



Create and Link Discussion Categories

Introduction

Discussion Categories allow you to create and group related discussion topics together. For example, if your course design includes two or more discussion topics within a module, week or unit, you use Discussion Categories to keep the discussions organized.

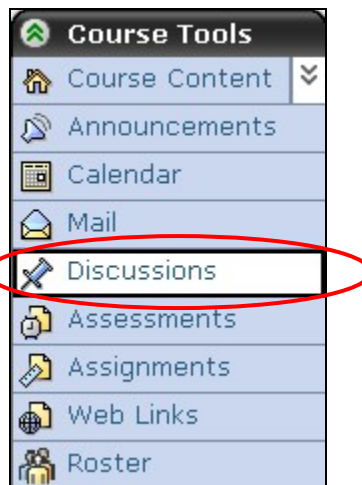
Once created, you can link an entire category, along with all of the individual discussion topics, to a folder or subfolder created on your course homepage. Keep in mind that you can move existing discussion topics into Discussion Categories after they have been created.

Create a Discussion Category

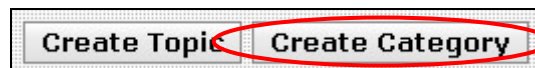
Step 1: To begin, click on the **Build** tab after you have logged into your course.



Step 2: Next, click **Discussions** from the *Course Tools* menu.



Step 3: Click **Create Category**. The *Create Category* page will appear.



Step 4: Enter the **Category Title** in the field provided. In this example, we will enter the title Module 1.

Create Category

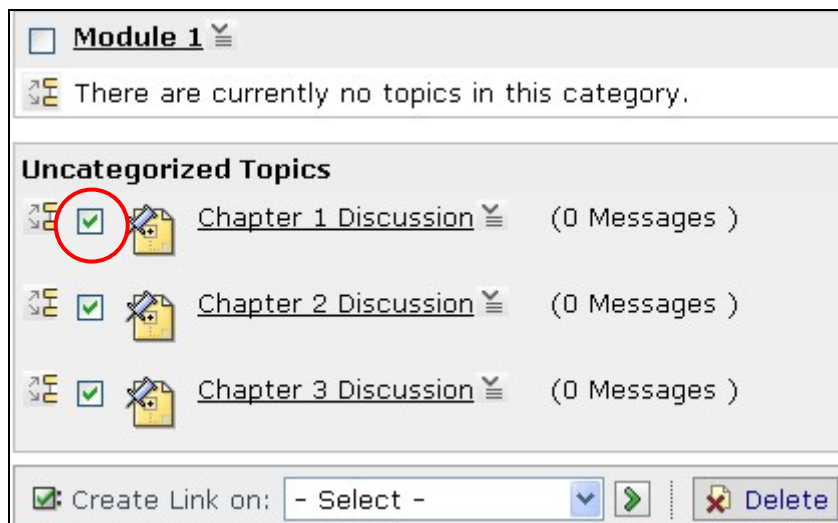
*Title:

Step 5: Click **Save** when finished.

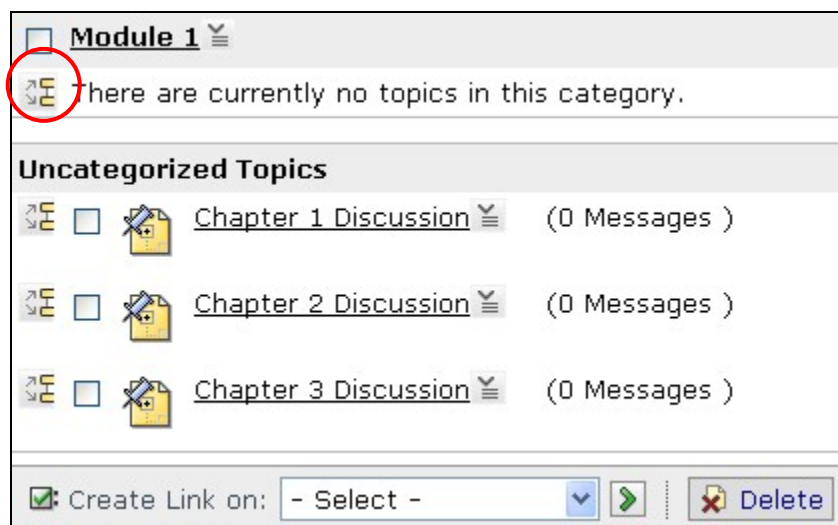
You will receive confirmation that the items were created.



