



Content

Use the Content tool to post and organize course content so that information about course expectations, course syllabus, lecture notes, and important dates display to users clearly.

Course materials you post in Content can include documents, images, media files, URL links, and existing course activities. You can add release conditions, grade items, and learning objectives to topics to ensure users navigate through course materials while fulfilling specific course requirements and learning expectations.

You can also monitor class and user progress as students work through course content by setting automatic (determined by the system) or manual (determined by the student) completion tracking.

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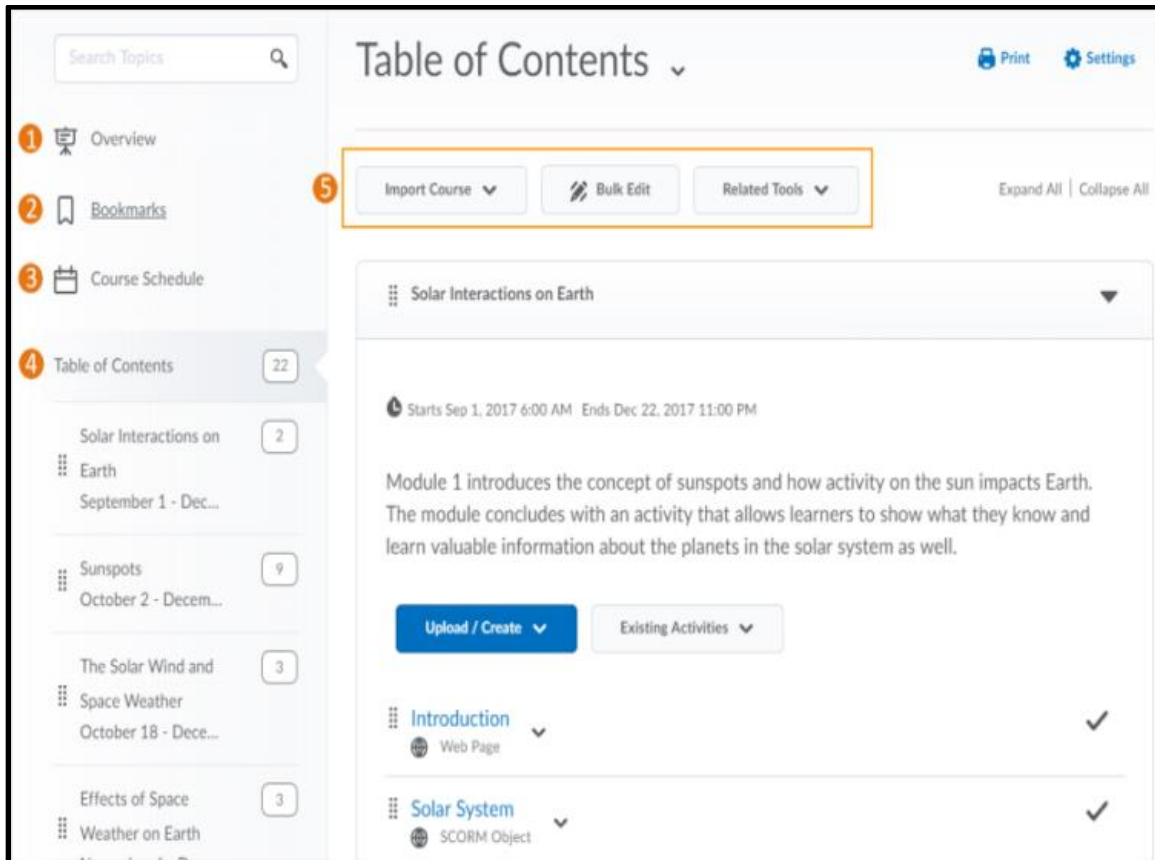
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Tutorial Videos

- [Create a Course Overview](#)
- [Content - Add a Module](#)
- [Content - Remove a Module](#)
- [Content - Create an Audio Topic](#)
- [Content - Create a Video Topic](#)
- [Content - Upload a Topic](#)
- [Content - How to Add an Existing Activity to Content](#)
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- [Attach a Release Condition](#)

Content Tool Overview

An Overview of the Content Tool for Instructors



- 1) When users access a course's Content tool for the first time, the first page they land on is the Overview. Use the Overview page to orient users to the course, content materials, and course expectations. If you decide not to add anything to this page, the Overview link and page is hidden from learners' view. Please note that at CMU we have decided to follow the QM guidelines and direct students to the "Start Here" folder to begin their course. Watch the ["Create a Course Overview"](#) Video for more information.
- 2) Topics you bookmark appear in a list on the Bookmarks page. The number beside the Bookmarks link indicates how many bookmarks you have.
- 3) The Course Schedule page lists course material due dates, start dates, end dates, overdue course activities, and other course events for the next seven days. If you set availability dates or a due date for a course object, it appears in the Course Schedule page and the Agenda view in the Calendar tool. If you set a due date for a course activity that has no end date or it has an end date that occurs after the due date, the activity appears on the Overdue tab for learners who miss the due date. The Overdue

tab lists overdue course activities that learners can still complete before the item or course becomes unavailable.

The dates listed on this page are not exclusive to content topics; upcoming events include all events within the course from the Calendar tool. The number beside the Upcoming Events link indicates how many upcoming events you have.

4) The Table of Contents panel lists all modules available in your course. The number beside each module name in the Table of Contents panel indicates the number of topics you have set completion tracking for. The number beside the Table of Contents link indicates the total number of topics you have set completion tracking for. Use the number totals to determine the task load being put on learners per module.

5) The course content administration options located on the Table of Contents page allow instructors to import and copy course content, bulk Course Admin content properties, manage course files, view reports on course content, and restore deleted course items.

About Course Content Organization

Your course content is organized using content topics and modules. Use modules to organize the units of your course offering (for example, week 1, week 2, week 3, and so on) and topics to organize the content of each module (for example, lesson 1, lesson 2, lesson 3, and so on.)

