

## What is the Layout of a Blackboard Course?

Once you have your blank course shell you may be wondering where to start. Configuring a Blackboard Course Shell can be a bit intimidating at first! The first step in customizing your course shell is understanding the layout of a Blackboard site.

### Accessing Your Course Shell

1. Log in to Blackboard at <http://blackboard.wcpss.net> or access it through the intranet.
2. Click on the Course Sites tab at the top of the screen.



3. Click on the title of a course you are teaching.

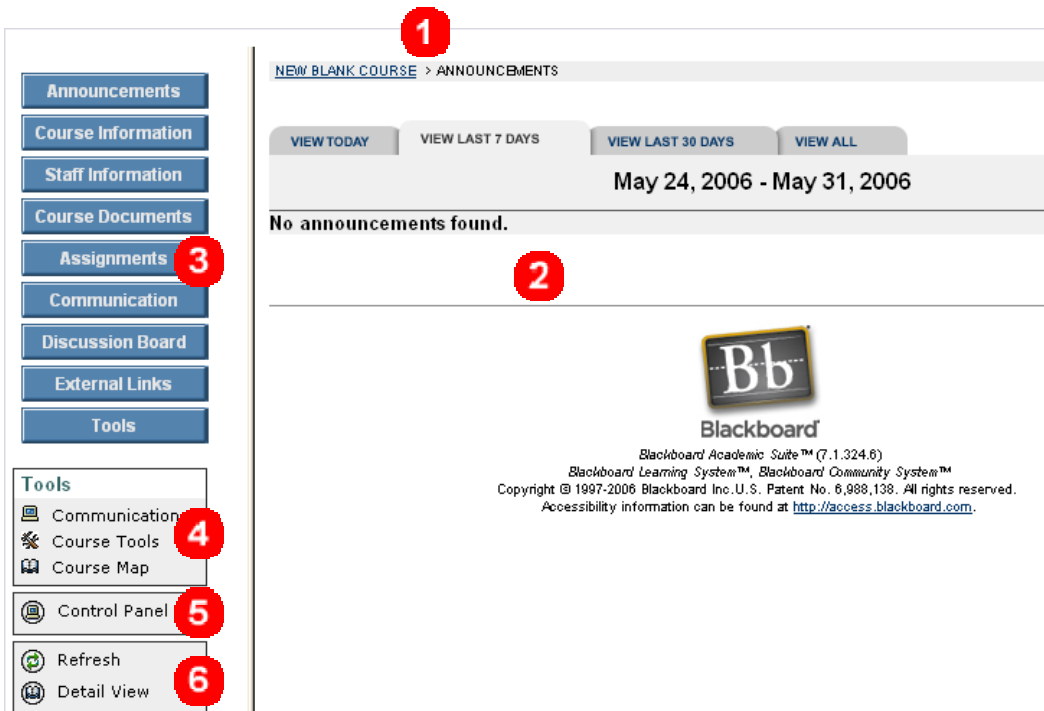


You are now looking at your course shell's homepage.

## Understanding Your Course Layout

This is the default layout for every course created in the WCPSS Blackboard system. This manual refers to areas by their system name and this page will help you understand what is being discussed. You may want to print it out and use it as a reference!

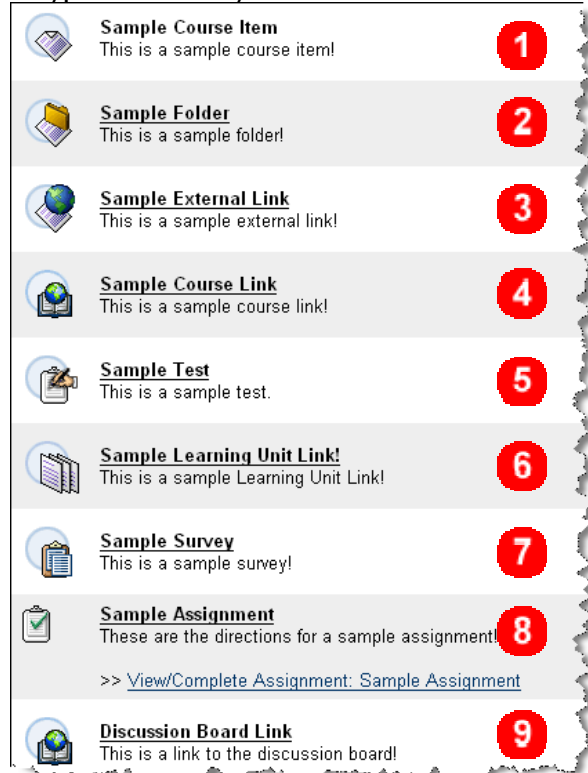
1. Breadcrumbs
2. Announcements / Content Area
3. Course Menu
4. Toolbox
5. Control Panel
6. View Controls



The screenshot shows a Blackboard course interface. On the left is a vertical navigation menu with buttons for: Announcements, Course Information, Staff Information, Course Documents, Assignments (marked with a red circle '3'), Communication, Discussion Board, External Links, and Tools. Below this is a 'Tools' section with icons and labels for: Communication (marked with a red circle '4'), Course Tools (marked with a red circle '4'), Course Map, Control Panel (marked with a red circle '5'), Refresh (marked with a red circle '6'), and Detail View (marked with a red circle '6'). The main content area on the right has a breadcrumb trail 'NEW BLANK COURSE > ANNOUNCEMENTS' (marked with a red circle '1') at the top. Below it are view filters: 'VIEW TODAY', 'VIEW LAST 7 DAYS', 'VIEW LAST 30 DAYS', and 'VIEW ALL'. A date range 'May 24, 2006 - May 31, 2006' is displayed. The text 'No announcements found.' is centered in the main area (marked with a red circle '2'). At the bottom of the main area is the Blackboard logo and version information: 'Blackboard Academic Suite™ (7.1.324.8)', 'Blackboard Learning System™, Blackboard Community System™', 'Copyright © 1997-2006 Blackboard Inc. U.S. Patent No. 6,988,138. All rights reserved.', and 'Accessibility information can be found at <http://access.blackboard.com>'.

### Navigating Your Course

Course navigation works just like any other website you may encounter on the internet. You can review the different types of links you'll find inside of each Course menu below.



1. Course Content Item – This content type allows you to add files, or just text to your course.
2. Folder – Add folders to organize your content.
3. External Link – Provide links for students to explore useful sites around the net.
4. Course Link – Link directly to specific locations within your course site.
5. Test – Add links to tests that you create and deliver within Blackboard.
6. Learning Unit – Add entire lessons online that allow self-paced instruction for students.
7. Survey – Create and deliver surveys via Blackboard.
8. Assignment – Add assignments that students can review & complete online.
9. Discussion Board Link – Link directly to a specific forum within your course site's discussion board.

Notice how each link has its own icon that demonstrates both the content within and its purpose.