

## Notes on Web Assign

### INSTRUCTOR'S ACCOUNT

- To open an instructor's account, go to: <http://www.webassign.net>
- The recommended user name is your Net ID (the one that you log on to iLearn with). However, I was also informed by the technical staff that you can use any user name, as long as your Blackboard name is your Net ID.
- Halfway through the sign-up page there is a section on Blackboard link. Be sure to complete that section and use your Net ID as your Blackboard link.

### CREATE COURSE

- To create your course, click on the "Create Course" link on the top of the page.
- The student fees option should be "Student Access Codes".
- The "Course Visible Date" should be the first day of class or maybe even a later date than that. This is the date that the 14-day free trial for the students begins. Say, for example, the first day of class is a Friday, and you won't assign any HW till next week, you may want your "Course Visible Date" to be next Monday or later.
- Select your textbook and click the "certify" box.
- Select the other options that you like. Most of this page is self-explanatory. Personally, I disable private messages and extension requests. Remember to click SAVE COURSE before you exit.

### LINK COURSE TO iLEARN

- To link your course to iLearn, log on to iLearn, then go to your course. Go to the Control Panel, then under "Course Tools" click "Web Assign".
- FIRST: Link the course by clicking "Link".
- THEN: Click on the link "Sync the roster".
- Your iLearn roster is now your Web Assign roster.
- *Note that this only syncs it ONCE.* As students drop or enroll, you'll need to sync it again. So you may want to do this often during the beginning of a quarter.

### STUDENTS' ACCESS

- The students will enter Web Assign via a link on iLearn under "Student Tools", near the bottom of the page. Be sure to let your students know about this.
- Instructors can enter Web Assign via this link too. The system will recognize that you are an instructor and take you to the instructor's page.

- The students will be given a “14-day free trial” which gives them reasonably enough time to purchase the access code. The access code will be available in the bookstore. Students with credit cards can also purchase the code online at the Web Assign page.
- Note that for Thomas Calculus, all the students need is the basic version.
- The 14-day free trial begins on the date the course is made visible to the students.
- To get a feel of what your students will see, click on the “Switch to Student View” link at the upper right hand corner of the home page.
- To return, click on “Switch to Faculty View”.

### **ASSIGN HOMEWORK**

- To assign HW, click on the link “Create Assignment” on the top of the page.
- Click on “Question Browser” near the middle of the page.
- A new window pops up. From there, select the chapters/sections you want to work on.
- Click on the problems that you want to assign. You should see those problems appear on the right hand column of your screen.
- Problems with numbers in red are randomized. More on this later.
- When done, click UPDATE ASSIGNMENT.
- It is best if you assign homework section by section so you will have homework assignments that don’t have a large variance in the number of points. That way, when you drop the lowest scores (to be discussed later), students cannot take advantage of it by skipping the longest assignment.
- The “**Intro to Web Assign**” is an assignment that helps the students get familiar with the program.
- It is recommended that students are assigned “**Intro to Web Assign**” as their first HW.

### **HOMEWORK SETTINGS**

- The Administrative Settings give you control over what you allow your students to do or see.
- It saves a lot of time if you check the box “Save these Administration Settings as my default”.
- You can decide how many attempts you want to give a student on each problem. You can change this setting on a *specific problem* later. For example, you want to give your students 5 attempts per problem. However, one of the problems is a true/false, and you want to allow only one attempt. You can change the setting for this problem only under “Submissions Override”.
- To access “Submissions Override”, go to “My Assignments” and select the specific assignment that you want to work on.

- Select the other options that you like. It is best to add the “Practice” button before and after the due date so students can always come back to do more problems.
- Caution: To avoid cheating (I discovered that if a student clicks on the practice link enough times, it will eventually generate one that is the same as the homework, and the student can just copy the answer), add the restriction “After All Attempts Used” by clicking on the box. Or you can select to hide the answers.
- When you are done, CLICK SAVE.