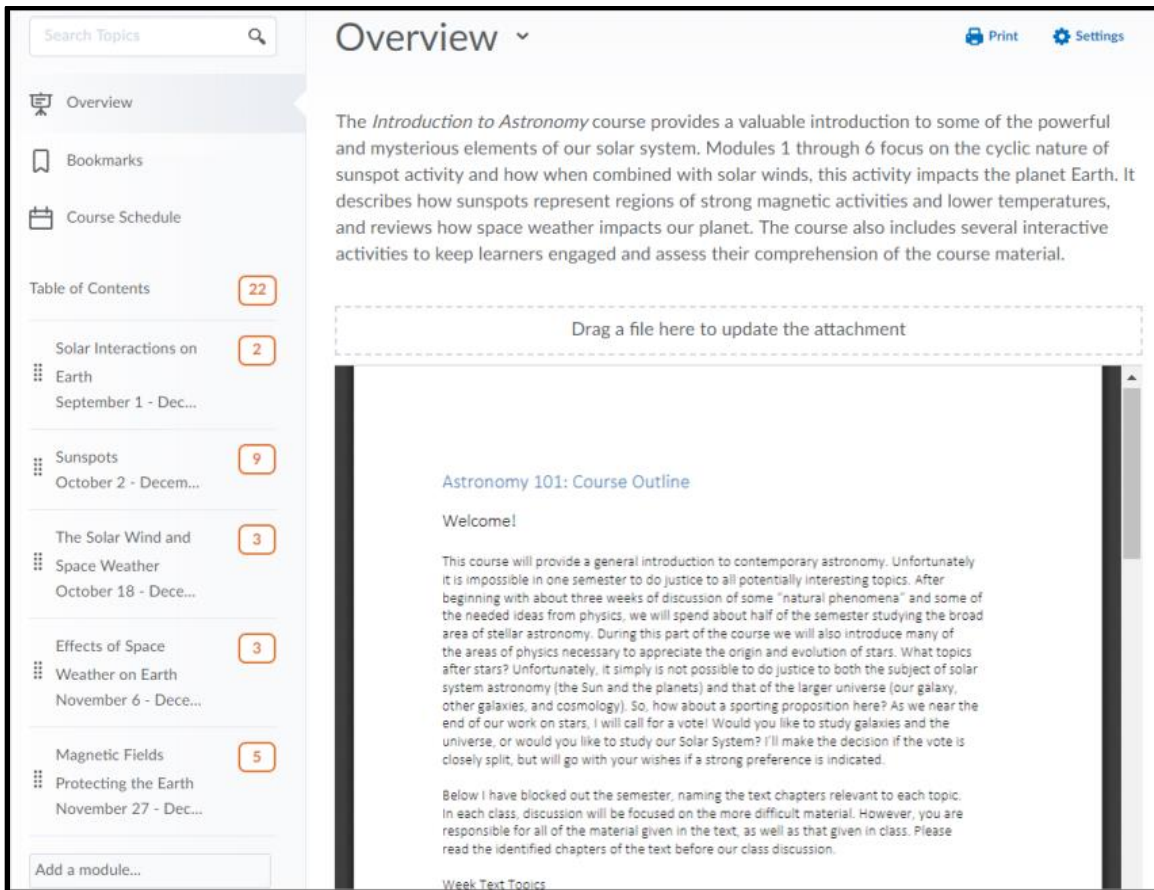


Figure: An Astronomy 101 course in Brightspace Learning Environment

Overview

When users access a course's Content tool for the first time, the first page they land on is the **Overview**. Use the **Overview** page to orient users to the course, content materials, and course expectations. You can insert course overview information using the HTML Editor beneath the **Overview** title, and you can add a file attachment by dragging a file from your computer onto the upload target, or by clicking **Add an attachment** from the **Overview** page.

Note: If you decide not to add anything to the Overview, the **Overview** link and page is hidden from student view.

Bookmarks

Topics you bookmark appear in a list on the **Bookmarks** page. Click the **Add Bookmark** icon while viewing a topic to add it to your bookmarks list. The number beside the **Bookmarks** link indicates how many bookmarks you have.

Course Schedule

The **Course Schedule** page lists course material due dates, start dates, end dates, and other course events for the next seven days. If you set availability dates or a due date for a course object, it appears in the **Course Schedule** page and the Agenda view in the Calendar tool.

The dates listed on this page are not exclusive to Content topics; upcoming events include all events within the course from the Calendar tool. Click **Course Schedule** to view all past, current, and future course events. The number beside the **Upcoming** link indicates how many upcoming events you have.

Table of Contents

The **Table of Contents** panel lists all modules available in your course. Click on a listed module to view and manage its details, topics, and sub-modules. You can also stay on the **Table of Contents** page to view and manage all modules and topics. Click the **Table of Contents** link to access the **Table of Contents** page. This page enables you to view and manage all modules and topics. You can add new topics to existing modules by dragging and dropping files from your computer onto upload targets on the **Table of Contents** page, and you can also rearrange course materials by dragging and dropping topics between modules.

The number beside each module name in the **Table of Contents** panel listing indicates the number of topics you have set completion tracking for. The number beside the **Table of Contents** link indicates the total number of topics you have set completion tracking for. Use the number totals to determine the task load being put on students per module.

About accessible courses and accessible course content

Organizing your course in a way that supports the learning needs and styles of all users can be a difficult task. Your learning materials need to engage, educate, evaluate, and accommodate people effectively.

Set clear course expectations

There are some design decisions you can make that will help all learners use your online course effectively:

Use the Content Overview page to help familiarize your learners with your course content.

Add your course syllabus to the Content Overview page. This helps all users clearly understand your course expectations up front. Link each syllabus item to the actual item in your course. This provides a navigation shortcut to important content and helps students with learning disabilities clearly see how course content relates to course expectations.

Set up enumerations in the Content tool's Settings to establish a clear hierarchy in your course content. Well-defined course structure is easier to navigate for screen reader users and learners with learning disabilities.

Make time limits and deadlines flexible

Provide readings well in advance of deadlines so users can work ahead and prepare. Many learners need the extra time to read through content multiple times. If you use release conditions to control when to release course content on a module by module basis, make sure you give learners plenty of time to complete each component.

Provide alternative learning materials

One of the most effective course design decisions you can make to improve engagement is to offer course materials that appeal to more than one sense. For example, the same material can have an audio, video, and text component. This type of redundancy helps engage learners with different learning types, reinforces important concepts, and helps ensure that users with physical disabilities can access content in a suitable format.

Use the Content tool for readings and course material. HTML code is easier for assistive technologies to interpret than application-based files such as Microsoft Word. Follow web standards when creating your content.

If you need to use PDF files for additional content, use optical character recognition (OCR) if you are scanning documents so the text can be read by screen readers. Also consider adding tags to your documents to enable screen reader users to navigate them more easily. For more information about PDF accessibility, go to <http://webaim.org/techniques/acrobat>.

If your readings and lecture materials use many graphics, tables, videos, or audio recordings, provide a text-only alternative. Text-only material should supplement, not replace, other delivery methods. Videos, graphics, and audio files are a great way to generate interest in a topic, present material from different perspectives, and help students with learning disabilities through redundancy. Make the text-only alternatives easy to compile for print so that all learners can use them as study aids at their leisure.

Tips when creating HTML content

Most of the following tips provided are web content standards set by the World Wide Web Consortium in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and should be considered when creating HTML content:

Use a simple layout that does not organize content in tables or columns. Simply organized material is easier for learners to read and understand, is easier for assistive technology to interpret and present, and is easier for mobile and handheld devices to resize.

Use headings to communicate the relationships between sections. Use Heading 1 for the title, Heading 2 for major sections, Heading 3 for subsections, and so on. If headings are used correctly, screen reader users can quickly search a page by heading and participants with cognitive disabilities can understand how sections and content relate easier.

Make sure each heading is unique. Do not use the same text for a Heading 3 (subsection) that you used for your Heading 1 at the start of the document. The same principle applies to file/item names. Make sure each file or item you create has a unique name.

For longer topics, include a table of contents that links to each section and "Back to top" links at the end of each section.

Include alternative text descriptions (alt text) for all graphics. Use double quotes (null) "" as the alt text if the object is a decorative element that does not add meaning. If the graphic is a link, begin the alt text with "Link to". The HTML Editor in Brightspace Learning Environment automatically prompts you to include alt text when you insert an image.

Include detailed captions below tables and graphs. These captions should explain what the objects convey, including important trends and statistics. This will help all learners interpret the objects. For tables, include a caption using the caption element that explains how the table is organized. Check that tables make sense when read from left to right. Screen readers have difficulty conveying information that reads from top to bottom.

Use the same text on-screen and in the alt text for links. Make sure the text describes the action that will occur. Never use text such as "Click Here" as the link. Screen reader users often use a list of links to quickly navigate actions on a page; this is not possible if links are not descriptive.

Include text alternatives of multimedia content, such as audio or video files. If you do not have the time to create a complete text alternative, include a descriptive label that summarizes the content.

Do not use blinking or flashing multimedia as it can cause seizures in individuals with photosensitivity. Use animation when it helps convey a concept and not to draw attention to an unchanging object. Use a combination of size, color, and prominence to draw attention to objects.

Never use only color to convey meaning. If you want to show how concepts and objects relate to each other use a combination of size, color, and text labels.

Ensure there is a strong contrast between the text and background colors used in your course materials.

Use relative font sizes and make sure the text and page layout adjusts when font sizes are changed. Users should not have to scroll horizontally.

If you create PDF documents from Microsoft Word or another word processor, make sure you format titles and sections using headings so they are tagged correctly in the PDF.

If users can use text-to-speech software to read text aloud or highlight text as they go through it, test the software to ensure it functions correctly for specific tools and settings you want to create. For example, disabling right-click in quizzes can prevent some text-to-speech software from tracking text, so try your software to see if you experience similar issues.

Take advantage of D2L-compatible tools, such as ReadSpeaker, Visual course widget, and audio topics.

D2L recommends that instructors and instructional designers who want to make good default choices for learners with dyslexia read [Dyslexia Style Guide 2018: Creating Dyslexia Friendly Content](#) from the British Dyslexia Association. Browser extensions such as [OpenDyslexic Font for Chrome](#) are also available for learners with dyslexia.

What kinds of files can I use for course content?

Instructors can upload a wide variety of document, image, and video file types to use for course content. Learners view the files inline; however, they can also download and/or print the files, if they have the appropriate permissions. For more information, contact your administrator.

To display documents inline, the Document Conversion Service converts documents uploaded to the Content tool into PDFs. The documents are converted during upload instead of during learner access, which reduces wait times when rendering the

documents to learners. For best performance, D2L recommends uploading all non-HTML documents as PDF files, since PDF files do not go through the conversion process. When learners download documents, they are saved in their native file formats.

