once you have signed into the blackboard system. These will be found on the right hand side of the page.

What can you do to be successful in an online class?

- **Keep in mind that you may not be in the same town, state or time zone as others in your class.**
 - For example, you may be responding to a question someone posted two days earlier. This is called asynchronous communication. The nice thing about asynchronous communication is that you have a lot of time to think about the question and how to respond to it. The challenge with asynchronous communication is that you may feel a bit removed or isolated from your instructor or classmates. This type of communication may take a little getting used to.
 - This is why it is very important to be active within the course and plan ahead so that you post your thoughts when they are due which will give you time to respond to each other's thoughts and ideas in the class.
- **Get comfortable with the technology.**
 - If you are using the computer or any other type of technology for your distance education class, be sure to take some time to learn some of the basic computer tools. To support your success, it is helpful to have regular access to the Internet and understand how to use a browser
 - (We recommend using Firefox for use with Blackboard).
- **Carefully read and understand written information. If you do not understand ask.**
- **Be an active participant in the course and Communicate with the instructor.**
 - Your instructor will be communicating with you on a regular basis, but sometimes it is important for you to contact the instructor, yourself, if you don't understand some written information or an assignment or you are confused. Your instructor wants to communicate with you. If you can't reach your instructor by email, or a method or tool they have instructed you to contact them with try using the telephone.

What you will need:

1. **You must have reliable access to the Internet and email.**
 - a. Awareness that this course is not self paced. You will be expected to make and be actively involved in weekly posts on the discussion board. If you will not have access to a computer and internet access for extended periods of time, this absence may negatively impact your grade.
 - b. An understanding that because there is no formal lecture process, reading assignments will constitute a large portion of this course along with online discussions and internet recourses shared with the class.
 - c. **PLAN AHEAD** as technology may not always work efficiently.
 - d. Be sure to **make a backup copy** of any assignments that you turn in
2. **Computer Literacy**

Participants in online classes must be proficient with the basic functions of a word processor as listed below. If you are unable to fulfill these requirements, another class delivery method is more appropriate for you.

For word processing, the following software and skills are essential:

1. Approved Word processing software (**note that Microsoft Works is not compatible with MS Word and should not be used to submit assignments.**) or the ability to turn in assignments with a file extension of .doc, docx, .rtf, or .pdf
2. Edit: copy, cut, paste, find, replace
3. Manage files using the directory system of the operating system (this encompasses creating new files and folders, as well as being able to navigate through your operating system and word processor to perform open, close, save, and save as functions).

Please check the Browser Check link located on the sign in page to the course shell. Resource links to current browser plug ins can also be found at <http://umhelena.edu/online/plugins.aspx>

*** The University Of Montana - Helena College Of Technology has entered into an agreement with Microsoft allowing students to lease a copy of MS Office 2007 Professional for the duration of the school year. Upon graduation the student becomes the owner of the leased software. See the bookstore for your copy of Microsoft Office 2007.

To login into your Online Course Shell do the following:

1. To login to Blackboard is to go to the umhelena.edu website at www.umhelena.edu and click either on “**Blackboard**” or “**Online Learning**” at the top of the page.
2. Click on the “**Non-NetID Login**” button located in the box to the right.
The login box appears ready for your username and password.
 - a. Your Username is your **firstname. lastname**. For example: john.smith for John Smith.
Note: The Username will not support the use of the apostrophe. If your name is O'Dell for example or has a space separator, you should enter it as john.odell for John O’Dell
 - b. Your password is your Nine Digit School ID Number. (If you do not know your school id # you may get a student ID card through the Admissions office or call tech support at 444-0819 for assistance)
 - c. At this time students are unable to update their Blackboard password. If you need to change your password please contact the IT Department at 444-5560 or 444-0819.

Logging into your UM-HELENA Email Accounts

You can login to your email at: <http://umhelena.edu/mail>

1. Each student enrolled in UM-Helena classes has been supplied an email account through the University of Montana - Helena College of Technology.
2. Although student may have other email accounts their UM-Helena email account **WILL** be the method used by your instructors to communicate with you.

All email accounts logins are:

Username - firstname.lastname

Password – Nine Digit School ID#

Email Use:

The University of Montana – Helena College of Technology states that all official student email correspondence be sent to a student’s UM-Helena email address and that faculty and staff consider email from student’s official *only* if it originates from a UM-Helena account. This allows the College to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individuals and the security of transmitted information. The University of Montana – Helena College of Technology furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with College personnel.

