



FAIRLEIGH DICKINSON UNIVERSITY
H.P. BECTON SCHOOL OF NURSING AND ALLIED HEALTH

WEB COURSE ORIENTATION

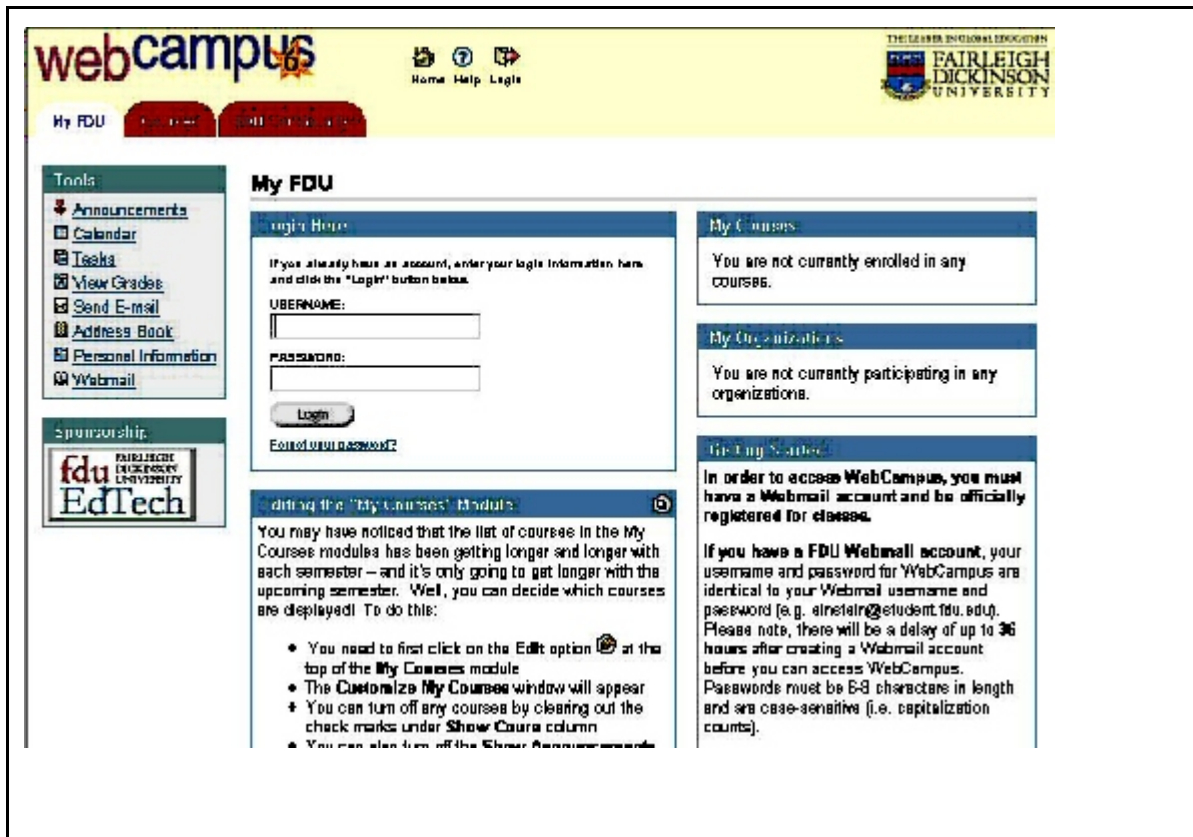
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With a small amount of guidance and orientation, virtually any student can successfully participate in an online course at Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU) using the WebCampus server. Fairleigh Dickinson University uses software published by BlackBoard, Inc. BlackBoard is one of several competing companies who produce online course software and markets these packages to colleges and universities. Fairleigh Dickinson University calls its system holding the online courses "WebCampus." WebCampus hosts both distant learning courses (conducted entirely online) and web-enhanced courses (class meets in classrooms and includes online components.). The following tutorial will help you master the skills needed for online course work. Ideally, you should log onto to the system and follow this tutorial in a step-by-step manner.

I. Creating a WebMail Account: The first thing step necessary to participate in WebCampus is to set up a "Webmail" account. Any FDU student is entitled to an account, without charge. Simply log onto <https://webmail.fdu.edu> A screen as shown in *Figure 1 (WebMail)* will open. Click on the text which reads "Create new webmail account" and follow the online screen directions. Note there is an "s" following the "http" and there is no "www" in the url address. The 's' means that it is a "secure" website.

After setting up your WebMail account, it will take approximately 24 to 36 hours to process the account before you can log-on to WebCampus to access your online courses. Once the WebMail account has been processed, the next step will be to log-on to Webcampus at <http://webcampusfd.edu>

II. Logging-on to WebCampus: Log-on to WebCampus via typing the url <http://webcampus.fdu.edu> into your web browser. Note that there is no 'www' in the url and also that, unlike WebMail, there is no 's' after the 'http.' You may use Netscape, Mozilla or Internet Explorer, however, only Internet Explorer will offer tools which allow you to edit text onscreen. If you create the text in your wordprocessor and then "cut and paste" this text into WebCampus, it will not matter which browser you use. Once at WebCampus, you will see a log-in screen as shown *Figure 2 (Log-In Screen)*. Enter your entire WebMail address (jsmith@student.fdu.edu) for user name and enter the password you created at WebMail as your password, then click the "Login" button.



Clicking the "Login" button will take you to the "Welcome Screen" illustrated in *Figure 3 (Welcome Screen)*. Your Welcome Screen will not look exactly like the screen shown in Figure 3 because each student's Welcome Screen is slightly different. Your Welcome Screen will show the particular courses in which you are registered. The Welcome Screen shown in Figure 3 that of a fictitious nursing student who is enrolled in several nursing courses. At the Welcome Screen, you will be advised as to whether there are any "Announcements" for your courses. Announcements are important because they contain course updates posted by your instructor. At the Welcome Screen, all of the courses in which you are enrolled will appear as links to the far right of the screen. To access your course, you must click on the link for the course you wish to enter. It can take 24 hours after registering for a course, before a link to that course will in the Welcome Screen.

