Blackboard Collaborate Ultra
Blackboard Collaborate is the interface used for the live session component of your courses. See below for instructions, screen shots, and more details.

Overview
Live Sessions

Live class sessions are times when you, the instructor, and your entire class are simultaneously logged in to the same online classroom and can see and hear one another. Sometimes the term synchronous is also used for these sessions, referring to the fact that all students are online and interacting at the same time.

The Blackboard Collaborate platform will serve as the platform for:
Class discussions. You are required to attend a live-session class discussion once a week for each course in which you are registered. All live-session class discussions require that you dial into an audio conference. We will review audio choices for live sessions later in this unit. You must be prepared to discuss that week's asynchronous material in your weekly live-session class discussion. This means if you have class on Monday, you must have completed that week's asynchronous material prior to your scheduled live session on Monday.
Office hours. Professors may post online office hours to give students opportunities to ask and clarify questions about the course, review assignments or upcoming coursework.
Study groups. In some courses, you may be assigned a group project where you will need to meet on a regular basis to complete the project. As a Syracuse student, you have the ability to create Blackboard Collaborate sessions for you and your group members to work on group assignments. The steps to create a Collaborate session can be found in Unit 6 of this orientation course.

Live Session Best Practices
Etiquette for Class Session

Join the session early: Give yourself time to learn what you can and can't do in the session. Add a profile picture and set up your audio and video. If you are presenting, make sure you can share content. Practice using the tools.

Be on time: If you can't be early, be on time. Let the moderator know if you are going to be late or absent. Everyone can set notifications to alert them when someone has joined the session and may see who is joining when.

Introduce yourself: Don't assume anyone automatically recognizes your voice. State your name the first few times you speak. Let your instructor know who is participating. Give everyone a chance to know you.

Make eye contact: If you are sharing video, look at the camera and not the session. It may feel weird, but it shows you are engaged in the session. If you need to multi-task during the session, shut your video off to avoid looking distracted.

Mute yourself when not speaking: Nothing is more distracting than background noise. For example, typing or a private conversation. It can also give the impression that you aren't paying attention.

Be professional: You may be joining the session from somewhere private, but you are not alone. You are face-to-face with your peers, instructors, and guest experts. Make a good impression. Participate. Don't talk
over someone. Raise your hand if there is no opening to speak. Type questions and feedback in the chat. Pick your best profile picture. Watch your mannerisms and facial expressions.

**Joining a Live Session**

**Attending your Live Class Session**

Blackboard Collaborate with the Ultra experience is based on modern web technologies, you don't need to install Java or a launcher.

*For the best experience use Google Chrome™ or Firefox® (versions 52+).*

Review a list of the suggested browsers for your best experience during live sessions here:

[Blackboard Browser Support](#)

**Joining Your Live Class Session:**

Where do I find Blackboard Collaborate to join the live session for my course?

To access your courses, live session, first log into Blackboard and click on your specific course in the "My Courses" section of your landing page. Then, select the section your Instructor has indicated for joining the live sessions. In the example below, the Instructor has labeled the section "Live Wednesday Night Session," they may also reference it as "Online meetings," "Live sessions," or a similar variation.

![Blackboard Collaborate Ultra](image)
After you select the date and time for the appropriate session, click on "Join Course Room". Generally, you can join the session up to 15 minutes in advance.

Each live session link is unique to an individual session and a user in that session. This means that the link only works for you in that session. If you don't see "Join Course Room", it is possible the session has not opened yet; be sure to check the sessions date and time you selected.

Upon entering the live session, you will be prompted to set up your audio and video. Please continue with the section below for detailed instructions. You may also print and refer to our [Live Session Checklist](#) [Live Session Checklist - Alternative Formats](#).

The video focus is on attendee profiles; you can switch between a grid view and a view that follows the speaker. With the follow-the-speaker view, the focus moves to the current speaker as the discussion unfolds. Within Blackboard Collaborate there are 3 areas of tools and information; the Collaborate Panel, the Session Menu, and the Control Panel. Below is a brief overview of each of these areas.
Control Panel
Turn on your audio and video, set your status, raise your hand, or leave the session through the control panel.

The image below is of the full Blackboard Collaborate room with the Control Panel (bottom center) open. In the upper left corner is the icon to open the Session menu, and in the lower right corner is the purple tab to open and close the Collaborate Panel.

Collaborate Panel
The Collaborate panel takes your session experience to the next level. You now have a single space to go to engage other attendees with all the great collaborate tools.

- Chat with everyone in the session or privately with other moderators.
- View attendees and their roles.
- Moderators and presenters can share content or start polling.
- Set your personal settings.
Session Menu
The Session menu opens a collection of high-level session actions and information. Open it using the Session menu button at the top left of the screen.