Virtual Classroom Citizenship:

The same guidelines that apply to behavior and interaction within traditional classes should be observed in the virtual online classroom environment. Please use proper [netiquette](#) when interacting with class members and the professor.

Attendance and Participation:

Students are required to login regularly to the online class site. The instructors are able to use the tracking feature within the system to monitor student activity. Students may also be required to participate in all class activities such as discussion board, chat or conference sessions, and group projects.

Special Accommodations:

Students with physical, cognitive, or learning disabilities who seek accommodations should contact Disability Services Director Cindy Yarberry, located in the ACCESS Center, at 444-6897 or cindy.yarberry@umhelena.edu. All information will be kept confidential.

Check to see if your browser will work with Blackboard:

Check your browser’s compatibility with [Blackboard](#) by clicking on the “Browser Test” <http://umhelena.edu/browsercheck.html> found under the login portion of the screen. Simply clicking on the link runs the check, so the screen you see provides the results. Further software plug-ins may be found on the software plug-in page off of the online education link found at <http://umhelena.edu/online/plugins.aspx> .

UM-Helena Library:

Students may access all of the library’s electronic resources (reserves, journal articles, ebooks, interlibrary loan) from off campus through the use of their student identification number by accessing the school library at <http://umhelena.edu/library> .

Navigating Your Online Course

After logging into Blackboard, click on the Courses Tab – click on your course in the “Courses in which you are participating” box. The following links are located at the left hand side of the page.

- [Announcements](#)
The Announcements Link will take you to the announcement page where your instructor will post any messages they wish all the class to read. This is usually the first page you come to when you login. It is important to read your class announcements.
- [Welcome](#)
The Welcome Link provides initial information about your class.
- [Course Information](#)
The Link is a link to the syllabus and other important documents and schedules for your class. The Course Information Link is just that, information provided by your instructor about your course. It may contain the syllabus, schedule, policies and procedures, or just any information your instructor deems important for you to successfully complete the course. Never skip over this link!
- [Faculty Information](#)
Your instructors contact information is found here. Instructors may not post their information here but rather on our Website or in their syllabus. Always read your syllabus FIRST!
- [Course Documents / Content](#)
Some instructors post the books needed for their courses here along with additional reading to assist you in successfully completing your course. This menu button may or may not be visible depending upon your instructors preferences.
- [Learning Units / Assignments](#)
This is the area where instructors post assignments, instructional units, tests and quizzes. Do not skip this area!
- [Discussion Board](#)
The Discussion Board is where you will be posting your comments related to specific questions about the readings and course materials. This is where you will also read and respond to these comments. Be sure to read the syllabus to find out how the instructor wishes you to add your posted answers and responded to such posts in this area.
- [Communication](#)
From this area of Black Board you can view announcements, use the discussion board (if your instructor has made this part of their class) as well generate an email to someone in the class, your instructor, or everyone in the class. **ALWAYS SIGN YOUR EMAILS WITH YOUR FULL NAME!** Check with your instructor to see if they have other requirements for this area i.e. how they wish you to label assignments etc.
- [Tech Support](#)
This link will direct you to preloaded web page offering support features associated with blackboard.
- [External Links](#)
Within this link your instructor may include additional links to resources and or materials for your course. This link may or may not be available dependent upon your instructor’s preferences.
- [Tools](#)
Here is where you will find the Digital Drop box, your grades, address book, a manual for using Blackboard, and even a calendar to help you schedule work routines along with means to create your own blackboard profile.

Address Book:

Users can store contact information in the Address Book. The Address Book is empty until the user enters contacts. Users must enter a profile for anyone they wish to add to their address book.

Calendar:

This allows students and instructors to exchange information about class events quickly and effectively.

This option allows you to add individual public or private calendar entries, depending on the access level your instructor has set.

1. From the **Calendar** screen, click the date to which you wish to add an entry. The **View Day** screen appears.
2. Click **Add entry**. The **Add a Calendar Entry** screen appears.
3. Complete the selection drop-boxes and text fields for your calendar entry:
 - **Title:** provides the brief description of the entry that displays in the calendar.
 - **Description:** provides the details that are not included in the entry's **Title**.
 - **Dates:** the date you choose is automatically selected; you may change the date if you wish.
 - **Entry Type:** sets whether the entry is public (all course members can view the entry) or private (only you can view the entry). Only instructors are allowed to make public entries.
 - **Links:** (under **More Options**) allows you to include a link to a website in your entry.
4. Click **Save**. The **View Day** screen appears displaying your new entry.
5. Click **View month** to go back to the monthly view of the calendar.