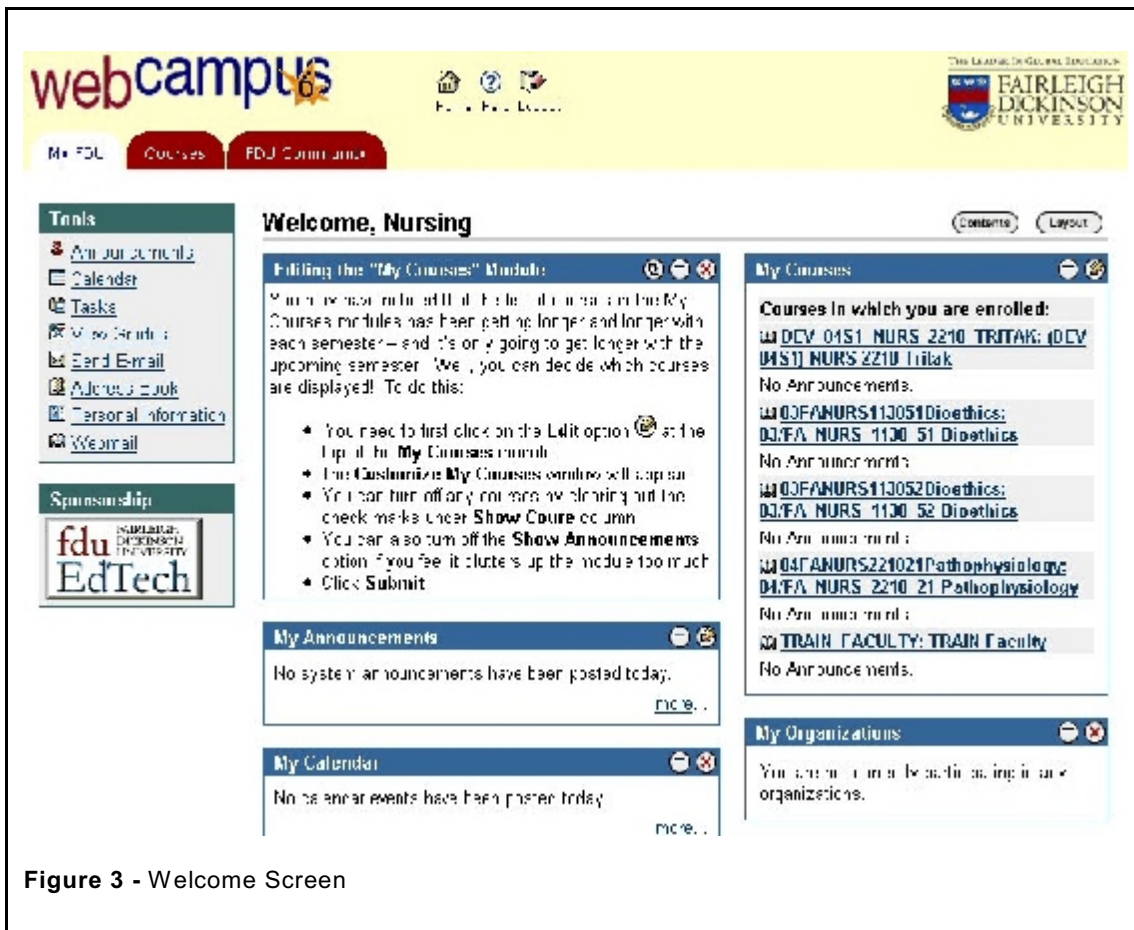


Figure 3 - Welcome Screen

You may access announcements directly from the Welcome Screen without entering the course. Aside from announcements and course links, there are several “Bells and Whistles” on the Welcome Screen which you may optionally use. For example, the Welcome Screen offers options for online “To Do Lists” or setting up a personal calendar. Other options allow you to “View Grades,” “Send E-mail,” access an “Address Book” and perform a other tasks. While useful, none of these extra features are essential for purposes of participating in an online course. They are the equivalent of accessing an online PDA. You may optionally experiment with these features after completing this tutorial. For purposes of continuing with this tutorial, choose one of your courses and click on the course name. Doing so will take you to the course home page where you can access course materials.

III. The Course Home Page: Clicking on one of the course links in your Welcome Screen will take you to the home page for that course. *Figure 4 (Course Home Page)* illustrates the home page for a pathophysiology course taught by this author. The blue panel with white text appearing to the left of the screen is the “Course Map.” This map provides access to the various features available in the course. These features are accessed by clicking on the white text links. Unfortunately, the white text links are not legible in Figure 4 and appear as only white dots on a blue background. In WebCampus, however, they will be readily apparent. There is a white text link for each of the nine components present in every course: *Announcements, Course Information, Faculty Information, Course Documents, Assignments, Communication, Discussion, External Links, and Tools*. All online courses have these nine components. Clicking a particular white text link opens that component.

The course home page also contains the course announcements. Tabs are available to separate announcements by date, e.g. "Today" or "Last 7 Days," etc. Announcements are intended for purposes of mass communication. The instructor can also communicate with students on an individual basis via email. Students may communicate with one another via email. Email is confidential; only the recipient may view it. Remember, however, that all e-mail recipients can forward the e-mail to third parties. Use extreme caution when emailing persons regarding confidential matters.



IV. Finding Course Materials: Course materials are accessed via clicking on the various white text links in the Course Map. For example, clicking on the white text link labeled "Discussion" will take you to the Discussion Boards. Clicking on "Course Documents" will take you to a screen allowing you to download the various course documents.

Each instructor organizes a course in a unique manner. Some instructors put the course syllabus in "Course Information" and the course handouts in "Course Documents." Others may put everything you need in "Course Documents." Still another instructor might put some materials in "Course Assignments," some materials in "Course Documents" and other materials in "Course Information." There is no standard or 'right' way to organize course materials any more than there is a 'right' way to organize the clothes in ones chest of draws. Everyone will have a different system for organizing closets and drawers. Similarly, every instructor will have a somewhat different idea of how do organize a course and under which heading to put various course materials. The only way to be certain as to what is in each of the course components is to click on the links and check to see what is inside.

For purposes of this tutorial, click on each of the white text links in the Course Map in succession to determine where your instructor has placed course materials. After opening one link to view the contents therein, use the “Back” button to return to the course map so as to click on another link. Open all of the links to see what information has been placed in each of them. Some instructors will put a photo and introduction in the “*Faculty Information*” section. Some courses include online discussion. When a course does include online discussion, clicking on the “*Discussion*” link will open a screen which reveals one or more “*Forums*.”

Forums are places where online course discussion takes place. Each forum will have a description indicating what type of discussion should take place in that forum. Some forums are dedicated to discussion of course topics; other forums are for social interaction.



Figure 5 - Opening a Course Component (Assignments)

Sometimes, clicking a course a particular link in the course map will not reveal actual documents but, instead, show icons of folders. Once again, individuality is the rule. There is no one “right way” to organize a course. Some instructors will set up folders organized by course topics. Other instructors will set up folders organized by calendar weeks. Some instructors do not use folders at all but simply post documents directly. Whenever you see an icon for a folder, simply click on it to “open” the folder and view

the contents inside. If opening a folder reveals yet more folders, continue to click on the folders in succession until you arrive at the actual course documents. Documents are posted as files which you can open to view, print out or save to your own computer.