### **SCHEDULE ASSIGNMENTS**

- To assign HW, click on “My Assignments” and select “Schedule”.
- Select the course/sections that you want to assign to. (This feature is especially helpful if you are teaching 2 or more sections of the same course).
- Select the visible and due dates.
- The last visible date should be no sooner than the end of the course (or the final exam date), so that students can review their HW problems.
- The time due is by default the time of the day when you are assigning the homework, so be sure to change it to a time that you specify to the students (such as 11:59PM).
- CLICK SAVE.

### **STUDENTS HELP**

- Students can get help online by clicking on the “Guide” link to read a guide and FAQ or the “Help” link to email Web Assign.
- The most common question is on formatting the answers, which we (instructors and TAs) can help them.
- To get help on syntax, click on the “Symbolic Formatting Help” button.
- To preview an answer before entering it, click on the preview icon (that looks like an eye).

### **GRADEBOOK**

- To set up your gradebook, go to the top of the page and click on “Grades” and then “Gradebook”.
- You will see the message: “Your Gradebook has not been set up for this class. Use the Wizard link above to get started.”
- Click “Wizard”.
- Choose “Specify my gradebook setting now”.

- To make life simple and easy, use this gradebook to calculate your Web Assign grades only. So select NO for all the other categories such as quizzes and exams, leaving only Homework checked YES.
- Say your HW is 10% of a student's grade. Then the grade here reflects only that 10%. You will do your other accounting on quizzes/exams, etc on iLearn.
- There is an advanced method to integrate your Web Assign gradebook with your iLearn gradebook, but it is advanced and we will not cover it in the basic training.
- You can select to weigh your HW by assignments or by points.
- Select how many HW assignments you like to drop. Since we are new in using this, the students may struggle a bit in the beginning, so we may want to be nice and drop at least the lowest one or two assignments.
- Skip the letter grade page.
- Select what you want to show students.
- Click SAVE THESE SETTINGS.

### **DOWNLOAD GRADES**

- To download your grades to an Excel worksheet, from the top toolbar, click on "Tasks" and then "Download Manager".
- Select your course.
- Select Gradebook.
- Under file type, select "Excel".
- Then click "Download".
- The integration with the Blackboard (iLearn) gradebook is advanced and will not be discussed in the basic training.

### **RANDOMIZATION**

- Problems with numbers in red are randomized.
- Randomization can sometimes cause problems. A random number could cause a function to be undefined at that point. Thomas has many word problems setup such that calculators are not required. Also, in chapter 4, most of the functions and polynomials have coefficients such that y' factors. Randomization of these problems could make the arithmetic overwhelming.
- There are two ways to fix this problem.
- The first method is to replace the random number with a fixed integer. You can do this by replacing the code -- for example  $a = \text{randnum}(1, 9, 1)$  -- with a number. Then the problem is no longer randomized.
- Another way is to use your own randomization by changing the randnum code.
- The randnum code has 3 values (min, max, increment). The following are examples of sets of integers that a randnum code will generate a random integer from:

$\text{randnum}(1, 9, 1) = \{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9\}$

$\text{randnum}(1, 9, 2) = \{1, 3, 5, 7, 9\}$

$\text{randnum}(3, 6, 1) = \{3, 4, 5, 6\}$

$\text{randnum}(2, 10, 4) = \{2, 6, 10\}$

- Either way, you'll need to create a new problem by changing the existing codes.

### **CHANGING AN EXISTING PROBLEM**

- Click on the problem that you want to change.
- Click "Open in Editor".
- Click "Duplicate" – Web Assign won't let you edit problems in their database so you must first duplicate the problem.
- Change the codes in this window.
- Give it a name – I usually just copy the original problem number and append an \* or something.
- Save it.
- *Note that problems changed and saved here are saved under "My Assignments". So to assign these problems, under the "Question Browser" select "All My Questions".*

### **TO ADD YOUR TA TO YOUR COURSE**

- From the Home page, click on "Edit Class Info".
- Click on the "Access" link to select your TA.
- Under each category (roster, assignments, grades, etc) grant the privilege to "view only" or permission to "modify" as you like.