

Ed Discussion for Faculty

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As of May 2022, Ed Discussion is available to all Penn faculty, staff, and students. A Canvas integration is available for all courses taught through **Penn Canvas**; in 2023, a **chat feature** has been introduced and can be added to a course already using Ed Discussion.

Ed Discussion is an asynchronous discussion tool that provides a platform for students and members of the teaching team to interact through threaded conversation. Students can answer one another's questions, work on and run code together, embed videos, annotate images, and share documents. They can also like one another's posts, post anonymously, and receive instructor feedback all in one place.

In this article, you will learn more about the instructor experience in Ed Discussion. For information on utilizing Ed Discussion in your course as a student, [view the guide linked here](#).

Before You Start

You will need the following before you can complete this task:

- You will need access to **Canvas**.
- If you are using Ed Discussion in a course that does not use Canvas, you may log in with your Penn email address at edstem.org/us/login.

Navigating Ed

From the faculty perspective, Ed Discussion has a clear set of color-coded categories, a searchable discussion area, and a big blue button for posting new threads. It is recommended to include a pinned thread containing instructions for how the tool will be utilized in class, as students will likely have questions about discussion etiquette and overall setup. The categories you see on the lefthand side are customizable and will differ from course to course, so you can add, edit, and delete categories to best fit your teaching needs:

Start a new thread

Filter by status of post

Open EdDiscussion

Stay notified about posts

Profile settings

ed CIS550 Spring 2022 – Discussion

New Thread

Search

Filter

WELCOME TO CIS550 #14

Edward Tao STAFF

3 months ago in Announcements

UNPIN STAR WATCHING 423 VIEWS

Hello everyone and welcome to CIS550!

We are excited that you are here! To help you better navigate this course, we would like to share a few tips with you -

How to get started -
If you haven't gone through the "Course Introduction" and "Recourses" sections on Coursera, please do it as soon as possible. We have covered a lot of details there to help you succeed in this course. Please note all the assignment deadlines on Coursera are using U.S Eastern time.

How to get help - We understand this learning journey could be challenging. You are not alone, there are multiple ways to get help from our TA team. While interacting with your peers, TAs, and professor, please be polite and respectful.

Ed Discussion - We will be using Ed Discussion for course announcements, FAQs, or sharing your thoughts and expertise to help your peers. You need to check out Ed Discussion throughout the week. If you have any questions, feel free to post them on Ed Discussion and our TA team will respond to your questions within 24 hours. More instructions about Ed Discussion.

TA Office Hours - You can get 1:1 help from our TA Office hours within 15 minutes limit. Please check out the TA OH schedule on the 550 Google Calendar, Note these OH schedules are subject to change with short notice. More instructions on how to join OHQ.

Instructor OH/Weekly Recitations - Instructor Office hours and Weekly Recitations will be hosted twice a week. Recording of the weekly recitation will be posted on the Coursera. Instructor Office hours are open (not private) but will be recorded.

Recitations are on Wednesdays from 10 AM to 11 AM eastern.
Instructor Open Office Hours on Thursdays from 9 AM to 10 AM eastern
Instructor Open Office Hours on Thursdays from 4 PM to 5 PM eastern
Recitation on Saturdays from 2 PM to 3 PM eastern

You can see the schedule here - CIS550 Google Calendar

15 others online

Edward Tao, Penn Engineering, via <https://online.seas.upenn.edu/student-knowledge-base/ed-discussion/>

Creating a New Thread

When creating a new thread as an instructor, you will see the option to pose a question, post, or announcement. Students will have the ability to draft only a question or post, so they will not see the Announcement option. Note that the grayed-out items indicate they are deselected, while the colored item (shown below in blue) indicates a selection. In this example, the instructor has selected to pose a post:

New Post

Question
 Post
 Announcement

Title

Category Week 1 Posts Announcements Questions

Select a category.

Pinned
Keep at top of thread list
 Private
Visible to you and staff only
 Anonymous
Hide your name from students
 Anonymous Comments
Allow anonymous comments
 Megathread
Resolvable comments

Anything you post will need to include a title, category, and sub-category, if applicable.

In order to start drafting the thread, you will need to first select a category. Once the selection is made, you will see

the tool's rich content editor. The question, post, or announcement can be pinned at the top of the discussion thread list, private to just you and your teaching team members, anonymous, or set as a **megathread**, meaning you can collate all questions on a specific topic into a single thread. As the instructor, you also can enable anonymous comments.