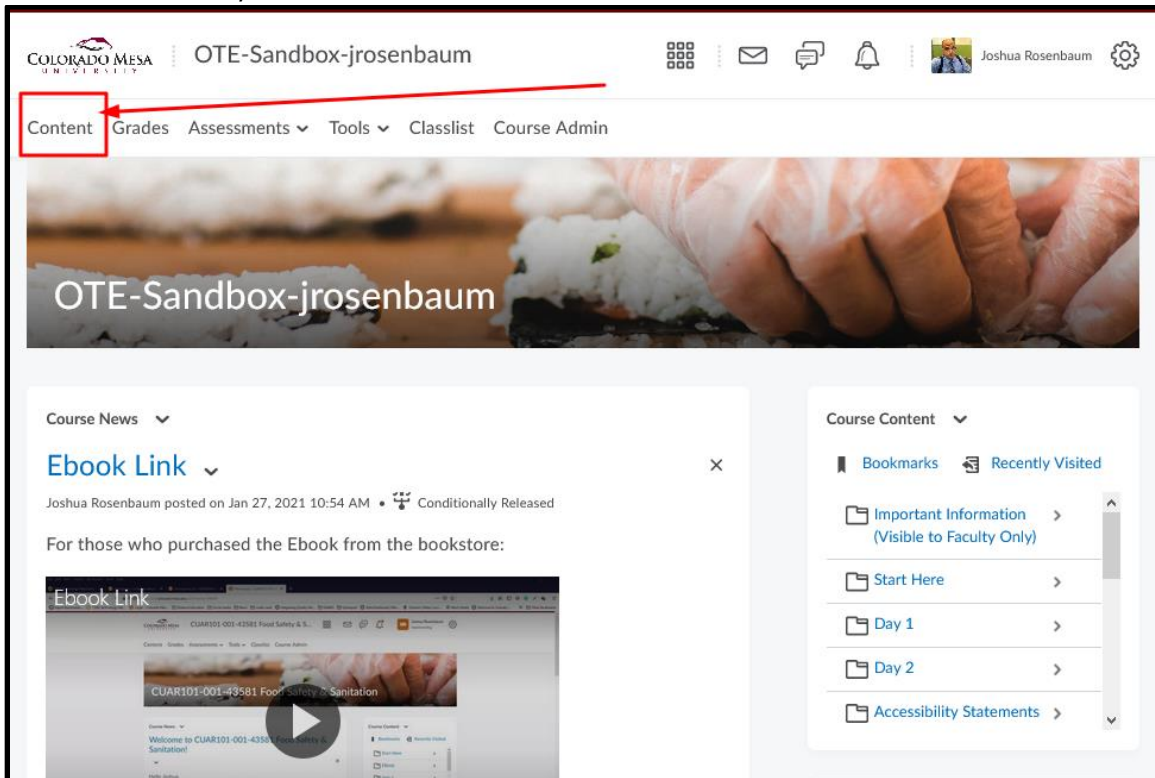
Extension	File Type	Notes
HTM, HTML, MHT, MHTML	Web document	Brightspace Learning Environment strips the <title> tag and text within the tag from user created web documents
RTF, PPT, PPS, PDF, DOC, DOCX, PPTX, XML, XLS, TXT, WPD, XLSX, XLS	Text document	When embedded in Content, PowerPoint presentations that contain animations do not play; however, downloading the PowerPoint presentations saves them in their native file format, allowing the animations to play
JPG, JPEG, PNG, GIF, BMP, TIF, TIFF	Image	
SWF, MPG, MPEG, RM, MP3, MP4, M4V, M4A, AVI, WAV, RAM, ASF, MOV, RA	Media	The extensions MP4, M4V, and M4A allow users to drag entire albums, video podcasts, and movies from iTunes

Create a New Module

To create a new module

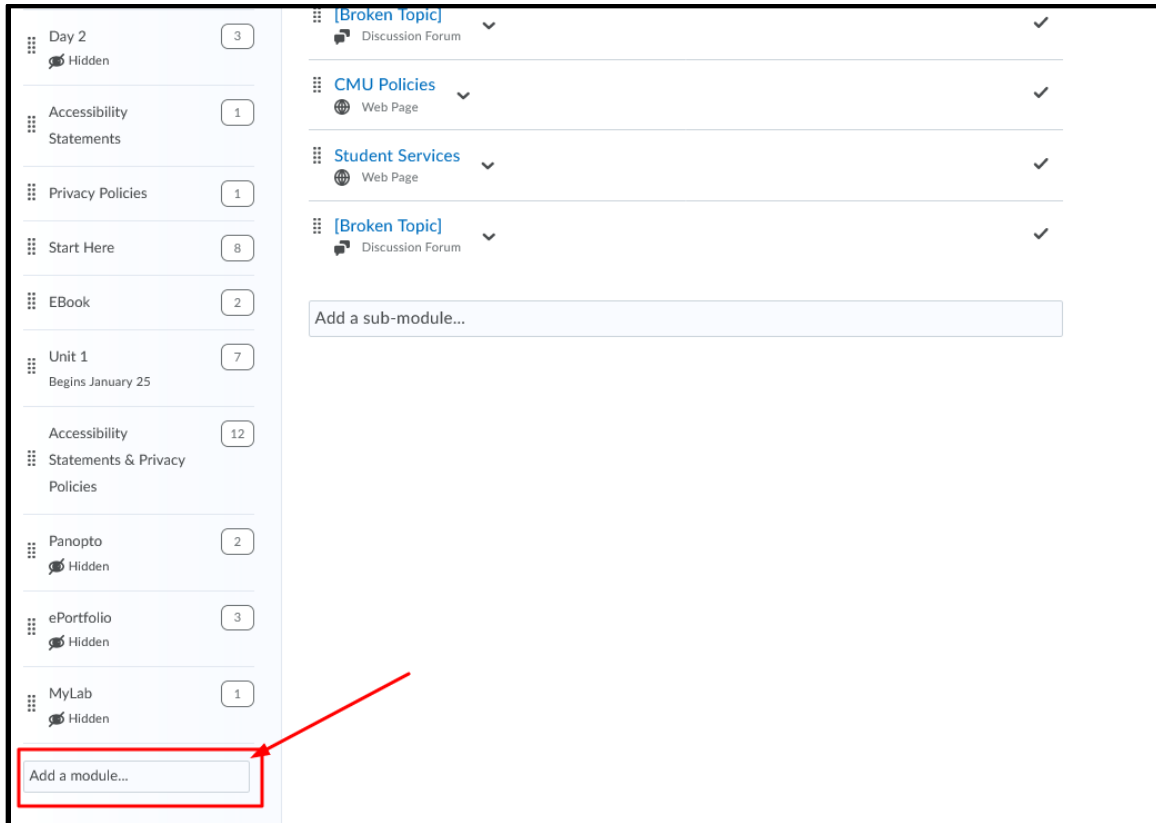
You must create a module before you can add topics. You can create submodules (modules within existing modules) to establish a deeper hierarchy.

