

# Why Use Canvas, Anyway?

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## Baseline and Beyond

### About Canvas

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Canvas is a modern educational platform that supports a deep focus on teaching and learning. The robust features of Canvas help to enhance teaching and learning beyond the physical classroom.

Canvas is:

- **Intuitive.** It has a clean interface for desktops, laptops, tablets, and smartphones.
- **Flexible.** It allows customization to support a range of pedagogical styles and formats.
- **Dynamic and Cloud Based.** Continual improvements to features and support documentation.
- **Engaging.** Instructors can easily connect with students through rich video, audio, text chatting, and discussion boards.
- **Reliable.** Canvas support by phone, chat, or email is available 24/7/365 for general questions about getting started in Canvas, how to use its features, and for troubleshooting assistance.
- **Efficient.** It provides faster and easier grading capabilities.

### Canvas Features

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Canvas boasts hundreds of features to help make teaching and learning easier. Several user favorites are highlighted below.

- **Collaborative:** Wikis, discussion boards, and integrated tools like Google Docs make group learning more productive.
- **Integrated Media Recorder:** Easily include audio or video comments on personal messages, assignments, course discussions, and even graded work.
- **Mobile Capabilities:** It lets students engage in learning anytime, anywhere from any computer or mobile device.
- **SpeedGrader:** This utility facilitates grading in half the time, plus you can preview student submissions and provide video or voice feedback all in one area.

You can see a full list of features at <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-features>.

### Go Beyond the Basics

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Canvas has so much more to offer than simply serving as a repository for your course materials. Here are some ideas about how to use Canvas to take your course beyond the baseline:

#### Win the Classroom Attention Battle

Instructors are constantly battling social media, texts, and funny cat videos on YouTube for students' attention. Create a captive audience by integrating media and/or clickers in your class.

Setting Up TurningPoint: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-clickers2>  
Getting Answers: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-clickers1>

Media in Canvas: See Media Handout at  
<http://bit.ly/nucanvas-handouts>

## Move Canvas From Supporting Actor to Starring Role

Let Canvas drive learning both inside and outside the classroom. During the Canvas pilot, Professor Andrew Rivers taught his Highlights of Astronomy course directly out of Canvas, making Canvas an active part of both the in-class and out-of-class activities. Using Modules, you can create self-paced learning experiences and/or gamify your course.

Sample Courses: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-sample>  
Not Just Playing Around: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-gamify>

Organize Content Into Modules: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-modules1>

## Facilitate Learning On Demand

Did you know that Canvas has an app for students to take learning with them wherever they go? You can also use Big Blue Button (Conferences in Canvas) to help students learn without having to meet face to face.

Conferences Overview: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-conf>

Canvas Mobile Apps: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-mobile>

## Help Students Help Each Other

Peer learning can be a great way to increase student engagement and deepen learning. Canvas has a wide range of tools to help you integrate peer learning into your course.

Group Creation/Collaboration: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-large5>  
Collaborations: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-collaborations>

Peer Review Overview: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-peer>  
Discussion Boards: <http://bit.ly/nucanvasdiscussion>

## Go Social

Connect with your students outside the classroom by registering social applications to your Canvas account. Create a class #hashtag and show the tweets on your course homepage.

Learning Apps: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-LTI1>

Connecting Accounts: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-social>

## Identify At-Risk Students

It can sometimes be a challenge to identify students who are falling behind or struggling. Using the Analytics tools in Canvas can help you identify these at-risk students earlier and more efficiently.

Course Analytics: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-analytics2>

Student Analytics: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-analytics1>

## Personalize Your Message

Take advantage of the wide range of tools available in Canvas for you to customize and beautify your course.

Creating Pages: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-pages1>  
Rich Content Editor: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-content>

Media in Canvas: See Media Handout at <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-handouts>  
Customize the Homepage: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-pages2>

## Help!

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There are several ways to get help when creating content for your Canvas course.

Canvas URL: <http://canvas.northwestern.edu>  
Search the Canvas guides: <http://guides.instructure.com/>  
Call the 24/7 hotline: **1-855-680-0126**  
Online 24/7 Canvas help chat: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-ga24>

Canvas Learning Center: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-clc>  
Request a consultation: <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-consultation>  
Walk-in hours: **Fridays from 1 to 2:30 p.m. in University Library 2 East Room 2635** <http://bit.ly/nucanvas-walkin>