To open a file, click on the name of that file. *Figure 5 (Opening a Course Component)* shows a screen-capture from the author's Bioethics course. A student enrolled in her Bioethics course would have clicked on the "Assignments" link in the Course Map to arrive at this particular screen. Referring to Figure 5, clicking on any of these folders would open screens which show additional folders, each of which contain the actual course documents. For example, observe the third folder from the top which is labeled "*Patient Rights and Informed Consent.*" This topic is one of the many topics covered in the Bioethics course. Clicking on this particular folder would open a screen which shows yet more folders and is illustrated in *Figure 6 (Folders within Folders)*. Referring to Figure 6, we see several folders, each of which pertains to some aspect of the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment. Tuskegee is a sub-topic within the portion of the course which deals with "*Patient Rights and Informed Consent.*"

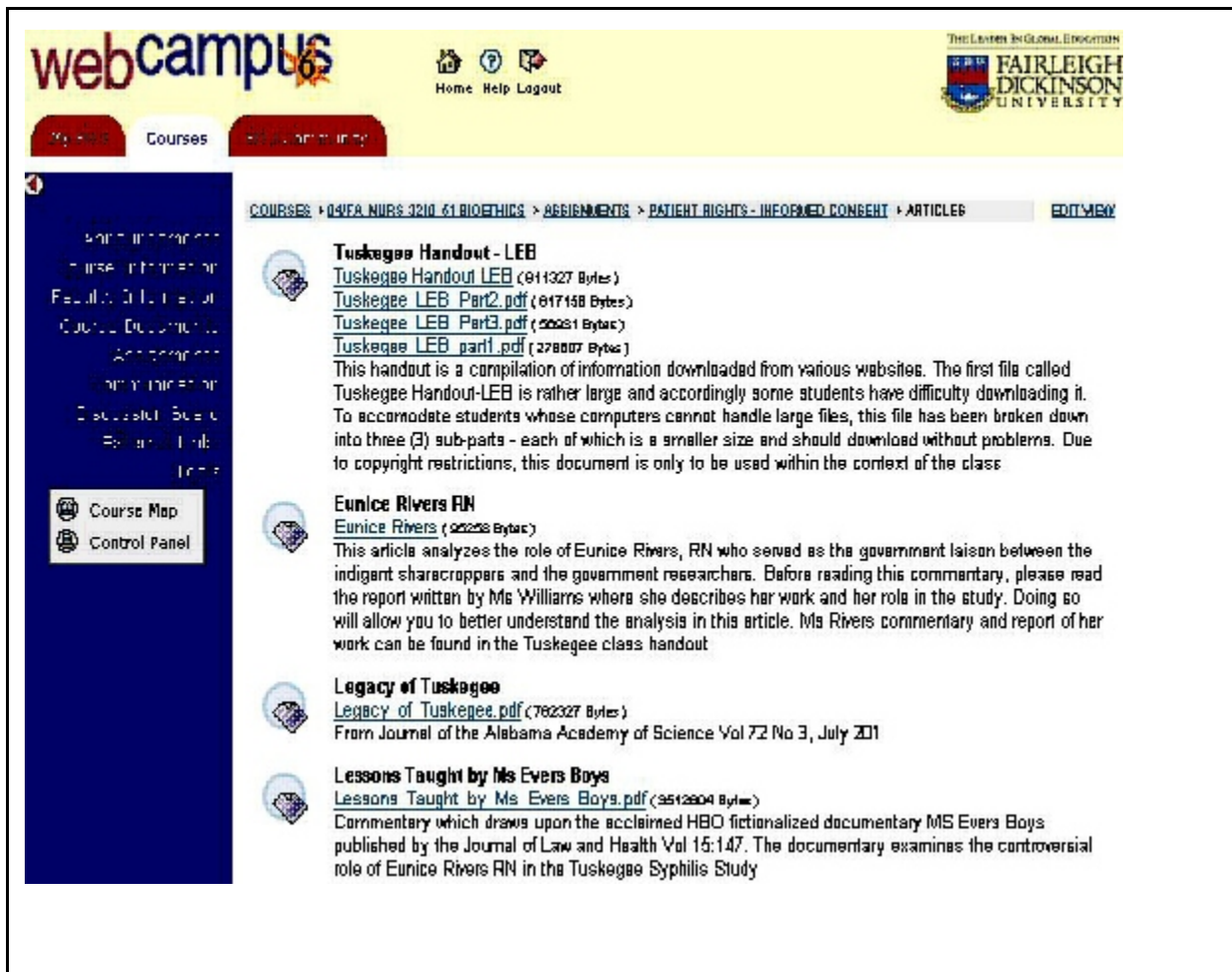
Referring again to Figure 6, note that the individual Tuskegee folders are labeled as follows: *Reading Assignment*, *Articles*, *Handouts*, *Graphics*, *Sound files*, etc. Clicking on any one of the Tuskegee folders opens a listing of course documents contained within the folder. Clicking on the *Graphics* folder, for example, would reveal image files of the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment taken from the National Archives of Medicine. Images include the sharecroppers who served as subjects for the study, a view of a sharecropper's cabin, photos of the researchers who conducted this notorious study, and a photo of Nurse Eunice Rivers who has been condemned for her role in deceiving study victims.



Figure 6 - Folders Within Folders

Refer to *Figure 7(Course Files)*. Clicking on the Tuskegee folder labeled “Articles” reveals this screen view showing a list of required reading. The instructor has posted the articles as PDF files. They can be accessed using Adobe Reader (www.adobe.com).

Most computers today have *Adobe Reader* already installed when the computer is purchased. If Adobe Reader has been installed on a computer, clicking a PDF file link will open the *Adobe Reader* program and open the file on the screen. The user can then read the text and view the images contained in the PDF document. The user can also print the file by clicking on the icon of a printer or save the file to the computer’s hard disk by clicking on the icon of a floppy drive. If you click on a file name for one of the PDF files and nothing happens, it is likely that *Adobe Reader* is not installed on your computer. In such case, go to www.adobe.com to download and install *Adobe Reader* onto your computer. Directions can be found at this site. There is no charge for *Adobe Reader*.



Referring back to Figure 6, had we opened the folder labeled “Tuskegee Sound Files,” we would see a listing of sound clips (as WAV files) recorded from the various speakers at the White House apology ceremony. President Clinton formally apologized to the five surviving victims of the notorious study and their families. We also hear remarks from Herman Shaw, then a 92 year-old study survivor, who was elected by his companions to respond to the presidential apology..

Documents posted to WebCampus may be in one of several formats. These formats include the following: PDF files (Adobe), DOC files (MS Word documents), TXT or RTF (generic wordprocessor files) JPG or GIF files (graphic images), WAV or MP3 files (sound files) and MOV or AVI (movie files). For sound files, you must have either RealAudio (www.real.com) or MS Media Player (<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/default.aspx>) installed on your computer.

All computers with the Windows operating system will already have MS Media Player installed at the time of purchase. You may, however, wish to update your version, if it is not current. Movie files with the extension MOV can be accessed with QuickTime (www.quick.com). Movie files with the extension AVI can be accessed with MS Media Player.

Including movie files in courses posted to WebCampus is less common but it does occur. This author uses them on occasion if they are relevant to course content. Sound files are sometimes used although these files are less common than graphics or text files. Instructors do use them where relevant e.g. heart sounds, clips from speeches, etc. PDF (Adobe) and graphics files (JPG or GIF) along with MS Word (DOC) files are common file formats used by course instructors who teach online courses. Conveniently, other than PDF files, the WebCampus platform can access these files without the need to install any additional programs. Simply clicking on the file will open it. PDF files require Adobe Reader.