Tools and features you use only once or twice during a session are conveniently grouped here.

- Find details about the session.
- Moderators and presenters can record sessions.
- Connect your phone for audio.
- Get help or report an issue.
- Take tutorials that show you how to use Collaborate.

Please see the following sections for additional details on setting up your audio and video, and on how to access recordings of your live sessions.

Audio & Video in your Live Sessions
Setting up your audio and camera

You must give the browser permission to use audio and video to participate in a session. This is necessary so that you are seen and heard. You'll be asked to do this when you first join a session or when you first go to share your audio or video.

Setting up your audio and camera

1. Open My Settings. Select your profile pictures and select your name. Or open the Collaborate panel and select My Settings.
2. Select Set Up your Camera and Microphone. You can use your phone for audio.
3. Choose the microphone you want to use. Collaborate tells you that you sound great when it is receiving your audio. Select Yes, it's working to proceed.
4. Choose the camera you want to use. Collaborate tells you that you look great when it is receiving your video. Select Yes, it's working to proceed.

By default, you are hidden and muted after you complete the setup. Select the microphone and camera icons to begin full meeting participation.
Turning on your camera and audio
You can select the microphone and video camera icons any time during a meeting to turn them on or off.

With your keyboard, press Alt + M to turn your microphone on and off. Press Alt + C to turn your camera on and off. The microphone automatically turns on after you enable it, but you will get to preview how you'll look on screen before sharing your video.

As the discussion unfolds, the person speaking appears in the center of the screen. Select Grid View to see more than one attendee.

Microphones appear next to any attendees who have their microphone or phone audio turned on. A dark microphone is used to represent the current speaker. It moves to the current speaker as the discussion unfolds.

Know when you are "on air"
Collaborate tells you when others in the session can see your video. If you see your video with an eye, others see your video in the center of their screen. If you see an eye while content is shared, others see your video as their picture-in-picture.

You have two audio choices for your live sessions in Blackboard Collaborate:
- From in the session using your computer/headset:
- From in the session using your phone to dial in: If you have joined a session on a browser and want to use your phone for audio, open the Session menu and select User your phone for audio. Call the number listed and enter the temporary personal identification number (PIN). With this personal PIN, you appear as yourself in the session.
Use your phone for audio for live class session

If you have joined a Collaborate session on a browser, you can choose to use your phone for audio. Open the Session menu and select Use your phone for audio. Call the number listed and enter the temporary personal identification number (PIN).

This temporary PIN is associated with your personal account. It helps the session identify you. When you enter this PIN, the audio from your phone is paired with your profile picture. This helps everyone keep track of who is speaking.

Don't share your personal PIN with anyone. It only works for you and only in the current session. You are not able to use the PIN in another session or share your PIN with another user. Personal PINs stop working when the session ends.

As long as you have the session open in your browser, you have access to all the session tools. Your microphone changes to a phone. Others see a phone icon by your name in the Attendees panel.

You aren't muted when you first call in. Everybody can hear you immediately. Turn your audio on and off in your browser by selecting the phone icon.

With your keyboard, press Alt + M to turn your phone audio on and off. You can still use the mute on your phone. Just make sure the audio is turned on in your browser, if you want others to hear you. Moderators can also mute attendees anytime during the session. You are notified, if a moderator has muted you.

You can close your browser after you dial-in and still hear the session and talk. You aren't able to chat or share anything without the session open in a browser.

Accessing Recorded Live Sessions

Reviewing Your Live Session

Recorded sessions are saved as MP4s. Recordings include activity in the live session.

- Audio
- Any content shared or active speaker video of both are shared during the session, only the content shared is recorded.
- Captions entered during the live session
- Chat messages in the Everyone channel (Private messages and chat messages in breakout groups are not recorded.)

Only moderators can record sessions.

Everyone can view the recordings from any device as often as they want. There are no view limits.

How do I find the recordings?

Recordings are saved on the same page you joined your session from.

- From a web link, log into Collaborate and select Recordings.
- From a Blackboard Learn course, select Course Tools and Collaborate.
ITS Service Center
Information Technology Services - Tech Support is available to you!

The ITS Website itself has its own wealth of information you may find useful. Pay particular attention to the Services section for other important information.

Additionally, you can submit a help ticket directly through the website help.

What is Two Factor Authentication (2FA)?

To search for answers to your Blackboard questions, visit: Answers self-help knowledge base

If you have problems logging in or need assistance, contact the ITS Service Center at help@syr.edu or 315.443.2677

ITS Hours:
Sunday-Thursday: 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m. (EST)
Friday & Saturday: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (EST)

Full Support Schedule (NetID Login Required)
Information Technology Resources (video link)