

# Memorandum

**To:** Faculty  
**From:** Ronald J. Colombo, Professor of Law and Associate Dean for Distance Education  
**Subject:** Canvas Resources  
**Date:** April 5, 2023

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This memo provides a list of resources to help you familiarize yourself with Canvas – the learning management system (“LMS”) adopted by Hofstra University for use starting Fall 2023.

Please retain it for future reference. (If possible, please file it away somewhere as an electronic document so the links contained herein will continue to work for you!)

## Background

Effective Fall 2023, Canvas will be completely replacing Blackboard, the University’s previous LMS.

TWEN, Westlaw’s online LMS, is unaffected by this transition and remains an available option. That said, please bear in mind that:

- (1) TWEN does not integrate with Hofstra’s IT systems;
- (2) TWEN’s functionality is limited and stagnant; and
- (3) Westlaw’s commitment to maintaining TWEN is uncertain.

## Upcoming Training

As previously announced, a special Canvas training session (customized for the Law School faculty) will be held live via Zoom on April 10<sup>th</sup>. Please make an effort to attend that session, or at least to view a recording of it.

Additionally, University-wide Canvas training sessions are taking place throughout this semester. Please consider attending to further solidify your grasp of this new technology.

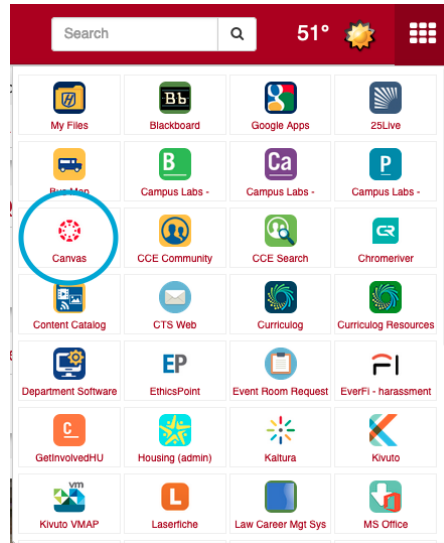
## On-Demand Canvas Instructional Course

A lengthy but well-done course on Canvas is already available to everyone who wishes to take it. The course can be accessed via the Hofstra Portal as follows:

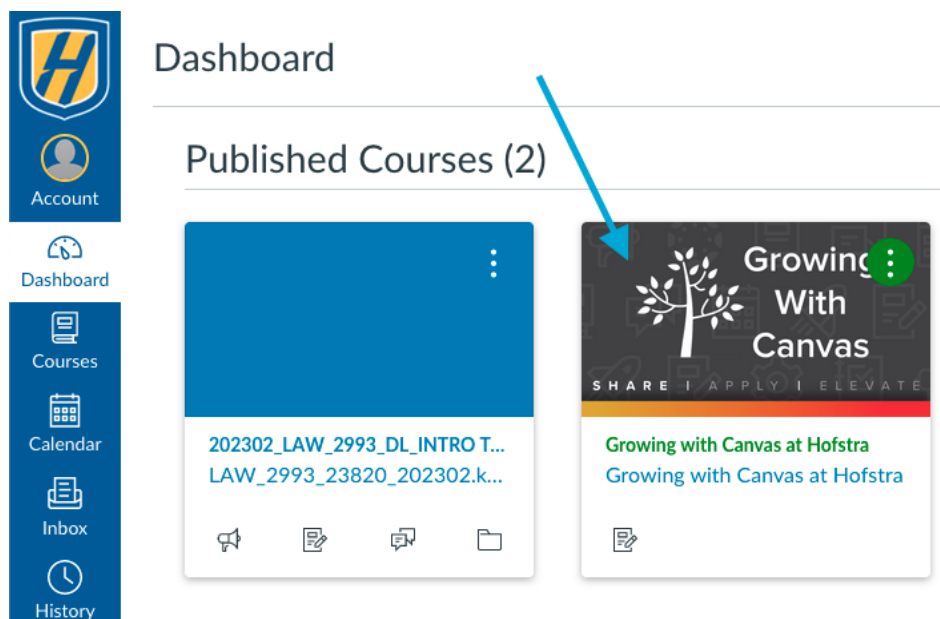
1. Click on the “My Apps” icon in the upper right-hand corner



2. Select the “Canvas” app



3. Your Canvas “Dashboard” should appear. Under “Published Courses,” you should see a course box entitled “Growing With Canvas.” Clicking on this course opens it up.