Regardless of whether your instructor posts sound or movie files, having the ability to access various file types is extremely useful. Many internet sites post interesting materials in these formats. News sites, for example, frequently feature items from the days events in the form of short film clips. Sound files abound on the internet: speech clips, music files, heart and lung sounds, etc. When accessing the urls listed previously in an effort to download the multi-media software, you will be invariably offered the option to choose a paid (premium) version of the software. For most purposes, it is rarely necessary to purchase the premium versions of the software. Typically, they contain features which are not needed by most users.

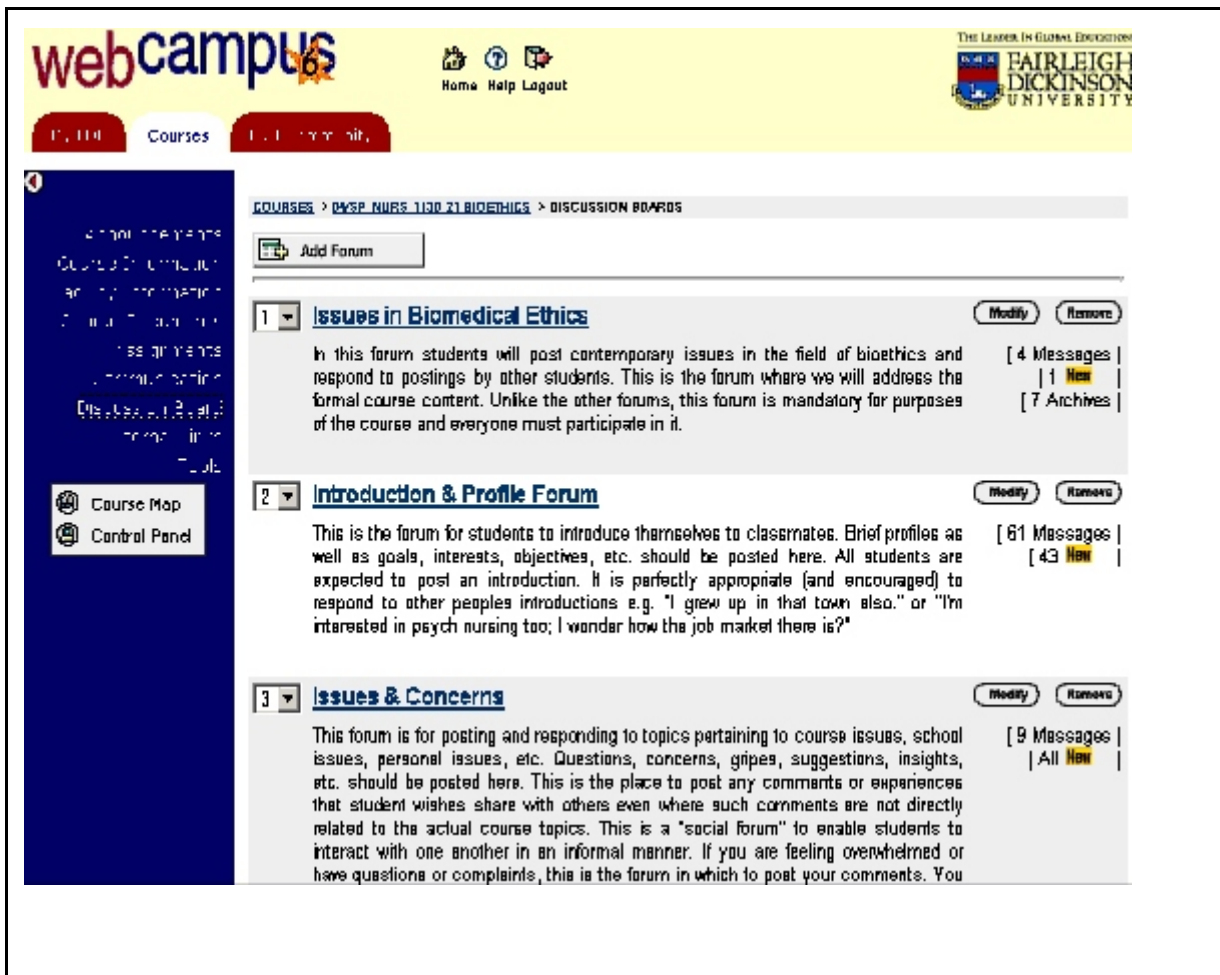
V. Participating in Online Course Discussions

Participating in web discussion is an important feature in most online course work. In many cases it is the very heart of the online course activities. Course discussion on WebCampus is conducted in the form of "Threaded Discussion" When you click on the Control Panel link labeled "Discussion," it will open a screen showing a listing of all of the discussion forums which the instructor has set up for that particular course. Forums are places where particular kinds of discussion takes place. Each forum in the list is accompanied by a description indicating the type of discussion which should take place in each of the forums.

Figure 8 (Course Forums) illustrates a screen-capture from the author's Bioethics course. Figure 8 depicts three of the many available forums for this course. Notes that each forum includes a description of what type of discussion is appropriate for that forum. Where multiple forums are offered, comments should be posted to the correct forum. Comments of a social nature should be posted to forums set aside for that purpose while comments pertaining to course topics should appear on the forums designated for academic purposes.

Note that the second forum illustrated in *Figure 8 (Course Forums)* is called "Introduction and Profile Forum." It is shown with a total of 61 messages, 43 of which are labeled as "new." New messages are those messages which are yet to be read. The first forum labeled "Issues in Biomedical Ethics" shows only 4 messages, however, it also shows that there are seven "Archives." Archives are places where the instructor stores messages after discussion for a particular topic is completed. Archived messages may be read but, in contrast to "active" messages (those appearing on a particular course forum), students may not post replies to archived messages. Students may, however, reply to any active message e.g. any of the 61 messages appearing in the Introductions and Profile Forum.

Archiving is used to prevent the forums from becoming too cluttered with excessive numbers of active messages. Instructors typically archive messages for one course unit, after the class has moved on to the next unit. Returning to the Bioethics course, the instructor has archived the messages after discussion for each of these course topics was completed. In this particular course, each of the archived topics contained several hundred messages. Archiving was necessary to clear the screen so as to make room for new discussion. Without archiving, the “Issues in Biomedical Ethics” forum would have been cluttered with hundreds upon hundreds of messages. In this particular course, as is often the case, online course discussion can often be quite lively, generating large numbers of messages, even for small groups of students.



To enter a course forum and participate in the discussion, simply click on the name of the forum. For example, referring to Figure 8, one would enter the “Issues and Concerns” forum by simply placing the cursor over the name of the forum and clicking on it. Doing so, opens a screen which reveals all of the discussion ongoing in a particular forum. *Figure 11(Threaded Discussion)* shows a facsimile of a course discussion, as it would appear on screen. For purposes of this tutorial, we cannot offer a screen-capture (illustration) of actual threaded discussion within the Bioethics course because doing so would be a violation of privacy for the students who have participated in that course. Any online course discussion is considered confidential and stays in that course. Accordingly, for purposes of illustrating online threaded discussion, we will look at Google Groups.