Digital Dropbox: (Some teachers will use this form of assignment submission where others will use a built in assignment submission page within their instructional learning unit. Be sure to check with your instructor as to which means they wish to have the assignment submitted.)

The Digital Dropbox page allows you to exchange files with your Instructor. Be aware that a file added to the Drop Box will not appear to the Instructor until it has been sent.

To use the Digital Drop Box perform the following:

Attaching the File – This will place the file in your Drop Box. You can use this for placing completed items in your Drop Box for sending now or at a later date.

1. Click on **Tools** from the left hand side of the page
2. Click on **Digital Drop Box**
3. Click on **Add a File**
4. Type a **Title** for the item being sent (example: **Unit1_Assignment_ My Name**)
5. At the **File** box Click **Browse** (this will let you browse your hard drive to find where you have your file stored **NOTE: My Documents** is the **BEST** place to save your files to. Always save your files until the end of your course. Your Instructor may ask you to resend your file – Remember things can and do get lost in the mail.
6. The **Comments** area is a good place to make comments pertaining to the added file or assignment. i.e. "I had trouble with adding a TABLE to my document"

7. Add your file by clicking the Submit button at the bottom right hand side of the page. A box will appear stating the file has not been sent and instructions are given for sending the file. Click OK to close the dialog box.
8. An assignment placed in the **Digital Drop Box** but not sent will show the assignment “**posted**” and the time/date you placed the file in the Digital Dropbox. NOTE – Any assignment marked “**posted**” has **NOT** been sent to your Instructor.

Sending the file – Use this option to either send an already added file in your Digital Drop box or to add and send simultaneously If the file is already in your Digital Drop box: Marked “POSTED”

1. Click on **Tools** from the left hand side of the page
2. Click on **Digital Drop Box**
3. Click on **Send File**
4. Use the drop down arrow from **Select File** to pick any file in your Digital Drop box.
5. Click Submit and the file will be sent to your Instructor

IF the file has not been added to your Digital Drop box:

1. Click on **Tools** from the left hand side of the page
2. Click on **Digital Drop Box** (first in the list at the center of the page)
3. Click on **Send File** – You will be using the “OR upload new file”
4. Type a **Title** for the item being sent (example: **Unit1_Assignment_ My Name**)
5. At the **File** box Click **Browse** (this will let you browse your hard drive to find where you have your file stored **NOTE: My Documents** is the **BEST** place to save your files to. Always save your files until the end of your course. Your Instructor may ask you to resend your file – Remember things can and do get lost in the mail)
6. The **Comments** area is a good place to make comments pertaining to the added file or assignment. i.e. “I had trouble with adding a TABLE to my document”
7. Click Submit and the file will be sent to your Instructor
8. An assignment that has been sent will show the assignment “**submitted**” and the time/date you sent the file to your instructor. NOTE – Any assignment marked “**submitted**” **has** been sent to your Instructor. When your instructor opens the file the assignment in your **Digital Drop Box** will now show the status of “**received**” and the time/date the Instructor opened the file.

My Grade: When you click on My Grade from within Tools you can review the grades you have received on completed assignments, quizzes, and exams. You are also able to access this item when you initially log into blackboard and is located in the tools box found in the upper right side of the screen. If you scroll to the bottom of the page you will see a set of icons that show the status of the work you have turned in. The indicates the work is locked and grading is in progress, the – indicates no assignment or quiz has been turned in for grading, a ! indicates the work has not been graded, the ? Indicates a grading error, and the ✓ indicates the work has been graded and is marked completed. The 🔄 means the assignment is in progress and has not been submitted for grading. If you feel you have a grading error please email your Instructor and they should be able to assist you.

- **Library**

From this link Students may access all of the library’s electronic resources (reserves, journal articles, ebooks, interlibrary loan) from off campus through the use of their student identification number by accessing the school library at <http://umhelena.edu/library> .For research needs, the Library has a book collection and a large collection of electronic resources – including books, encyclopedias, and journal articles – accessible from the UMH website, either on campus or from home. Library staff is a resource to help with research and student can “Book a Librarian” for one on one tutoring. These services can be found at <http://umhelena.edu/library>