Specific to Announcements, you can check the box to send out email notifications as shown below. Note that as the instructor, you also can schedule a post if you would like to send it out at a specific time:

The image shows a 'New Announcement' form. At the top, there are three tabs: 'Question', 'Post', and 'Announcement' (which is highlighted in green). Below the tabs is a 'Title' field containing 'Welcome to Class!'. Underneath the title are three category buttons: 'Week 1', 'Posts', and 'Announcements' (which is highlighted), and a 'Questions' button. A rich text editor follows, with a toolbar showing options like Paragraph, Bold, Italic, Underline, Link, and Unlink. The text area contains 'Hello! Here are some tips for the first day...'. At the bottom of the form, there are four checkboxes: 'Pinned' (unchecked, 'Keep at top of thread list'), 'Anonymous Comments' (unchecked, 'Allow anonymous comments'), 'Megathread' (unchecked, 'Resolvable comments'), and 'Email' (checked, 'Send email notifications'). A 'Draft saved' message is visible on the left, and a 'Post' button with an up arrow is on the right.

In the example below, an anonymous user posted a question about the homework under the Problem Sets category. In response, Ishtar answered the question by posting a guide which Cady found to be "very helpful." Also visible in the screenshot, students have the ability to "heart" questions, answers, posts, and comments they love, and they can also "star" and "watch" questions or posts, making it easier to filter the content in the discussion area. You as the instructor can pin posts to the top (as depicted by the purple pin icon), mark an answer as "accepted" by clicking the grayed out check mark boxed below, and "endorse" an item to distinguish high-quality content:

Search

Filter

Visual Analysis Assignment Sample
General Taylor Kahny **STAFF** 1mth 8 (8 new)

Welcome!
General Taylor Kahny **STAFF** 1mth

10 Jul 2022

Question about homework
Problem Sets Anonymous 1mth 2

Question about homework #3

Anonymous
Last mo. in **Problem Sets**

I need help with #3...

PIN STAR WATCH 5 VIEWS

Comment Edit Delete Endorse ...

1 Answer

Ishtar Test286
2 days ago

I found the following guide helpful for answering Question 3:

1 [howtocreataworldclassrecog.pdf](#)

Comment Edit Delete Endorse ...

Add comment

Cady Test280 2d
Very helpful!
Reply Edit Delete ...

Your Answer

Paragraph **B I U <>**

Rich Content Editor

When you **draft a new thread** or comment on someone else's content, you will edit the post through the rich content editor. The editor provides tools for formatting text, inserting media, LaTeX, and other programming language snippets. In addition, you can directly create formatted text and mathematical equations by typing in Markdown and LaTeX syntax:

Format text Hyperlink text Create a list Upload an image Embed a video Upload documents Write an equation Write code Insert web snippets Annotate images

Paragraph **B I U <>**

Ed Discussion allows users to:

- Upload images
- Embed videos
- Write math equations
- Upload documents
- Embed runnable codes
- Annotate images

$$u(x, t) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{4\pi kt}} \int_0^\infty \left[\exp\left(-\frac{(x-y)^2}{4kt}\right) - \exp\left(-\frac{(x+y)^2}{4kt}\right) \right] g(y) dy$$

Run Line Numbers Runnable Python

```
1 print ("Hello, world!")
```

Hello, world!

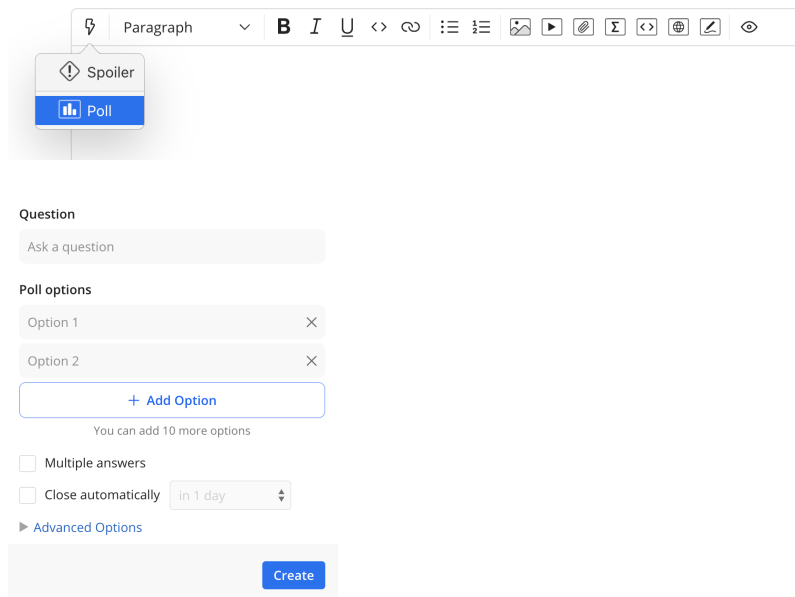
Private
Visible to you and staff only

Post

Submit your **post**

Ed - Quick Start Guide (Version One), via <https://edstem.org/quickstart/ed-discussion.pdf>