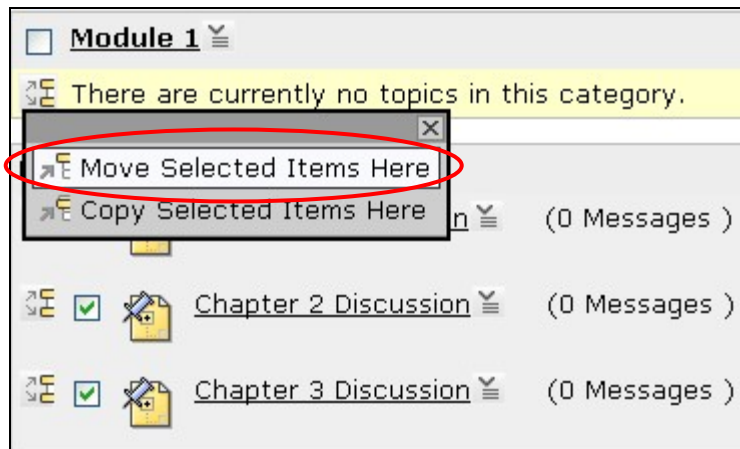
Step 6: From the *Discussions* page, select the **checkbox** corresponding with the Discussion(s) that you would like to add to the Category. In this example, we will add three discussions (Chapter 1, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3) previously created to *Module 1 Category*.



Step 7: Click the **Selected Item** option. A drop down list will appear.

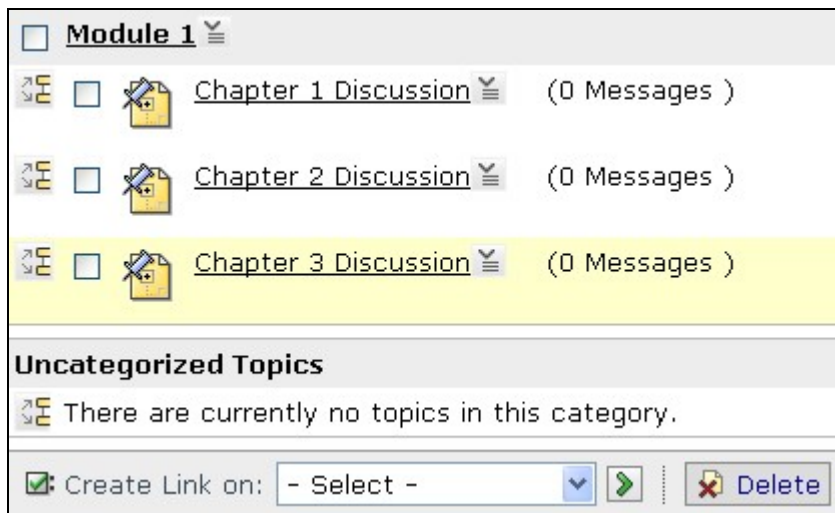


Step 8: Using the drop down menu, click **Move Selected Items Here**. This option allows you to move the selected discussions into the category you created.



*Note: Selecting the option **Copy Selected Items Here**, allows you to move a copy of the selected discussions to the category you created.*

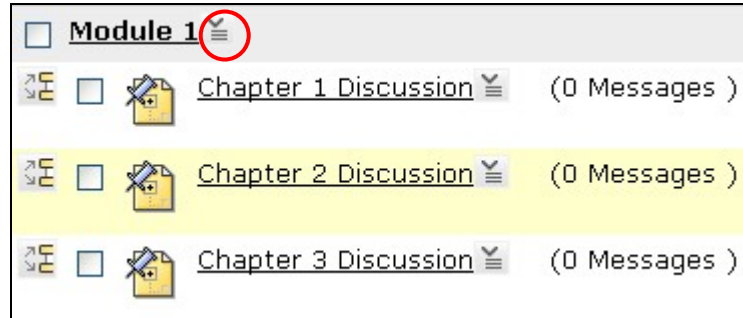
The discussion topics will appear within the Category you selected.