1. On the navbar, click Content.



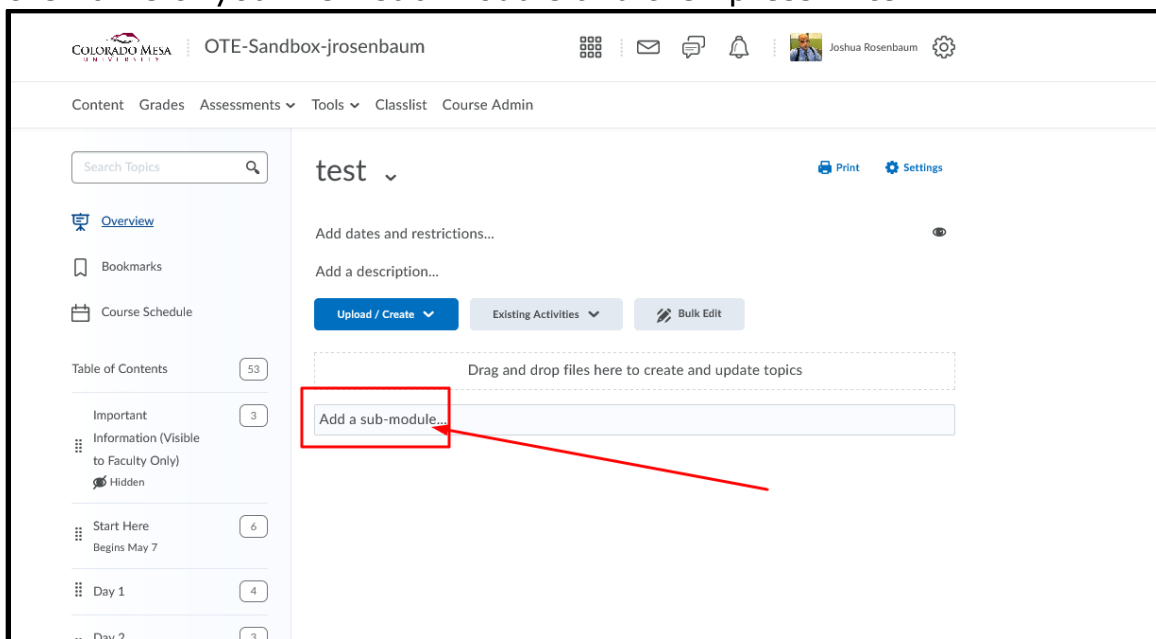
The screenshot shows the LMS interface for the course 'OTE-Sandbox-jrosenbaum'. The top navigation bar (navbar) contains the following items: 'Content', 'Grades', 'Assessments', 'Tools', 'Classlist', and 'Course Admin'. The 'Content' item is highlighted with a red box, and a red arrow points to it from the right. Below the navbar is a banner image with the text 'OTE-Sandbox-jrosenbaum'. The main content area is divided into two panels. The left panel, titled 'Course News', shows a post titled 'Ebook Link' by Joshua Rosenbaum, dated Jan 27, 2021, 10:54 AM, with a 'Conditionally Released' status. The post text says 'For those who purchased the Ebook from the bookstore:' and includes a video player thumbnail for 'CUAR101-001-43581 Food Safety & Sanitation'. The right panel, titled 'Course Content', shows a 'Table of Contents' with the following items: 'Important Information (Visible to Faculty Only)', 'Start Here', 'Day 1', 'Day 2', and 'Accessibility Statements'.

2. In the Table of Contents panel, in the Add a module field, enter the name of your new module and then press Enter.



The screenshot shows a course management interface. On the left is a sidebar with a list of modules, each with a three-dot menu icon and a count in a circle. The modules are: Day 2 (3), Hidden, Accessibility Statements (1), Privacy Policies (1), Start Here (8), EBook (2), Unit 1 Begins January 25 (7), Accessibility Statements & Privacy Policies (12), Panopto Hidden (2), ePortfolio Hidden (3), and MyLab Hidden (1). At the bottom of the sidebar is a red-bordered box containing the text "Add a module...". A red arrow points from this box to the "Add a sub-module..." field in the main content area. The main content area shows a list of sub-modules: "[Broken Topic] Discussion Forum" (checked), "CMU Policies Web Page" (checked), "Student Services Web Page" (checked), and "[Broken Topic] Discussion Forum" (checked). Below this list is a light blue input field with the text "Add a sub-module...".

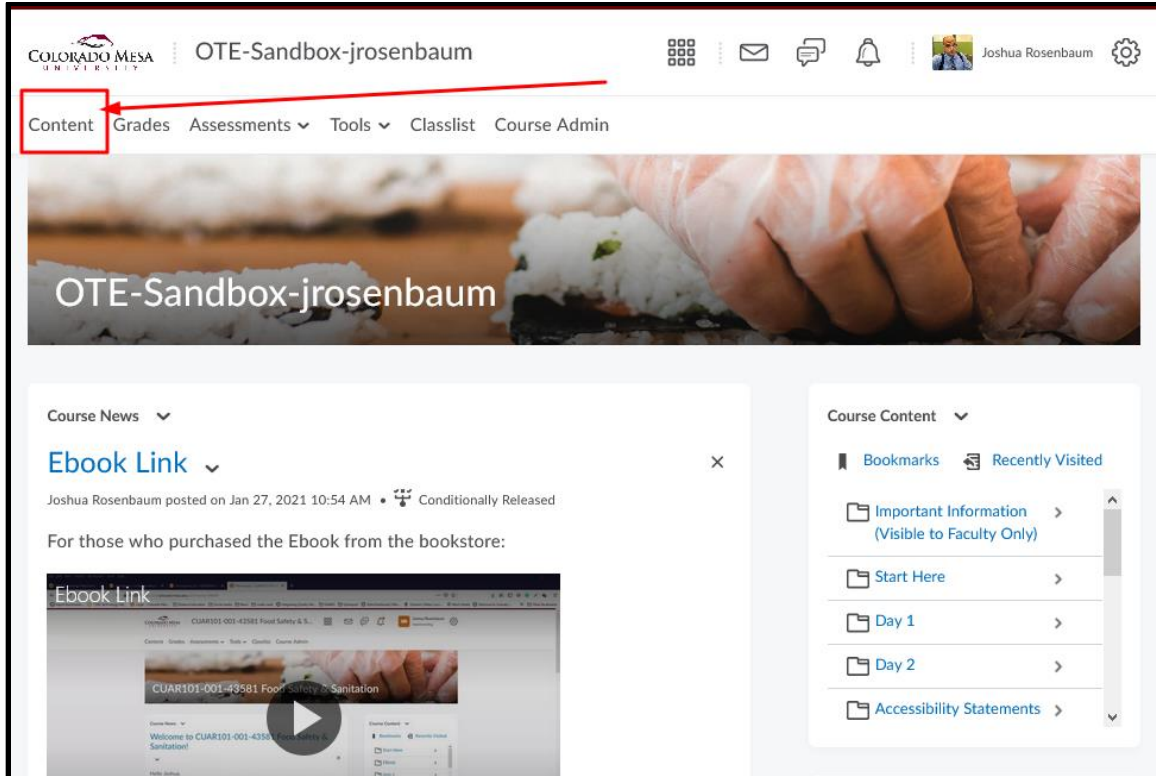
3. To add a submodule, click into the module. In the Add a sub-module field, enter the name of your new sub-module and then press Enter.



The screenshot shows a course management interface for a course titled "OTE-Sandbox-jrosenbaum". The top navigation bar includes "Content", "Grades", "Assessments", "Tools", "Classlist", and "Course Admin". The user's name "Joshua Rosenbaum" is visible in the top right. The main content area is titled "test" and has a search bar, "Print", and "Settings" options. Below the title are fields for "Add dates and restrictions..." and "Add a description...". There are three buttons: "Upload / Create", "Existing Activities", and "Bulk Edit". Below these buttons is a dashed box with the text "Drag and drop files here to create and update topics". At the bottom of this dashed box is a red-bordered box containing the text "Add a sub-module...". A red arrow points from this box to the "Add a sub-module..." field in the main content area. The sidebar on the left shows a "Table of Contents" with 53 items, including "Important Information (Visible to Faculty Only) Hidden" (3), "Start Here Begins May 7" (6), "Day 1" (4), and "Day 2" (3).