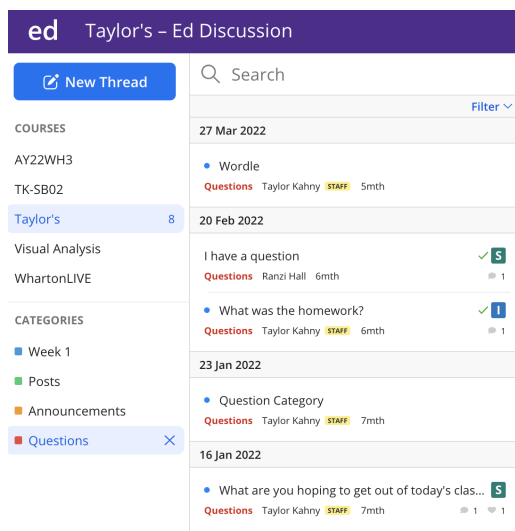
As an instructor, you also have the option to create a poll. To create a poll, click on the lightning bolt from your content editor, and then establish suitable question and answer types. There are currently two question types: multiple-choice and multiple-answer:



Poll results are displayed in realtime and do not require the page to be refreshed to get the most current data.




Categories

When **toggle among categories** within Ed Discussion, the chosen category's threads will appear underneath the search bar within the discussion area as shown below:









Each thread in the category is organized by date with the category, author, and related icons indicated on each separate post. As the instructor, you may have as many or as little categories as you choose.

Important Key for Understanding Thread Icons

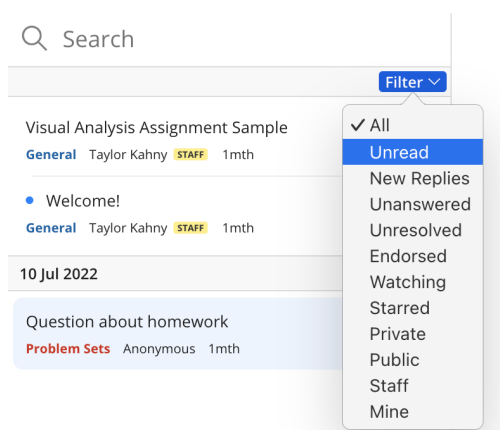
- Threads with a blue dot  are **unread**. These are threads that you have not seen.
- Threads with a green tick  are questions that have been **resolved**. This means that the question has already been answered.
- Threads with a purple pin  have been **pinned** and will be kept at the top of the discussion list to increase

visibility and encourage ongoing discussions. Pinned threads are generally reserved for announcements or important information. Only instructors can choose which threads to pin.

- Threads with a blue ribbon  have been **endorsed** by course instructors. This is usually done by instructors to distinguish high-quality content.
- Threads with a heart signify **agreement**.  Hearts are private and do not reveal identities.
- Threads with a star are **bookmarked**  to refer back to later. Stars are private to the individual.
- Threads with an eye icon selected  WATCHING are those in which you are **subscribed** to receive thread activity email notifications.
- Threads with the "S" icon  indicate a **student has answered** a question thread.
- Threads with the "I" icon  indicate an **instructor has answered** a question thread.

Filtering

In terms of organizing your view as an instructor, Ed Discussion allows for many **filtering options**. You can filter by unread items; the latest replies; threads that are unanswered (for questions only), unresolved (for questions only), or endorsed; items you have set to watch or have starred; your private content; any public content; posts from the teaching team; and threads only created by you:



Searching

In order to quickly find posts within the discussion area, you can use the search bar to extract key words from threads. In the example below, the word "question" appears in five different posts within this particular course's Ed Discussion site:

question Clear X

5 results Most relevant

- I have a question #32**
I have a question
Questions Ranzl Hall 6 mo. ago
- Wordle #38**
The wordle today is...
Questions Taylor Kahny **STAR** 5 mo. ago
- Question Category #29**
Question
Questions Taylor Kahny **STAR** 7 mo. ago
- What was the homework? #31**
What was the homework?
Questions Taylor Kahny **STAR** 6 mo. ago
- What are you hoping to get out of today's class session? #26**
Please respond with a topic from the syllabus.
Questions Taylor Kahny **STAR** 7 mo. ago