ACCESSING GOOGLE GROUPS AS AN EXAMPLE OF ONLINE THREADED DISCUSSION

Students can gain a good deal of insight as well as practice concerning online threaded discussion by visiting the Google Groups website. For purposes of this tutorial, please log into the Google website at this time www.google.com then click on the "Groups" link found at this site. Doing so will take you to the Google Groups website where you will see a variety of discussion categories. Google has literally hundreds of discussion groups and this particular screen offers general categories into which the various groups could be classified. Choose an area of interest from the categories offered. The link labeled ".talk - Current issues and debates" is a good choice for students who cannot decide upon which category to choose. Clicking on the chosen link will open a screen offering yet more choices of discussion, all of which represent sub-topics related to current events.

Next, choose one of these discussion sub-topics and click on the link provided. Doing so will open up a screen which reveals a list of recent comments made by participants to that particular discussion group. You are actually viewing a listing of the subject headings for the various comments which were posted as opposed to the actual comment, themselves. Each of these subject headings listed will be accompanied by the date when the comment was posted, the name of the person who posted the comment (most people use "screen names; some use their actual name) and the number of "articles" which the comment has generated. "Articles" are comments made by other persons in response to the comment posted.

Peruse the list of subject headings on screen and select one which has generated ten (10) or more "articles," then click on this link. Clicking on the link will open a split screen with two windows. The larger of the two windows, located on the right side of the screen will allow you to read the actual remarks written by the person who the posting. The text you clicked on to open these remarks is called the "heading" or "subject." Each participant who posts remarks also creates a heading which describes the remarks he or she is about to post. It is these headings which appeared as a list on screen when you first opened the discussion board. Perusing these headings will give an idea of the kinds of discussions which are taking place in the discussion forum.

Participants create their subject headings in an effort to attract other persons to read their remarks. For example, someone who is about to post comments expressing an opinion regarding gun control might create a subject heading which reads "Gun control is unconstitutional." Opening the link for this heading will reveal the comments which this person has offered in support of his or her views that gun control is unconstitutional.

The smaller and thinner window to the right of the screen shows an outline of the "threaded discussion" which the particular comment you have chosen has generated. Choosing a link which has generated at least 10 "articles" will give you an idea of a threaded discussion where at least 10 comments were posted in response to the subject heading. Note how the "articles" appear as hypertext links, each of which is labeled with the name of the person who posted the remarks. Clicking on any one of these hypertext links will open a window which reveals this person's remarks. Note also, that the hypertext links are arranged in an outline format which reveals exactly who is responding to which comments.

Whenever someone responds to a comment, the system automatically places the subject (heading) for his or her remarks as a hypertext link in the proper place within the discussion. These subject headings are always placed beneath and also indented to the right with respect to the comments which have triggered the response. Persons participating in the discussion look at the list of subject headings and decide upon which comments they wish to read. Participants click on subject headings which are of interest to them and read the comments.

After reading a particular comment, a participant may wish to post a reply to the remarks. The system offers participants an opportunity to reply to any of the comments posted. In Google Groups, replying is

done via clicking on the link which reads “*Post a follow-up to this message.*” Clicking on this link opens a screen which asks the participant to log-in to the system. After logging-in, the participant will be given an opportunity to post replies to the comments. Anyone may read comments which have been posted without having to log-in. Persons who wish to reply to remarks, must register and log-in to the Google Groups system before posting comments. Google does not charge for registration and permits people to have “screen names” which do not reveal their identities. You may wish to try it out.

At this point, peruse the various comments for the topic(s) you have chosen so as to become familiar with the mechanics of threaded discussion. The threaded discussion on the forums posted to WebCampus operate in essentially the same manner. The screens in WebCampus are a bit different from the screens presented in Google Groups, but the underlying principle is the same. Once you understand the process which is ongoing on Google Groups, you will readily understand how the WebCampus Forums function. Some instructors offer a “Practice Forum” on WebCampus for students who wish to gain confidence in online posting skills. You may use the Practice Forum to gain confidence in participating in online discussion. Alternatively, you may practice participation in threaded discussion by registering for a Google Group which is of interest to you. Practice is important to becoming comfortable with the process.

Google has literally thousands of groups from which to choose. Some groups are open to anyone who wishes to join; other groups have limited membership. For example, one group may be open only to professional dog breeders who wish to discuss issues concerning breeding dogs. Other groups may be open to anyone who is interested in dogs and wishes to talk about them. Still other groups may be devoted to discussion about one particular breed of dogs.

One important difference between Google Groups and WebCampus is that in some Google Groups persons may post remarks which would be considered rude or hostile. This behavior is not tolerated by instructors in WebCampus. Differences of opinion are always welcome, however, instructors usually will not tolerate rude or inappropriate rhetoric in their courses.

Another important difference between Google Groups and WebCampus Forums is that WebCampus permits the participant to post attachments to their remarks. Google does not permit attachments. Attachments are files. The following file formats are commonly used as attachments on WebCampus forums: DOD (MS Word), PDF (Adobe), JPG or GIF (graphics), TXT or RTF (word processor), MP3 or WAV (sound files), MOV or AVI (movie files). A posting on WebCampus which contains an attached file will appear with a small icon of a paper clip next to the title of the posting.

NEW THREADS.

New topics are referred to as “*New Threads*” While students participating in WebCampus Forums may always post replies, some instructors limit the ability of students to start “*New Threads*” in certain course Forums. This policy is instituted in an effort to keep the discussion focused on topics which need to be addressed within the course. Commonly, instructors will include one or more social interaction forums where students may initiate discussion topics and post any “*New Thread*” so desired. Within a WebCampus forum, if “*New Threads*” are permitted, a button labeled “*Add New Thread*” will appear as an option near the top of the threaded discussion screen. *Figure 9 (New Threads)* illustrates a forum which permits new threads. Note the button near the top of the screen. When the button does not appear, students may either reply to various discussion questions posted by the instructor or they may reply to comments posted by other classmates.



CHANGING THE SUBJECT HEADING

When replying to another person's comments, it is extremely important to change the subject heading for your comments. Simply clicking on the reply button and typing in remarks will result in your comments having the exact same subject heading as the person to whom you are replying. If everyone in the discussion replies without changing the subject heading, we can easily get a long list of comments, all with the exact same subject heading. It then becomes very difficult to follow the discussion or gain any insight into what everyone is saying. For example, if one person posts a comment with a heading titled "Withdrawal of tube feedings in the ICU setting" and 20 people reply to that comment or to each other - all with the exact same heading - we have virtually no clue about what any given person is saying. Far preferable, is for each person to give his or her comments a unique title such as "Disagree with the article's position regarding withdrawal of life support" or "People should consider the patient's advanced directive" or "My experience with end-of-life care in XYZ hospital." We then know what each person is about to say and can follow the discussion.

