Hello, Tarleton Texans!

My name is Justin Carrell and I’m a staff member in our eLearning division here at Tarleton State. Let me be one of the first to welcome you to Canvas. Especially if this is your first time to use this platform.

So you might be asking yourself: How do I get to Canvas since my courses will now be delivered on it?

That’s a great question! First, let’s bring up the Tarleton home page. Perfect! From this home page, there will be a link on the top right called Login. Selecting this link will provide a list of applications. One of them will be Canvas. Select Canvas from this list. On this Canvas page, you’ll see a button that says Tarleton NTNET account. Select this purple button to login to Canvas. Provide your username and password and then complete the Duo prompt to login. For account assistance, please contact the computer help desk at 254-968-9885 – Option 1.

This Canvas platform will be our home for learning for a while so let’s take a moment to explore this new home together by looking at the floorplan if you will.

First you’ll notice on the desktop version of Canvas that there is a gray bar on the far left hand side. This gray bar is called the global navigation menu. No matter where you go in Canvas, this global menu will follow you.

When you first enter Canvas, you’ll land on the dashboard page. The dashboard page shows all activities that are coming up as well as all of the courses that have been published. If there is a course you are enrolled in but you do not see it here, use the Courses button in the Global navigation menu to locate all unpublished courses.

When the courses button is selected, a new pop out panel appears. A web link titled **All courses** will show. Selecting this all courses will show you everything you are enrolled in. If the word **No** is listed next to a spring 2020 course under the publish column, it means that your instructor is not yet ready for you to enter the course. You’ll want to reach out to them to find out when they plan to open the course. If you do not have a way to contact the professor, please reach out to staff in your academic department and they can contact the instructor for you as well.

Now that we have information on how to access our courses, let’s take a look at the Canvas calendar. The calendar is available from the global navigation menu and is called Calendar. Once selected, a calendar page will show. On the bottom right side of the screen there will be a list of courses. You’ll want to make sure that all of your spring 2020 courses are selected. Any item in Canvas that has a due date will appear in the calendar automatically. I want to stress that there may be some faculty who do not assign due dates in Canvas but have provided a course schedule or syllabus with this information. It will be very important to locate this information. To emphasize again, there may be items that you have due that do not appear in this calendar. Our hope is that faculty assign dates when they create learning activities but that is completely at their discretion.

Next up on our Canvas tour is the Canvas Inbox. To get to the Canvas inbox, select the button titled Inbox. By default, all of your courses will be listed. There is a drop down on the right called All Courses that will allow you to navigate to a particular course. A pencil icon is on the top middle of the page. Use this to compose a message. Once this pencil icon is selected, we will pick the course and select our recipient. In this case, I have selected the instructor for this course. We then provide a subject and type out our message. When finished, we select the Send button.

The inbox is one way to communicate with your instructor during this time – unless they have requested to utilize university email instead. The course syllabus will likely identify a preferred way to contact each faculty member.

So far on this tour we have reviewed how to check our course status, the Canvas calendar, and the Canvas Inbox. Let’s now take a look at our settings. We will once again use the Canvas global menu. This time, select Account. A pop out window will appear with several options. Let’s start with Settings.

On this settings page, we can add additional email addresses, supply a mobile number, and a twitter handle if you use twitter. It’s important to add these extra items for Canvas notifications. To add an additional email, select the + Email Address link. To add a mobile device, select + Contact Method. The last item I would like to show you on this page is the Edit Settings button. Once edit settings is selected, you can update your time zone. If you have moved out of state and have a different time zone, setting this will ensure that course due dates appear correctly for you in Canvas. Now that we have updated these settings and added any additional contact methods, we are ready to take a look at Notifications.

Once again we will select Account from the global menu. From the pop out menu, we need to select Notifications. This is where you can let Canvas know how you’d like to be notified. If you added any additional contact methods, those options will be listed as columns on this page. There are four ways to be notified: right away, daily summary, weekly summary, or to not send a notification. Feel free to support this page and all its options.

Let’s head back to the dashboard and jump into a course. To do this, we will select the title of the course and then we will be taken to the course home page. This may be a static page like the one you see here or it may be a list of modules with content listed. The first thing we notice is that global navigation menu is still available. There is now also an additional menu called the course menu. This menu will consist of links like Home, Announcements, Modules, Assignments, Discussions, and Quizzes. Your course instructor controls the visibility of these items.

Most content will either be in Modules or pages. All learning activities will be listed on assignments. If the assignment menu is not shown, then the activities are likely added to course modules. Because there are so many variables here, it will be important to just click on all the links to get familiar with how each instructor has set up the course.

To end this Canvas tour, I would like to take a moment to show how you can get assistance. Again from the global Canvas menu, there will be a help icon. Selecting this help icon will show resources like chatting with support, telephone numbers for support, and various university resources to support you during this time.

To recap, we discovered how to locate the status of our course, we looked at the Canvas Calendar, and the Canvas Inbox. We discussed the importance of updating the time zone if you have moved out of state during this time. We also looked briefly at how to set notification. Then we looked at a sample course and what to expect on the course menu. We ended our tour with information on how to get assistance.

We want you to know that we are here to support you during this time. I know this was a crash course on Canvas and we went through a lot of material. Feel free to watch this video as many times as you need and pause at certain parts and explore what we just talked about on a different browser tab or window. Please utilize the resources from the help menu – they will be a great resource to you during this time. Finally, remember that we are all in this together.