FILTER

All

- Unread
- New Replies
- Unanswered
- Unresolved
- Endorsed
- Watching
- Starred
- Private
- Public
- Staff
- Mine

CATEGORY

- Week 1
- Posts
- Announcements
- Questions

DATE

From

To

To drill down the search even further, you can select one of the filtered options, a specific category, or even a date range.

Analytics

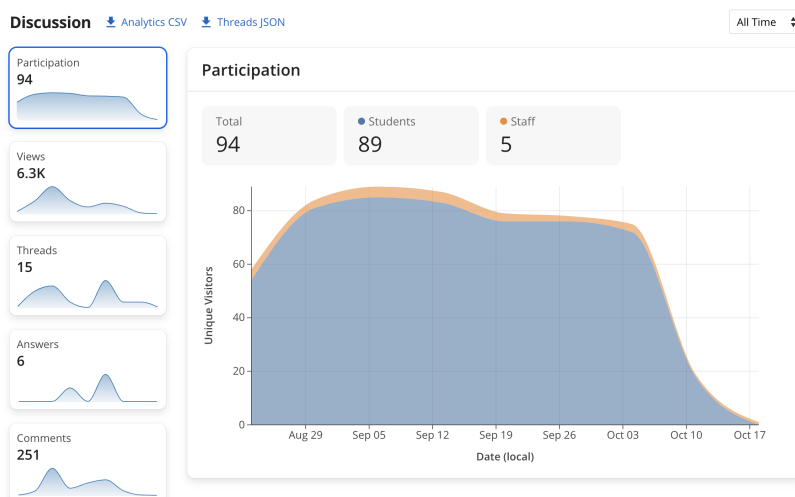
As an instructor, you can view and download analytics depicting participation stats, such as views, threads, and answers, for a certain point in time. Access your Course Analytics by clicking the tab boxed in red below:

ed Taylor's - Ed Discussion 📄 **Analytics** ⚙️ 🏠 🔔 👤

[New Thread](#) Filter

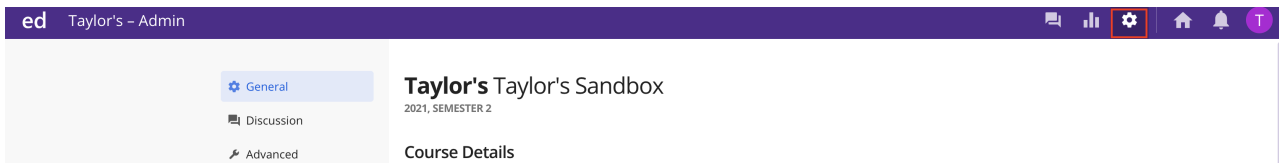
COURSES		This Week
FNCE 250	91	Ed
FNCE 750	5	Week 1 - Videos Cady Text280 19h
MGMT 773 Q3	4	27 Mar 2022
MGMT 773 Q4	10	Wordle
Taylor's	1	Questions Taylor Kahny STAR Smith
11 more		20 Feb 2022

You can also view details on top contributors in the class. These stats can then be downloaded and viewed in .csv format for further drill-down capabilities such as user email addresses, roles, and specific activity metrics. The image below shows how these metrics appear from your Analytics tab:



Admin

Another feature specific to a teaching team member role is the Admin tab. You can access this by clicking the gear icon boxed in red below:



When working with the admin controls, you will see three different sections: General, Discussion, and Advanced.

In the **General section**, it is not recommended to further edit your Course Details or send out a Join Link, as this syncing happens through Canvas. However, you will need to activate your course for each new semester once you are ready to make Ed Discussion available to students:

Activate Course

Activate the course to allow students access.

Activate Course

Then, under "Users," please check to make sure all members of your Canvas course are appropriately synced by clicking the blue "Sync With LMS" button show below:

A screenshot of the Canvas "Users" page. The left sidebar shows the "General" tab selected. The main content area is titled "Users" and states "37 users (34 students) are enrolled in this course. All users have accepted their invitation." Below this is a search bar and a table of users. The table has columns for checkboxes, names, email addresses, roles, and enrollment status. At the bottom of the table, there are four buttons: "Unenroll", "Resend Invitations", "Sync with LMS" (highlighted with a red box), and "Refresh".

