

# Using a Customized Home Page for a Canvas Course Shell

2020 Teaching and Learning with Technology Symposium

Dr. Stephen Souris, Professor of English / SSouris@twu.edu

## Abstract

Students should be able to navigate easily around any particular instructor's way of setting up a Canvas course shell. This presentation will demonstrate how a customized Home Page that functions as a site index can be helpful, especially in a course that differs in numerous respects from others.

## Student Feedback

"Hello: In response to your email in regards to the course shell home page, I feel it works well. While I've never had a course home page that involved hyper links, I do believe it works well for the following reasons: one it makes locating information easier. There is no need to sift through the things you aren't looking for. Second it's fairly user friendly, something I think us older students can appreciate in online classes. Lastly, it isn't over loading for the amount of information you present within it. Everything you need to know about the course is clearly laid out under its hyper link. Easy to find!" Stephen Souris20SUENG306350 POETRY / [NS] / July 16, 2020 at 3:48pm

"I have taken a few online courses, and this is the first time I have had the home page set up this way. At first it was a little confusing to me but now I find it easier to navigate, since everything is there and I don't have to click everywhere to get the information I need. But like I said I took some time to get familiarize with the set up." [English 2073.50] / [DS] / 1:25amJul 17 at 1:25am

"Similar to my feedback regarding course content, this shell is the most user friendly and comprehensive shell I have encounter in my online courses at TWU." [Eng. 3063.50—responding to request for feedback on Home Page] / [mh] / 12:55pmJul 17 at 12:55pm

"Hi Dr. Souris: I'm taking my 7th class in Canvas right now. I've seen a lot of variety in the layout of the Home page, so I'm not sure I would recognize which one is the standard template. That being said, I prefer yours to the others I've seen so far. I appreciate that yours is set up in outline form rather than subject headings. In some classes it's hard to figure out what is located

on the home page vs. what's buried within the links.” [Eng. 2033.50, Spring 2020:] / [CC] / Stephen  
Souris20SPENG203350 AMERICAN LIT MASTERPC July 17, 2020 at 3:46pm

“I think that you make everything accessible and easy to find. Granted, there is a lot of information to sort through between the syllabus and the course calendar. Nevertheless, if someone takes the time to read through the Home Page, finding the correct page to find the information one is looking for isn't all that difficult.” [Eng. 3063.50, Sum 2020:] / [JC] / 4:16pmJul 17 at 4:16pm

## **Links for Alternative, Self-Designed Home Page Styles**

Source: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-12947-4152724144>

Source: <https://community.canvaslms.com/groups/designers/blog/2015/04/16/creating-an-inviting-course-home-page> (might require login credentials)

## **Link for Alternatives to Designing Your Own Home Page**

Source: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-12816-what-layout-options-are-available-in-the-course-home-page-as-an-instructor>

## **Quality Matters Standard #1: Course Overview and Introduction**

Here is the first of the eight general standards for the QM Program: “1. Course Overview and Introduction: This standard ensures that the overall course design is clear to students and helps them understand how to get started in the course. Researchers have found that students perceive clear instructions on how to get started in a course and where to find various course components as the most important feature of a course design. (Hixon et al., 2015).” Source: Sadaf, A., Martin, F., & Ahlgrim-Delzell, L. (2019). Student perceptions of the impact of quality matters-certified online courses on their learning and engagement. *Online Learning*, 23(4), 214-233. doi:10.24059/olj.v23i4.2009