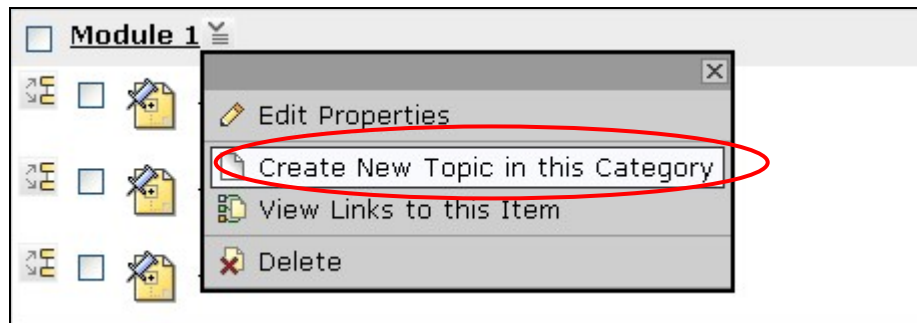
Create New Discussion Topic in a Category

Now that you have learned how to move existing discussion topics into a category, we will now demonstrate how to create a new discussion topic from within a category.

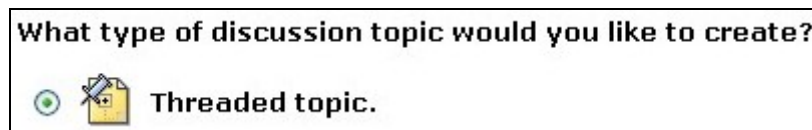
Step 1: Click the **Action Link** for the category you created. In this example, we will select *Module 1*. A drop down menu will appear.



Step 2: Click **Create New Topic in this Category**. The *Create Discussion Topic* page will appear.



Step 3: Select the type of discussion topic that you want to create. A detailed description of each type of discussion topic appears below each option. In this example, we will select a **Threaded topic** (default selection).



Step 4: Click **Next** to continue.

Step 5: Enter a **Title** in the field provided.



Think of each topic as its own “room” where students actively participate in a discussion facilitated by you. Discussion questions should stimulate meaningful dialogue at two levels; student to student as well as student and instructor.

Step 6: Enter the **Description** of the discussion topic in the field provided.

Description: Enable HTML Creator

Enter the description here.

Use HTML

Item Visibility: Show Item
 Hide Item

It is important to include any and all logistical information, instructions, guidelines and deadlines in this area so that your students are aware of your expectations.

Step 7: Next, select the **Numeric grade** option and **enter the possible grade** in the field provided. In this example, we will enter 100.

Allow the topic to be graded

Numeric grade: Out of

Step 8: Modify the **Grade book column Title as needed.**

A column is automatically created for this topic in Grade Book

Grade Book column title:

Release grade to Students in *My Grades*

Note: Consider using a shortened grade book column title so that you can view more columns within the grade book view of the course.

Step 9: Select **Release grade to Students in My Grades.** This allows students to be able to view their own grade.