Subject headings often determine how many people will read your comments. In a public forum such as Google Groups, interesting subject headings will attract more attention and generate many responses. The heading should give the reader a good idea of what is discussed in the actual remarks posted. When participating in a public forum where there are literally thousands upon thousands of postings, interest in the subject heading governs which postings persons will read and offer a reply.

For purposes of online course work in WebCampus, the amount of online comments generated is much less than what is encountered in a public forum. Instructors generally require that students read all of the comments posted by members of the class. The WebCampus software advises the instructor regarding how many messages each student has read and how many comments each student has posted. Instructors will advise students regarding the minimum number of postings required from each person enrolled in the class. Most students post many more comments than the minimum required especially if the web discussion has generated considerable interest or the topic is in any way controversial.

VI. Posting Comments to Course Forums

After reading the various comments posted by the students and instructors on a given forum, you will want to reply to one or more of these comments. Posting replies is actually quite easy. After reading a particular comment, if you wish to post a reply to these remarks, simply click the "Reply" button. Doing so will open up a screen with three windows as shown in *Figure 10 (Posting a Comment)*. The three windows

are titled “Subject,” “Message” and “Attachment.” Replying is simply a matter of filling in these windows with the appropriate text and then clicking the “Submit” button. Sometimes your reply will be in response to a question which the instructor has posted to begin discussion. At other times, you will be replying to comments which another student has posted. The process is the same in each case.

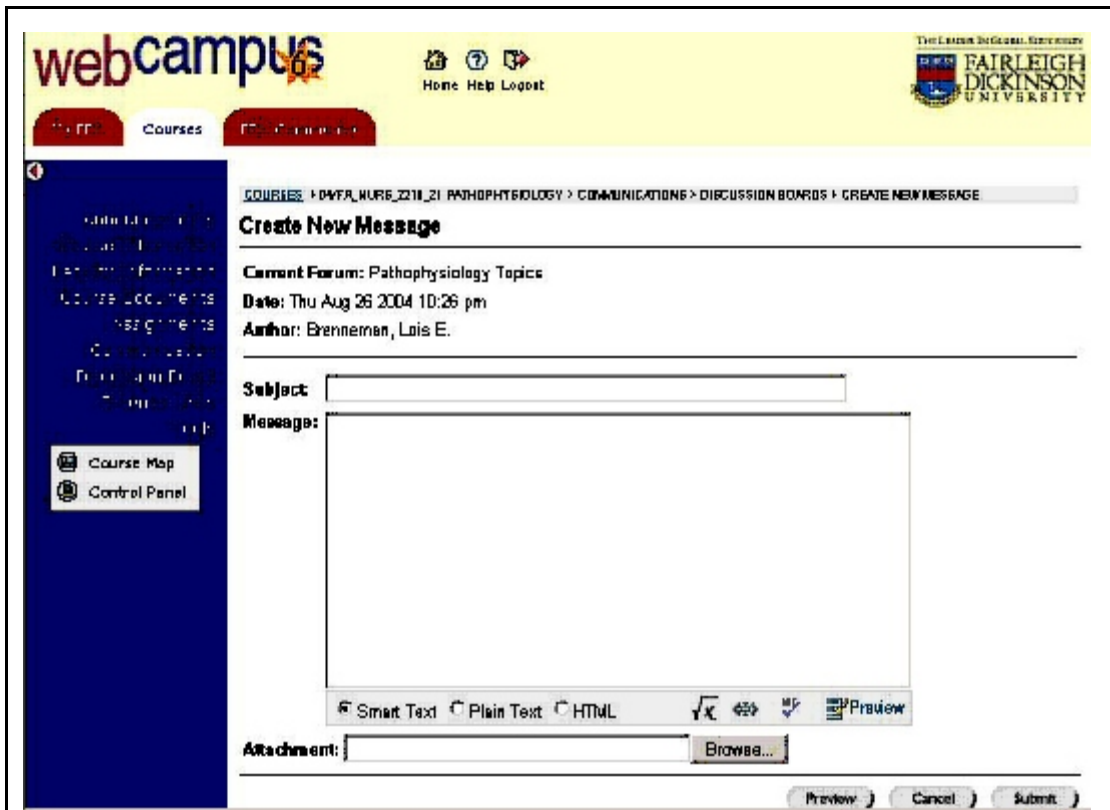


Figure 10 - Posting a Comment

When formulating your reply, first type a phrase which describes the message you are about to post in the “Subject” window. For example, perhaps you are replying to a comment about withdrawal of life support for a terminal patient and you plan to describe your experiences in caring for a patient in an end-of-life setting. Your “Subject” might read *“My professional experience supports the facts presented in this article.”* On the other hand, perhaps you disagree with comments posted by another student on this subject. In that case, your subject might be *“My experience has been very different from what you have suggested.”* Participants should have a clue about what you are going to say, based upon reading your “Subject.” Do not simply reply to a message without customizing the subject heading to something which will reflect your comments. Without changing the heading, your reply will be posted with the same heading as the comments which triggered your reply; readers cannot anticipate your comments.

The next step is to type in your message. Here is where you type in the main comments you wish to share. You would present your experiences, your argument or whatever it is that you wish to include as a response to the comments for which you have chosen to reply. It is often preferable to compose your remarks in your word processor where you can carefully word your remarks, editing your text. After creating your comments in this manner, you may “cut and paste” the text from your word processor and into the message window on the reply screen.

Finally, decide whether you want to offer an attachment to your comments. Not all postings need to include attachments. An attachment is a file. It may be a graphic image, an article in pdf format, a sound file, a text file, etc. You may attach any file you wish to include in support of a point you are making or to illustrate something you are describing.

To illustrate the process of posting a reply, consider the example of a person who is participating in a forum on gardening. Perhaps the person is having problems with his or her tomato plants and wishes to solicit help from other forum members. The subject heading for this posting might read “Help! All my tomato plants are dying! The message might provide a detailed description of the problems with the plants and what has or has not worked in an effort to solve the problem. The attachment might be a photo of the damaged leaves taken with the person’s digital camera. This attachment will be in the form of a graphics file and might be called “*Tomato_blight.jpg*.” When including an attachment on WebCampus, simply locate the file on your own computer via the “Browse” button. Obviously, you need to know where this file resides on your computer. Having an organized system for storing files on your computer will be very helpful in this regard particularly if you have many files on your computer.

After completing your typing and having browsed to the file you wish to attach, click the “Submit” button. Doing so will post your comments, along with any attachment, to the discussion forum. The system will automatically place your comments in the proper position with respect to the threaded discussion, depending on to whom you are replying. Once posted, your remarks will appear in the forum as the text of what you typed in the “Subject” window. See *Figure 11 (Threaded Discussion)* to view an illustration of how postings will appear within the Forum. In this context, it becomes apparent why it is critical to change the subject headings to reflect your comments. We do not wish to see a long list of replies, all with the exact same subject, offering the reader no idea how individual participants are responding.