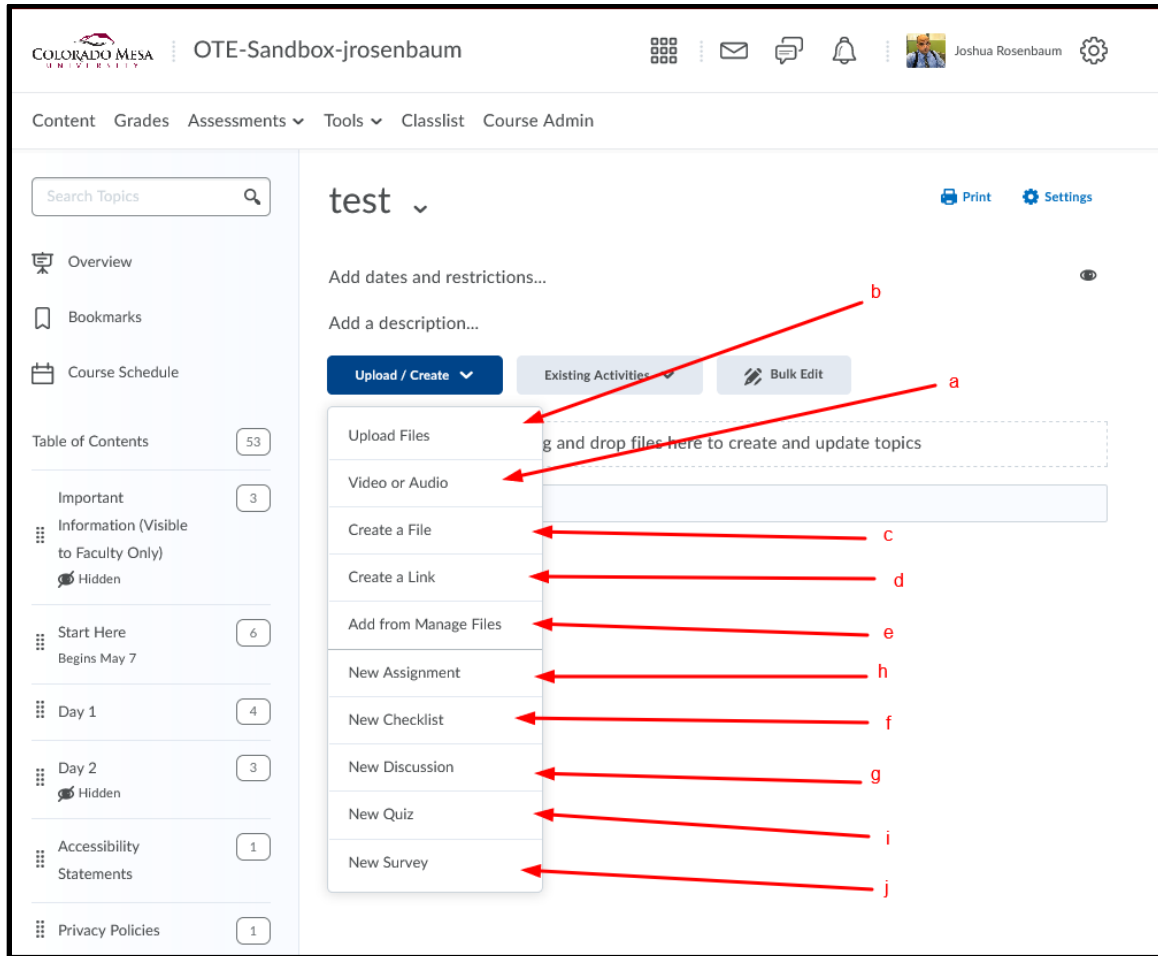
Create a New Topic

1. On the navbar, click Content.



2. In the Table of Contents panel, click on the module in which you want to create a new topic.
3. From the Upload/Create drop-down menu do one of the following:
 - a. To add a video or audio topic, click Video or Audio.
 - b. To add existing files from your computer, course offering files, or Shared Files area, click Upload Files.
 - c. To add a new file, click Create a File.
 - d. To add a link, click Create a Link.

Note: It is recommended that all link topics open as an external resource to prevent any unexpected security conflicts.
 - e. To add existing files from Manage Files, click Add from Manage Files.
 - f. To add a new checklist, click New Checklist.
 - g. To add a new discussion topic, click New Discussion.
 - h. To add a new assignment, click New Assignment.
 - i. To add a new quiz, click New Quiz.
 - j. To add a new survey, click New Survey.