Release grade to Students in *My Grades*

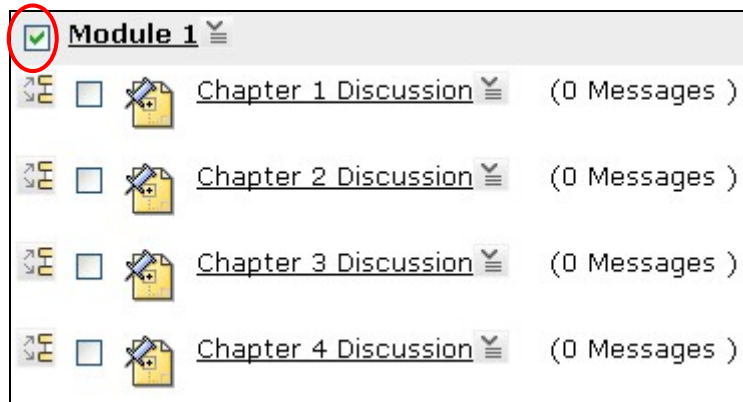
Step 10: Click **Save** when finished. You will return to the Discussions page where you will see the discussion topic that you have created within the Category.



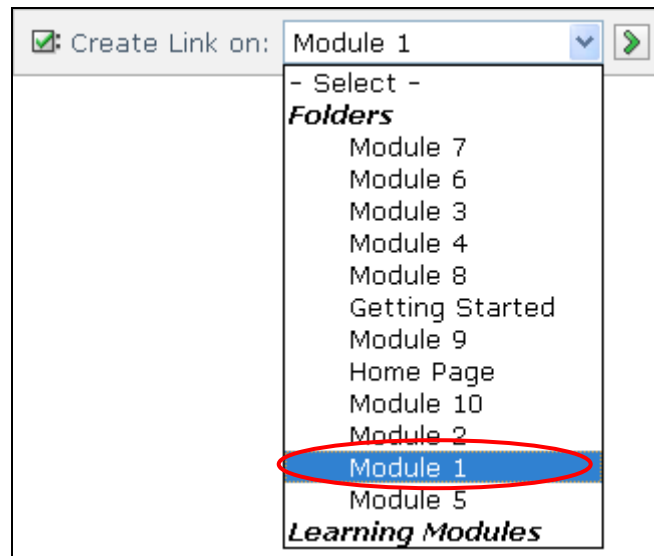
Link a Category

In this section, you will learn how to create a category link to a folder you have created on the course homepage. This option allows you to link all the discussion topics created in the category at once rather than linking the discussion topics one at a time.

Step 1: From the *Discussion* page, select the **checkbox** corresponding with the category that you want to link.



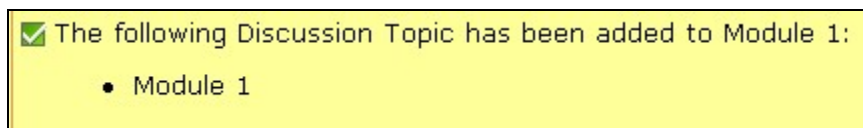
Step 2: Next, use the drop down menu located at the bottom of the screen to select the desired folder (assuming that you have already created your course folder structure) to link your category. In this example, we will select the *Module 1* folder.



Step 3: Click the **Green (Go) arrow** when finished.

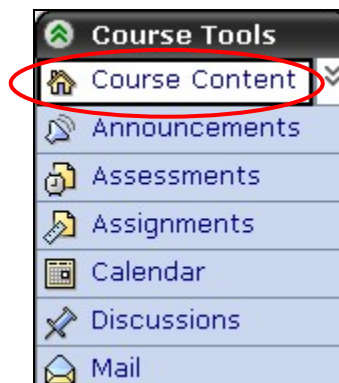


You will receive confirmation that the following discussion topic was added to the selected folder.