<input type="checkbox"/>	Name	Email	Role	ID	Status
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yousef Test264	youseftest264@whacware.33mail.com	Staff	90304385	Enrolled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anisa Test240	anisatest240@whacware.33mail.com	Student	90304361	Enrolled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brax Test241	braxtest241@whacware.33mail.com	Student	90304362	Enrolled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cady Test280	cadytest280@whacware.33mail.com	Student	90310813	Enrolled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cassian Test242	cassiantest242@whacware.33mail.com	Student	90304363	Enrolled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Damon Test243	damontest243@whacware.33mail.com	Student	90304364	Enrolled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Desdemona Test281	desdemonatest281@whacware.33mail.com	Student	90310814	Enrolled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emmett Test244	emmetttest244@whacware.33mail.com	Student	90304365	Enrolled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ernest Test282	ernesttest282@whacware.33mail.com	Student	90310815	Enrolled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Farrell Test245	farrelltest245@whacware.33mail.com	Student	90304366	Enrolled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gail Test246	gailtest246@whacware.33mail.com	Student	90304367	Enrolled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Homer Test247	homertest247@whacware.33mail.com	Student	90304368	Enrolled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ida Test248	idatest248@whacware.33mail.com	Student	90304369	Enrolled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jasmine Test249	jasminetest249@whacware.33mail.com	Student	90304370	Enrolled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kenya Test250	kenyatest250@whacware.33mail.com	Student	90304371	Enrolled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Layla Test251	laylatest251@whacware.33mail.com	Student	90304372	Enrolled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mitchell Test252	mitchelltest252@whacware.33mail.com	Student	90304373	Enrolled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nikola Test253	nikolatest253@whacware.33mail.com	Student	90304374	Enrolled

During the add/drop period, you may need to return here to ensure all users are appropriately synced and Ed Discussion is pulling the most current data from Canvas.

In the **Discussion section**, you can customize your categories by editing the text field shown below. Each category should be entered on its own line, and you can use the TAB key on your computer to specify subcategories. In the example below, Week 1, Posts, Announcements, and Questions are the course categories, while "Videos" is a subcategory. Also, the "Category unselected by default" option is checked, which is useful for organizational purposes, as students will need to consider where they are posting their new thread before drafting the content:

Taylor's Taylor's Sandbox
2021, SEMESTER 2

Categories

Define categories one per line and use the TAB key to indent and specify subcategories.

```
Week 1
  Videos
Posts
Announcements
Questions
```

Category unselected by default
Requires the user to explicitly select a category before they can begin typing the thread content. Recommended if you are using thread templates.

The **Discussion** section also allows you to configure more advanced discussion features, such as enabling anonymous threads, private threads, and anonymous comments for the entire course. You can also create Threaded Templates, allowing you to populate new text for a specific category with initial content to help guide users in their posts. In the example below, the text, "Have a question? Post it in this category." will automatically populate when a student chooses to add a new thread to the Questions category. The student can then erase that text and begin drafting their question:

Thread Templates

Customize the initial content of new question threads for each discussion category below.

Enabled

Week 1

- Posts
- Announcements
- Questions**

Paragraph **B** *I* U <> ↺ ⋮ ☰ 🖼️ ▶️ 📎 ⌨️ ⌂ ↶ ↷

Have a question? Post it in this category.

As a final note about the **Discussion** section, faculty can choose to require any new threads to receive approval by someone on the teaching team before it can be made public to the class. You can also enter a templated message for any posts that are declined by an instructor. Underneath the Moderation settings, you will also see a Code section where you can choose snippet languages, set a default language, and automatically syntax highlight code paragraphs based on your selected languages:

Moderation

- New threads require approval
New threads posted by students will be hidden from other students until it is approved by a staff member.

Decline thread template

Enter the template for a comment that you can post to the student when declining a thread.

Paragraph **B** *I* U <> ∞ ☰ ☷ 🖼️ ▶ 🗑️ 📄 ↻ ↵ 🔍

Code

Snippet Languages

Choose which languages are available inside snippets, separated by commas, or leave blank for all languages.

Default Snippet Language

Choose which language will be selected by default for a snippet.

Highlightable Languages

Automatically syntax highlight code paragraphs based on the selected languages.