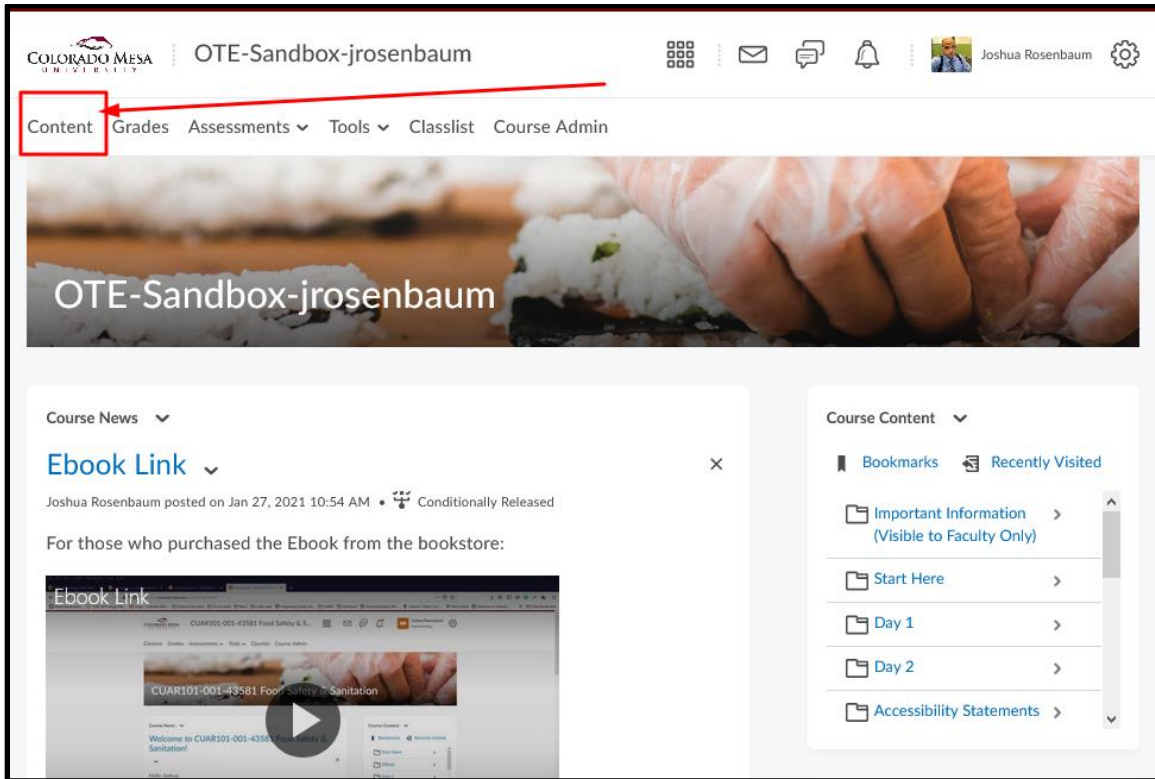


4. Follow the prompts on the screen to modify your new topic.

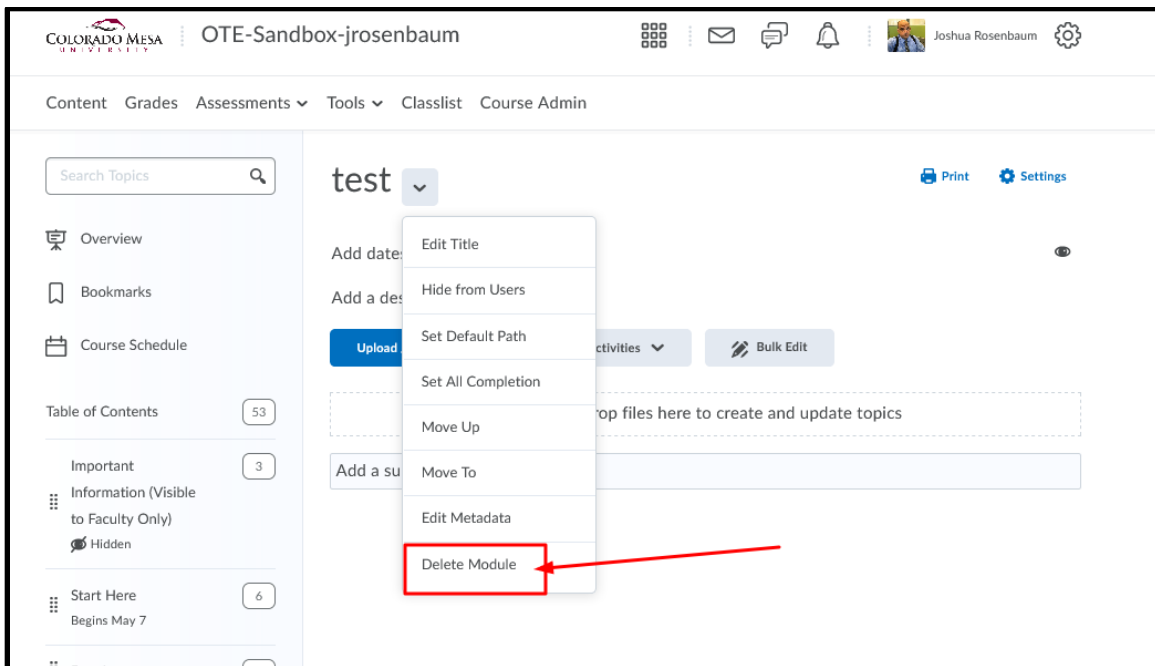
Delete a Module or Topic

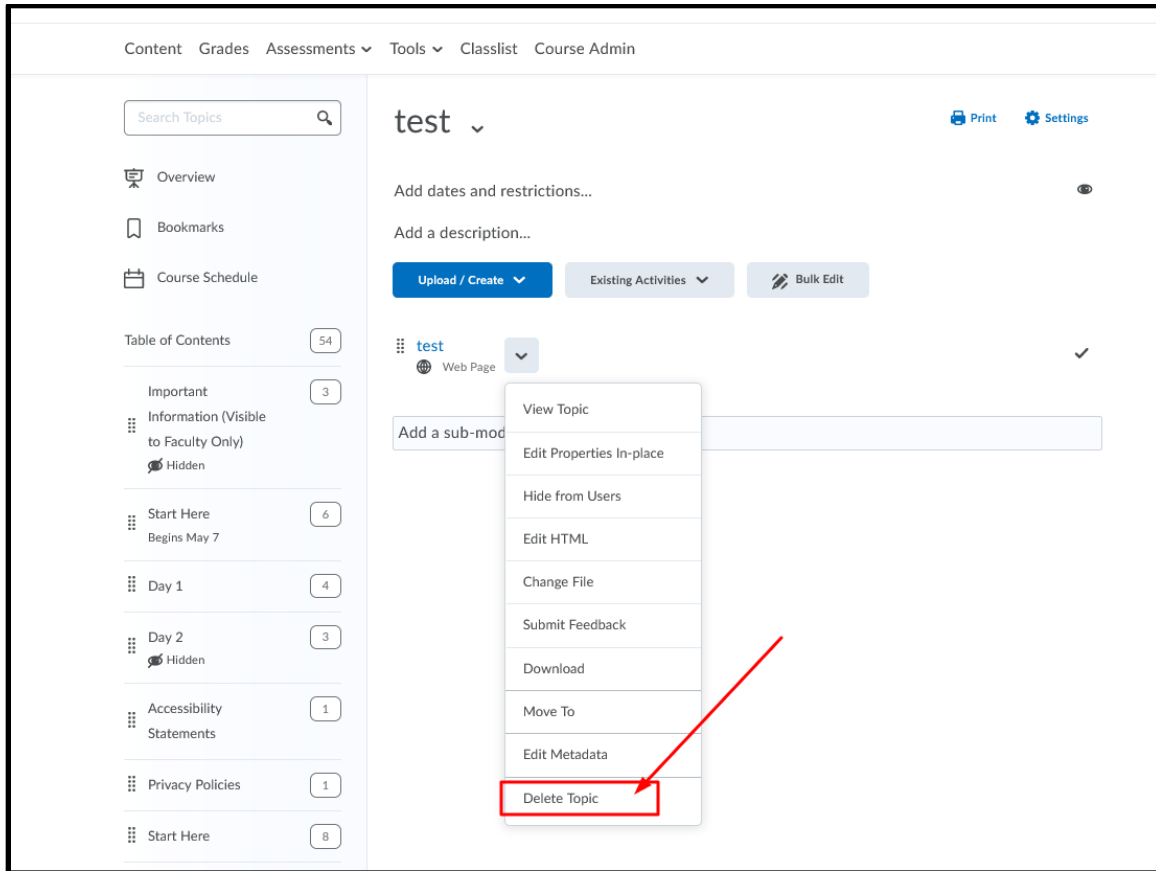
Note: Deleting a module deletes all topics within that module.

1. On the navbar, click **Content**.

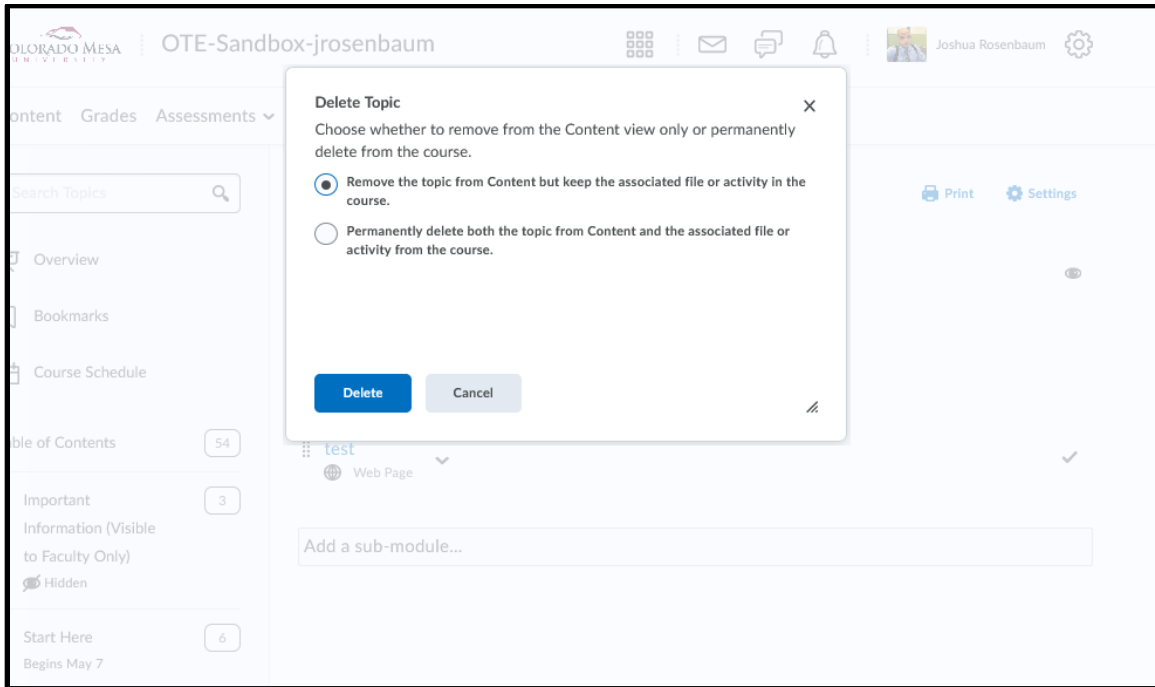


2. In the **Table of Contents** panel, click the module or topic you want to delete.
3. If you are deleting a module, click **Delete Module** from the module's context menu. If you are deleting a topic, click **Delete Topic** from the topic's context menu.