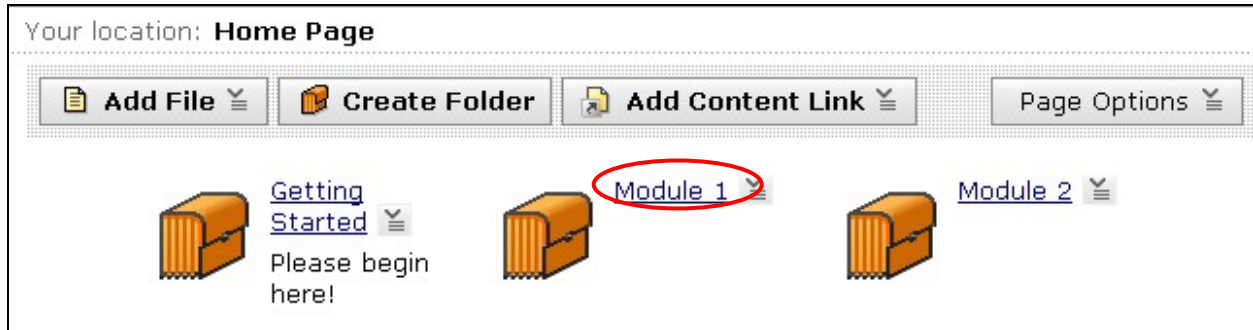


For some, you may want to confirm that this process worked properly... If so, follow these steps.

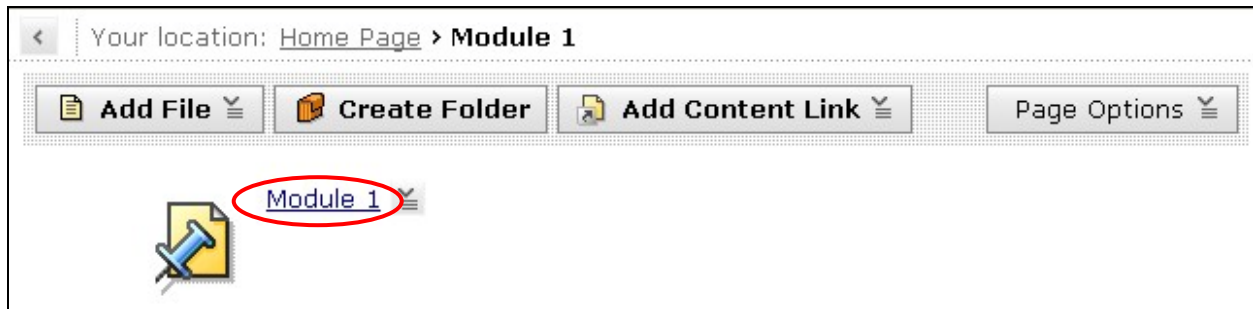
Step 4: From the *Course Tools* menu, click on the **Course Content** link to return to the course home page.



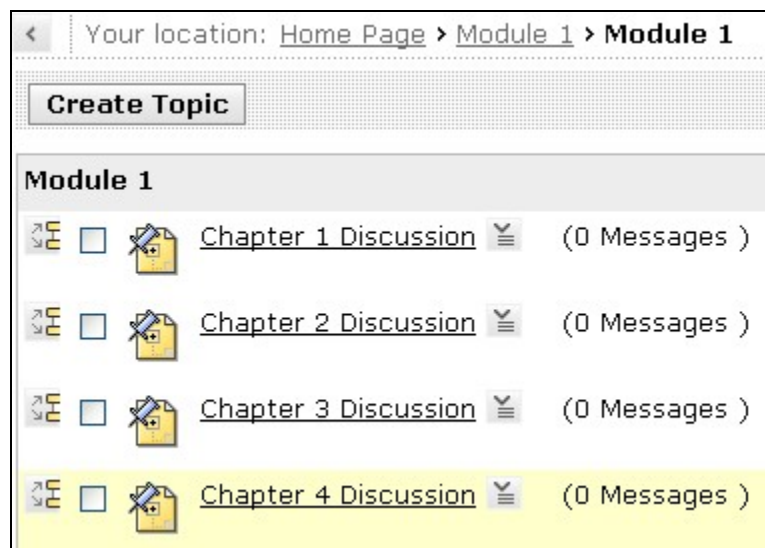
Step 5: From the course home page, click on the **name of the folder** you want to access. In this example, we will select the folder titled *Module 1*.



Step 6: Once inside the folder, you will see the link to the Discussion. To view all of the discussions topics within the category, click on the category **title**.



Notice that the Category contains all of the discussion topics that you have created.



Conclusion

We hope this guide was helpful.

For more information about online course development, please visit the TLiTC or contact us via email at tlitc@bhcc.mass.edu.