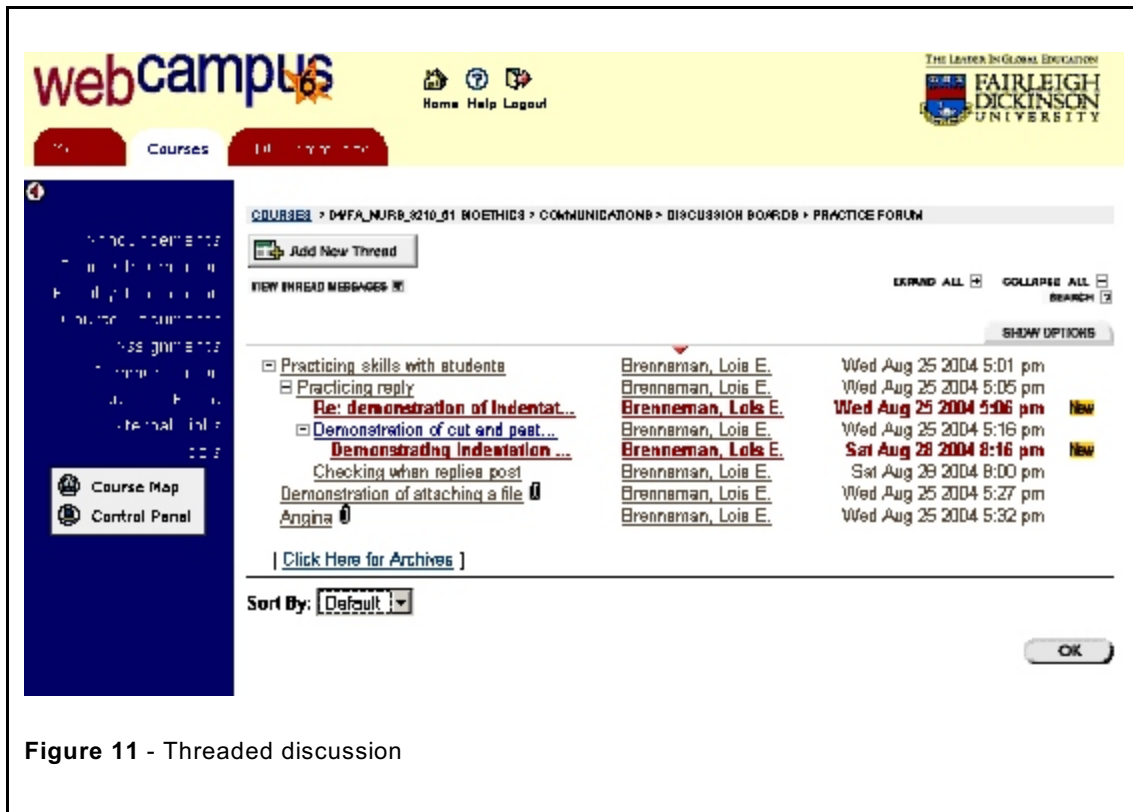


Figure 11 - Threaded discussion

VII. Reading Messages Posted to a Forum and Viewing Attachments

On entering the forum, one sees a listing of all of the subject headings for the messages which have been thus far posted to the forum. As mentioned previously, the messages will be presented in outline format as shown in Figure 11 (Threaded Discussion). Whenever someone replies to a posting, the system automatically places the comments beneath and indented to the right with respect to the remarks which triggered the response. An outline of the discussion is thus created. It becomes readily apparent who is participating in the discussion as well as who is replying to whom. It is important to note that the postings to the Forum will appear in outline format only when the "Sort By" button, shown in *Figure 11 (Threaded Discussion)* is set to "Default." Other views are possible which sort postings by date posted or by author. Changing the sort function to one of the other settings will alter the appearance of the screen view. In such case, the comments will no longer be presented in outline format. There is usually not many reasons to change the "Sort By" button. Leaving on the default setting works best.

As "*Figure 11 - Threaded discussion,*" illustrates, when a comment posted by a classmate or the instructor has not yet been read, it will show up in bolded text on your screen. After you have read the comment, it will show up as regular text. It is easy to discern which comments you have and which comments are yet to be read - perhaps because they have been posted since you last accessed the system. Unread messages will also have a yellow-background icon with the text "New" beside them.

If you have included an attachment, there will appear a small icon of a paper clip appearing next to your subject heading. Everyone seeing the paper clip image will know that you have included an attachment. As illustrated in *Figure 12 (Opening a Message)*, people read your remarks by clicking on your subject heading which, in turn, opens a screen showing your comments. They can then click on the file name shown within your comments so as to view your attachment. The name you have given to your file when you saved it on your computer will be reflected as the file name for your attachment. If you are telling everyone about your dog, Willie, and you attach a file on your computer which is called "Willy_sleeping.jpg," then this file name will show up as a link in your message. People can click on the link to see the picture of Willie sleeping.

Students may reply to as many or to as few message as they prefer. Generally, students who actively participate in the discussion receive higher grades for the discussion component of the course than students who rarely post comments. Most instructors expect students to read all of the comments posted to the course forum(s) which pertain to the course content and objectives. The instructor will advise students as to what is expected in terms participation in course forums. Usually a specified minimum number of postings is required in the academic forums for the course. Typically, participation in the social forums is optional although, in general, students tend to like these forums. The WebCampus software tracks the number of messages which the students read and also the number of messages which each student posts. The system reports this information to the instructor.

As mentioned previously, *Figure 11 (Threaded Discussion)* depicts a scenario wherein all of the comments in this threaded discussion have been posted by the same person. In contrast to the other illustrations which are screen captures from actual courses, this view has been created for purposes of this tutorial. Normally, there would be many different persons contributing to the discussion. This tutorial cannot offer a screen capture of threaded discussion from an actual course without violating the privacy of those students who actually participated in the discussion. Typically, the screen contains dozens if not hundreds of comments posted by course members who have participated in course discussions on the WebCampus platform.

Referring back to *Figure 8 (Course Forums)*, the listing of course forums indicates how many messages are in each forum. Recall that the screen is reached by clicking on the “Discussions” link in the course map on the course Home Page shown in *Figure 4 (Course Home Page)*. In addition to information regarding how many messages have been posted, you will be advised as to how many of these messages are “new” meaning that you have not yet read them. You can then enter those forums which have new messages for you to read. Unread messages tend to pile up very rapidly in on-line courses.

Referring again to *Figure 11*, you read a message by clicking on one of the subject headings shown in the outline view of the threaded discussion. Doing so will reveal the comments contained therein. If the message contains an attachment, the file name will also appear on the screen has opened. Note also that some of the subject headings contain an icon of a paper-clip. The paper clip indicates that the particular message will contain an attached file, enabling users to easily pick out which messages which contain attachments

Figure 12 (Opening a Message) illustrates the screen which appears when opening a message containing an attachment. It is a screen-capture from a message posted to the Photo Gallery Forum in one of the author’s Bioethics courses. *The Photo Gallery Forum* is a very popular social forum where course participants post images and photos. In addition to forums devoted to course content and academic topics, online courses frequently include one or more social forums which permit students to socialize online in.