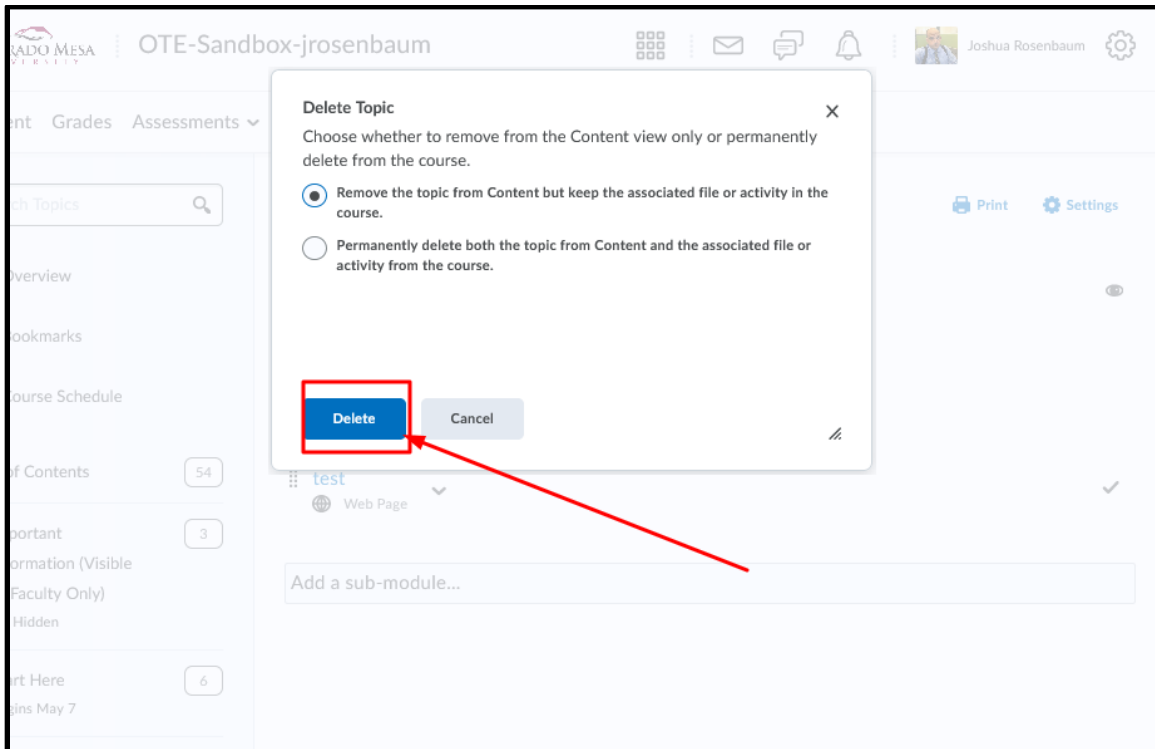




4. Decide whether you want to remove the module or topic from the Content view only or permanently delete the module or topic from the course (this will also delete all associated objects including discussions, quizzes, etc).