As of this writing, the “Growing with Canvas” course has six modules: Introduction, Planting, Nurturing, Sprouting, Flowering, Harvesting. Although not all will be applicable to every faculty member, I would strongly encourage you to go methodically through them all. This will probably take several sittings, as the course consists of a few hours of material. *That said, I think it is far better for you to go through the entire course, skimming or skipping material that you recognize as irrelevant, than not being exposed to it at all.* It would be very good for you to be introduced to, even if only fleetingly, the LMS’s various functionalities features.

Be forewarned: at times the course will require you to submit an assignment in order to continue. In all cases, this obstacle can be overcome by entering a one-word response in the supplied text-entry box.

### **À la carte training and resources**

For those who do not have the time to complete the entire “Growing With Canvas” course, or for those who need a refresher, an incredibly comprehensive library of short instructional videos can be found here:

[Video Guide - Instructure Community \(canvaslms.com\)](https://canvaslms.com)

These videos are organized, of this writing, into seven categories:

- [Video Collections](#)
- [All User Videos](#)
- [Student Videos](#)
- [Instructor Videos](#)
- [Observer Videos](#)
- [Admin Videos](#)
- [Canvas Studio Videos](#)

I would recommend that *everyone* review the “All User Videos” (there are only six of these, and they cover basic Canvas features and settings).

Thereafter, I would suggest that folks select from among the 30 “Instructor Videos” available, depending upon their needs and interests. To help you make your selections, I have divided instructors into two groups: (1) those who will be using Canvas the way most of us use/have used TWEN: for basic course administration, such as distributing materials, making announcements, facilitating office hours appointments, and (2) those who will be using Canvas to teach an online course (in which case familiarity with additional functionality, such as creating assignments and grading, will have to be mastered).

For instructors who will be using Canvas like TWEN (that is for basic course administration), the following videos are recommended:

- Canvas Overview for Instructors  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/69658934>
- Files Overview  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/71138019>
- People Overview  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/79434446>
- Announcements Overview  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/72222376>
- Course Home Page Customization  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/72433450>
- Course Creation  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/76384788>
- Calendar Overview  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/78093181>
- Course Settings Overview  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/79690358>
- Syllabus  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/575881057>

For instructors who will be using Canvas to teach an online course, the following videos, at a minimum, are recommended:

- All of the videos listed above (“Canvas Overview for Instructors,” etc.)
- Assignments Overview  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/71970884>
- Discussions Overview  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/108385146>
- Quizzes Overview  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/72004689>
- Modules Overview  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/72433830>
- Gradebook Overview  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/332005934>
- SpeedGrader Overview  
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/72662612>

Additionally, Canvas has a comprehensive and well-organized instructor guide available here:

[Instructor Guide - Instructure Community \(canvaslms.com\)](https://community.canvaslms.com/instructors)

The Instructor Guide provides clear, illustrated, step-by-step instructions for pretty much anything and everything you can do within Canvas.

## **Live Support Options**

Within your Canvas Dashboard, on the left-hand side of the screen, you'll see a "Help" icon. This pulls up other help resources, including Chat options (exclusive for faculty versus students), and a telephone hotline (1-877-241-4253). Each are active 24/7. I have utilized both options and am happy to report that (1) wait times were minimal, and (2) the technicians successfully and quickly resolved my issue each time. I certainly hope that this good first impression is representative of the service we will all receive going forward.

Finally, as someone who has been working with Canvas a little bit longer than most of us here (since Fall 2022), I am happy to make myself available to help anyone with Canvas to the best I can.