Canvas Quick-Start Guide for Mathematics Courses

Getting started and importing a template course into Canvas:

- Your course should appear in Canvas. Find it under Courses -> All Courses
  - Go to it. Click “Publish” under Course Status. When properly published, the Publish box will be green.
  - Click on “Import from Commons” found under the Publish box.
  - In the Canvas Commons, search for the appropriate course with key words like Indiana University M211. Templates for the Course Coordinators to modify exist in the Commons for M118, M119, M211, and M3xx/M4xx. The course coordinator should place a term-specific course in the Commons for you to use.
  - Click on the appropriate template name. Under the “Import into Canvas” box, click on the course you want to import the template into. Then click on the green “Import into Course” download box. It may take a few minutes for all the material to be imported.
Edit the Course Syllabus with Details for your section:

- Return to your course in Canvas. On the left course navigation list, click on Syllabus.

- Along to top to the right, find and click on Edit.

- Add the details for your section: your section number, your class days and times, your class location, your name, your office hours, the important dates for the term (if the course coordinator has not done this for everyone), your policy about calculators, cheating, religious holiday absences, grading scales, and other course specific policies. Under the Resources header, list the appropriate resources for your course and section – your office hours, your AI office hours, departmental help sessions and academic learning center hours.

Add dates to the assignments:

- While not everyone will know at the beginning of the semester when each homework assignment will be due, it is important that students know the dates of the major exams, at minimum. One way to add Due Dates is to go to assignments, click on the spinwheel icon, and then on Edit.
WebWork assignments point to “WebWork” in Pages. Clicking on WebWork in Pages takes students to WebWork on the CITO server that houses WebWork. You choose assignments for WebWork inside of WebWork, not inside of Canvas. Your WebWork course can be set up with standard WebWork homework. Just ask Brian Chase (brchase@indiana.edu) if you want this option.

Homework assignments are filled in based on departmental recommendations in lower-level courses. To see and edit the actual assignments, either click on “More Options” after completing the due date or click on the assignment to see it and on Edit to edit it.

Change grading schemes:

To change the weights for the various types of assignments, go to Grades, click on the spinwheel, and select Set Group Weights.

To change the rules for a type of assignment, such as the number of homeworks, webwork assignments, or quizzes dropped, click on the spinwheel associated with the Group (Homework, WebWork, Quizzes).

The menu that appears allows you to choose the number of lowest scores to ignore, the number of highest scores to ignore, and assignments to never drop.
Adding people:

- You will need to add people to your class, such as your AI if you want your AI to fill out grades in the Canvas gradebook. To do this, you go to People and +People. You will need the person’s IU user name. To understand all of the possible roles, see: https://guides.instructure.com/m/4214/l/73660-what-are-the-differences-between-course-level-roles-and-account-level-roles

General Canvas Tricks:

- Make sure you place on your syllabus that it is required that students in your class receive notifications from Canvas immediately by email. That places the responsibility for the students keeping up with Canvas announcements with the students.

- Make sure your assignments are published. If they are not published, students cannot see them and your AI cannot enter grades in for it.

- One click is never enough – not only does your course have to be published, every assignment has to be published. There is no way to set all assignments at once; the same series of clicks must be used for each assignment individually. While this is annoying, the departmental templates are designed to help by creating already published assignments which you just have to fill in.

- Deleting in Canvas is much easier than adding assignments. If your course does not have quizzes, for instance, you can delete all the quizzes by selecting the spinwheel at the uppermost Quiz level and selecting delete. Then you may have to adjust the weights for the other components.

- You can create one assignment, export the gradebook, use excel to duplicate the assignment however many times you need it duplicated, re-import the excel spreadsheet, and then choose that you really do want to incorporate each and every new assignment. I found this slightly less annoying than creating them one by one in Canvas.

- Canvas does allow you to create quizzes within Canvas. The editor allows for using standard LaTeX commands to create mathematical formulas. That is a nice feature.

- Canvas is well designed to organize online courses. While we do not teach many online courses, this may well be an area into which institutions of higher education can expand to attract new students as the demographics and economic opportunities of those students shift.