The message depicted in *Figure 12* comprises the author’s comments about interaction between her two cats. It also offers a photo of the cats as an attached file which bears the name “cuthbert_and_kitty.jpg.” Opening the attachment will reveal the photo of the cats as shown in *Figure 13 (Opening a File Attachment)*.

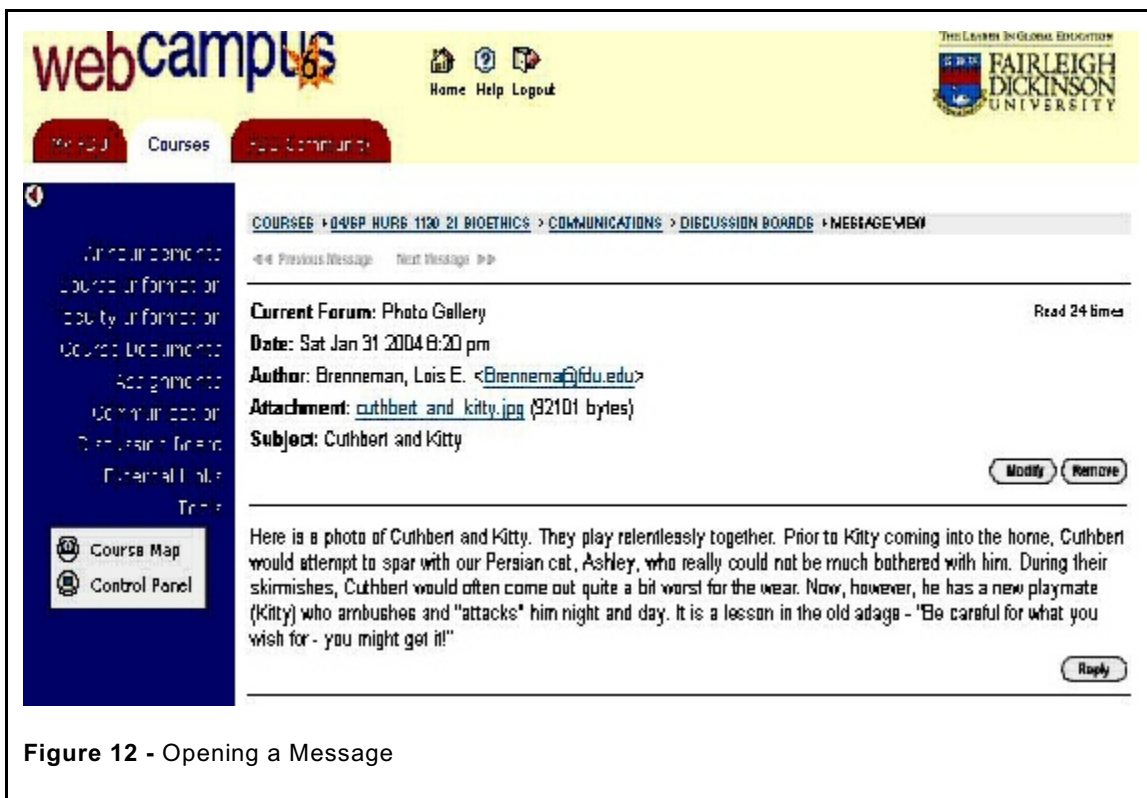


Figure 12 - Opening a Message

As illustrated in Figure 12, on opening the message, you can readily determine who authored the comments, when the message was posted, the forum where the message was posted and the size of the attachment which has been included. Size becomes important for when using a slow connections. Large files download slowly on dial-up modem connections hence hence students using a dial-up modem may not wish to open large file attachments. This issue is not particularly relevant with high-speed connections



While the academic forums in the author's various courses have generated large amounts of interesting and informative discussions about course-related topics, the social forums have been quite popular, as well. Cuthbert and Kitty (Shown in Figure 13) appear in the Photo Gallery Forum in a number of courses. Also frequently appearing in the Photo Gallery is Vera, the author's Border Collie, who is given to (futile) attempts at herding the cats. The Photo Gallery Forum has been exceedingly popular and has included all manner of interesting and amusing photos posted by the course participants. Also popular is the "*Introductions Forum*" where people introduce themselves to classmates and the "*Issues and Concerns Forum*" where students discuss matters not directly related to course content. Taking an online course does not preclude socializing with other classmates.

VIII. Online Testing

Some courses involve online testing wherein the instructor may post exams and quizzes to be taken online. There are a variety of ways in which online testing can be accomplished. WebCampus offers a variety of test question formats to include multiple choice questions, fill-in the blanks, short answers, true or false questions, multiple answers and essay questions. Some exams are time-limited, other exams have no time limits. Some exams permit multiple sessions to complete the questions other exams require that all of the questions be answered in a single session. Still other exams permit multiple attempts and provide feedback and rationale with respect to the answers after the student enters a choice.

Exams may be formatted so as to reveal only one question at a time with no backtracking permitted or they may be structured so as to allow students to open the entire exam at once and backtrack to questions as needed. The course instructor will provide details and instructions concerning which type of online testing, if any, will be used in the course. Regardless of what type of online testing is employed, students are expected to strictly adhere to Fairleigh Dickinson University Policy of Academic Integrity.

VIII. Getting Additional Help

A detailed manual for WebCampus can be accessed and downloaded at the WebCampus site by clipping the "Help" button at the very top of the welcome screen when first logging-in to the system. The file downloads as a pdf (Adobe) document and provides detailed instructions for using Webcampus.

The Fairleigh Dickinson University Technical Assistance Center (UTAC) is also available 24/7 at 973-443-8822 or fdutac@fdu.edu. Additionally, online help is available by clicking on the link provided on the help screen page.

Note About the Screen Captures Used in This Tutorial

The illustrations used throughout this tutorial are actual screen captures created while the author was logged-in to a WebCampus session using her own account. Accordingly, some of the views shown in the illustrations may contain certain features available to instructors but not students. It was not possible for the instructor to log-in as a student without violating student's privacy

Aside from a few minor points, however, the illustrations used in this tutorial will accurately reflect what will appear on the student's screen when they log into the WebCampus platform. There are two minor features appearing throughout these illustrations which are not present in the student view. The first discrepancy concerns the dark blue panel with white text which appears to the right side of the screen in most of the tutorial illustrations. Near the bottom of the blue panel, the words "Course Map" appear as black text within a white box. Appearing directly below "Course Map" is text which reads "Control Panel." Control Panel is an instructor feature and does not appear in the student view. Students will see only "Course Map." The second minor difference appears in *Figure 8 (Course Forums.)* The screen capture depicts buttons to add forums, remove forums and modify forums - all of which are instructor functions and do not appear in student screen views. Other than these two minor discrepancies, the figures and illustrations presented accurately reflect what the student will see onscreen when logged into WebCampus.