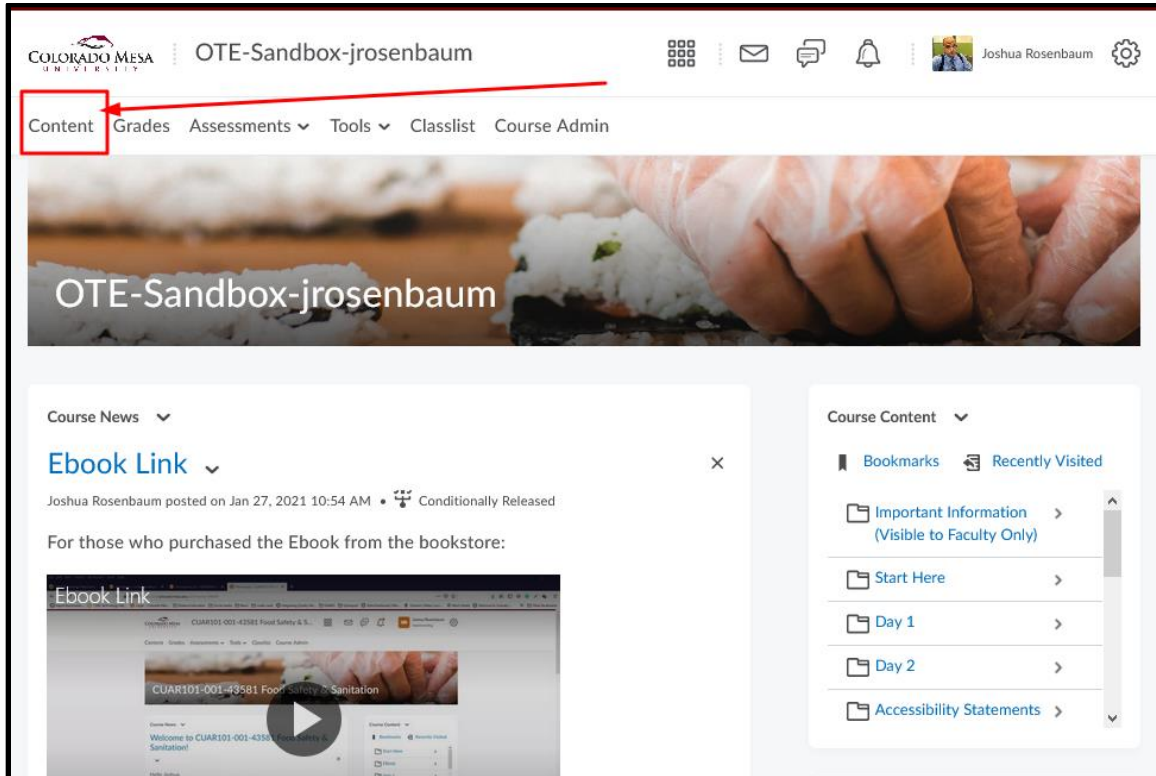


5. Click **Delete**.

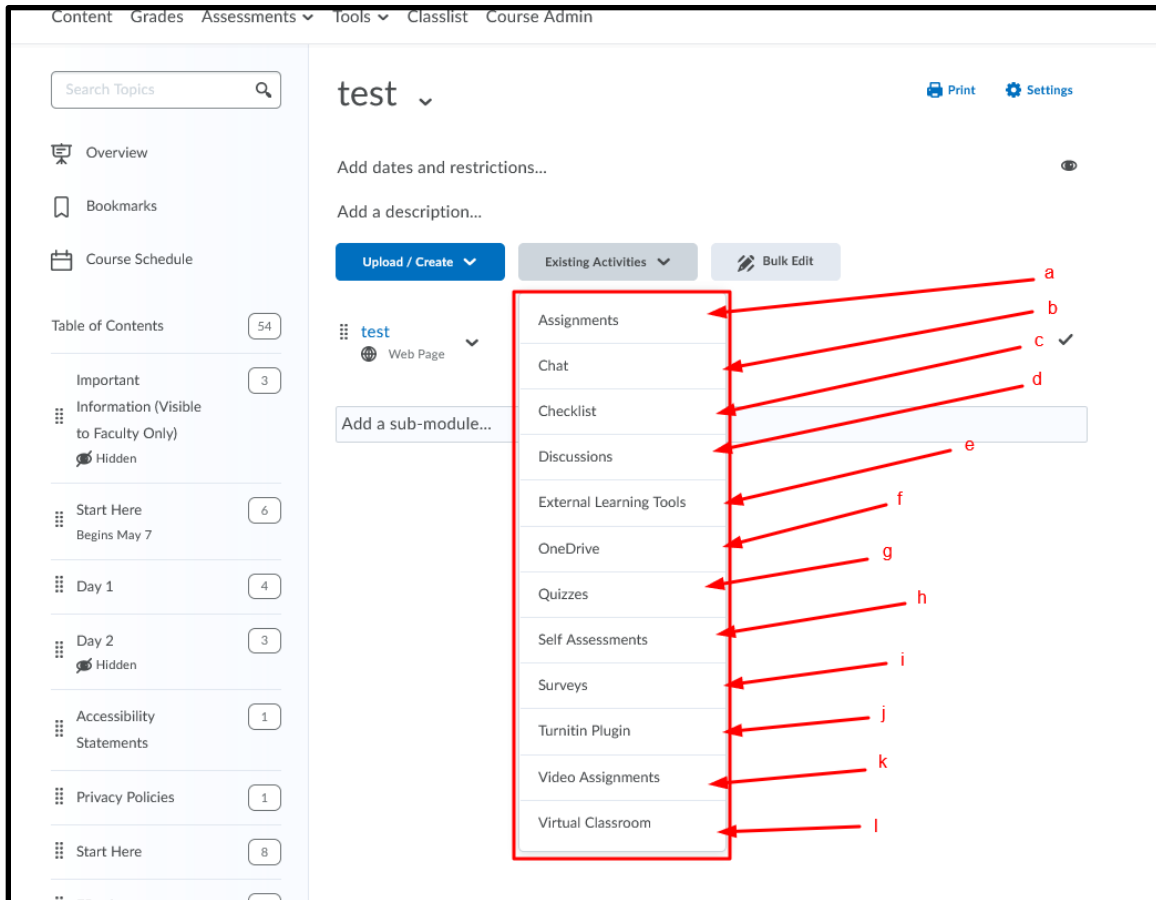


Add an Existing Course Object to Content

1. On the navbar, click Content.

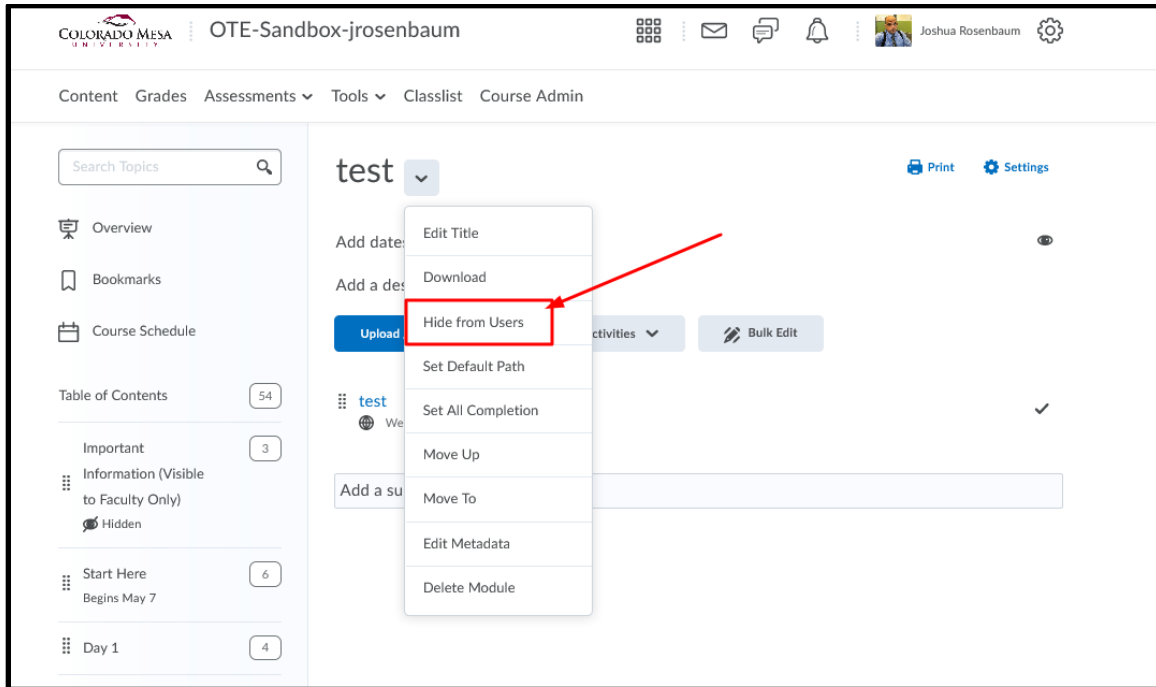


2. On the Table of Contents page, for the module you want to add a course object to, click Existing Activities and do one of the following:
 - a. To add an existing assignment, click Assignments
 - b. To add an existing chat, click Chat.
 - c. To add an existing checklist, click Checklist.
 - d. To add an existing discussion topic, click Discussions.
 - e. To add an existing external learning tool, click External Learning Tools.
 - f. To add a link to OneDrive, click OneDrive.
 - g. To add an existing quiz, click Quizzes.
 - h. To add an existing self assessment, click Self Assessments.
 - i. To add an existing survey, click Surveys.
 - j. To add a Turnitin Plugin, click Turnitin Plugin
 - k. To add a Video Assignment, click Video Assignment
 - l. To add a link to a Virtual Classroom, click Virtual Classroom



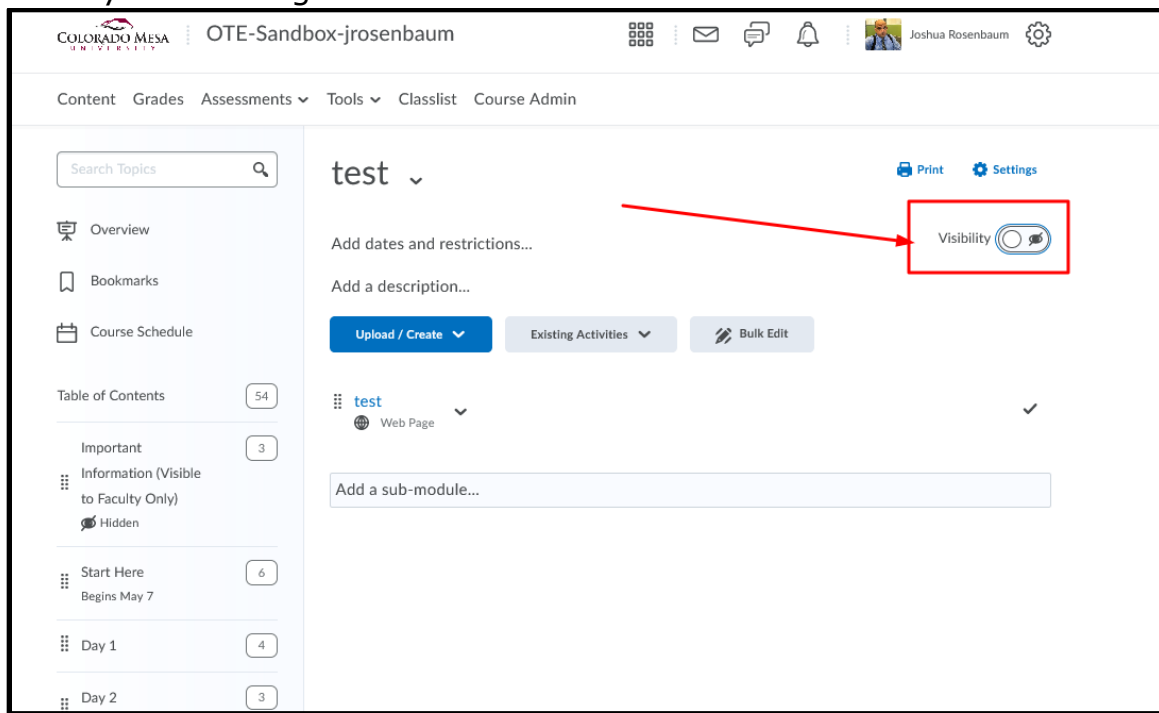
Hide Content topics and modules

1. Open the context menu of the topic or module you want to hide.
2. Select **Hide from Users**.



OR


1. Select the visibility icon for the topic or module. A visibility toggle appears to allow you to change between **Visible** and **Hidden**.



The visibility status of a topic appears when the topic is not visible, when the table of contents is in bulk edit mode, or when a topic is in edit-in-place mode. The

table of contents fly-out menu no longer provides the ability to switch the visibility of a topic or module. If a topic or module is already hidden, the hidden icon indicates its status. Open the context menu and select **Make Visible to Users** to allow user access. When creating activities from Content, (e.g. New Checklist, New Discussion, New Assignment, etc.) a **Hide from Users** checkbox displays below the title to allow instructors to easily control the visibility of the new activity.

Managing course content using Drag and Drop

In the Content tool, you can arrange your course content by dragging and dropping modules and topics using the module or topic's drag handle ().

If you drag a module or topic above or below other modules and topics, a gray line appears to indicate you can drop the module or topic there. If you drag a module or topic over another module, the module appears orange to indicate you can drop it there.

You can also automatically update your existing files by dragging the newest version of your file from your computer into the appropriate module. When a module contains no topics, an upload target displays. If you drag a file over an upload target, that area appears orange to indicate you can drop it there. When a module contains topics, you can still drag a file into it. A horizontal line indicates where the file will be dropped, allowing you to create new topics between pre-existing ones. You can also drop files from your computer directly into the Table of Contents panel.

When you drag files from your computer into a module's upload target to add or update topics, the files will save in the Manage Files tool. A dialog prompt will appear asking you where in Manage Files you want to save the new file.

Internet Explorer 9 and older currently do not support dragging and dropping files from your desktop into Brightspace Learning Environment.

Why can't learners see the Content I posted?

If learners indicate that they can't see a Content Module or Topic that you posted, review the following settings for that Content Module/Topic:

1. From the course homepage, click Content.
2. Select the Content module/sub-module from the contents section. If learners can't see a content topic, click the topic's context menu and select Edit Properties.
3. Click Add dates and restrictions.
4. Review the following:

- a. Ensure that the start and end dates set on the Content Module / Topic are accurate.
If there is a start or end date set on the Content module / topic that wasn't intended, remove the dates filled in the Start Date and End Date fields so that they are blank.
- b. Under Release Conditions, ensure that the release conditions set on the Content Module / Topic are accurate.
If there are release conditions set that weren't intended, remove the release conditions by clicking the Delete icon.
If the start date, end date, and release conditions are set accurately, and learners still can't view the Content module / topic, then the reason the learners cannot view the Content is due to them not having met the release conditions to be able to view the Content.