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> C/C++ | <input type="checkbox"/> Python | <input type="checkbox"/> Java | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruby | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> R |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Julia | <input type="checkbox"/> SQL | <input type="checkbox"/> JavaScript | <input type="checkbox"/> CSS | <input type="checkbox"/> HTML |

The Observer role (part of the Advanced section)

In some courses at Wharton, students may be added as informal auditors, taking on the "Observer" role in Canvas. In order to sync this user type with the Ed Discussion board, you will need to take the following action.

Navigate to **Admin->Advanced** and then scroll down to the "Sync observers" check box:

Taylor's - Admin

- General
- Discussion
- Advanced**

Remote Graphics
Automatically create an X11 display so that graphical applications can be supported. Due to the way some may not be possible to detect that they're trying to connect to a X11 display, you can always force an X11 'xdpyinfo'. Applies to code snippets, workspaces and lessons.

Database Services
Automatically start an ephemeral PostgreSQL, MariaDB or MongoDB server when the respective type of options to select a service when creating code challenges.

Course Files
Enables the /course folder. This folder will be present for all Code Snippets, Workspaces and Lessons Co-upload files that would otherwise not fit in a standard workspace, such as data files.

PATH Setting
Customise the PATH variable for running code. Separate paths with colon :

Show user profile pictures

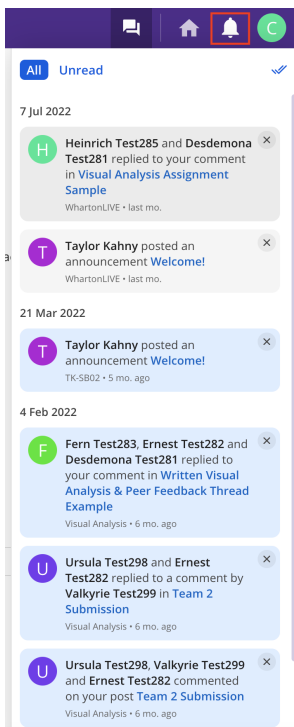
Sync observers

This setting will enable observers in Canvas to sync with Ed Discussion when the "Sync with LMS" button is selected (see first screenshot in Admin section of this article). Note that you will have to complete this action for each individual course's Ed Discussion board.

Notifications

In the upper right corner of your screen, next to the home dashboard, you will see a bell icon indicating notifications. The notifications are organized by date with a section for "All" notifications and "Unread"

notifications. There is also an icon enabling you to mark all notifications as "Read." Similar to the color scheme when posting a new thread, any item that is unread appears blue, while the notifications you have already read are grayed out as shown below:

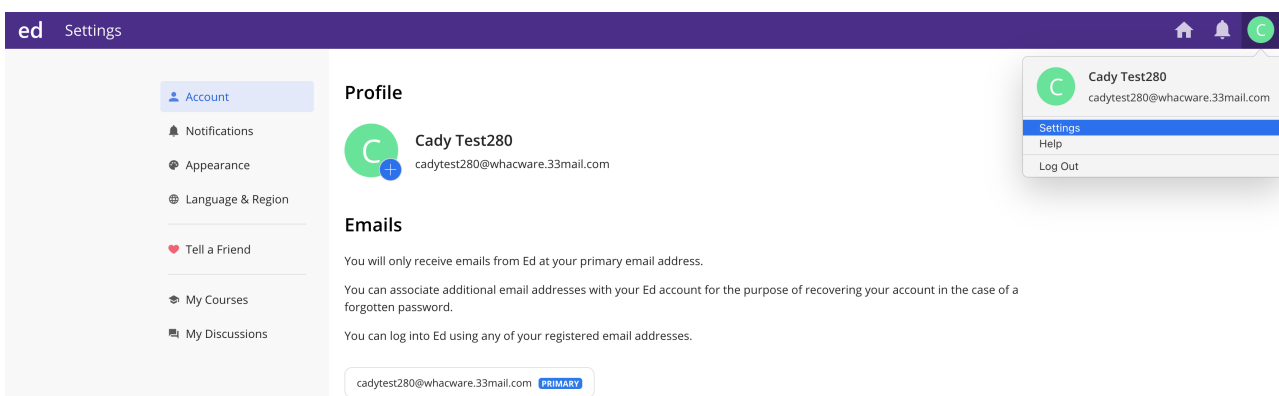


Please note that you will not receive Ed Discussion notifications via Canvas directly, as this is an LTI tool existing as a separate application.

To customize your notification settings, see the **Profile Settings** section below.

Profile Settings

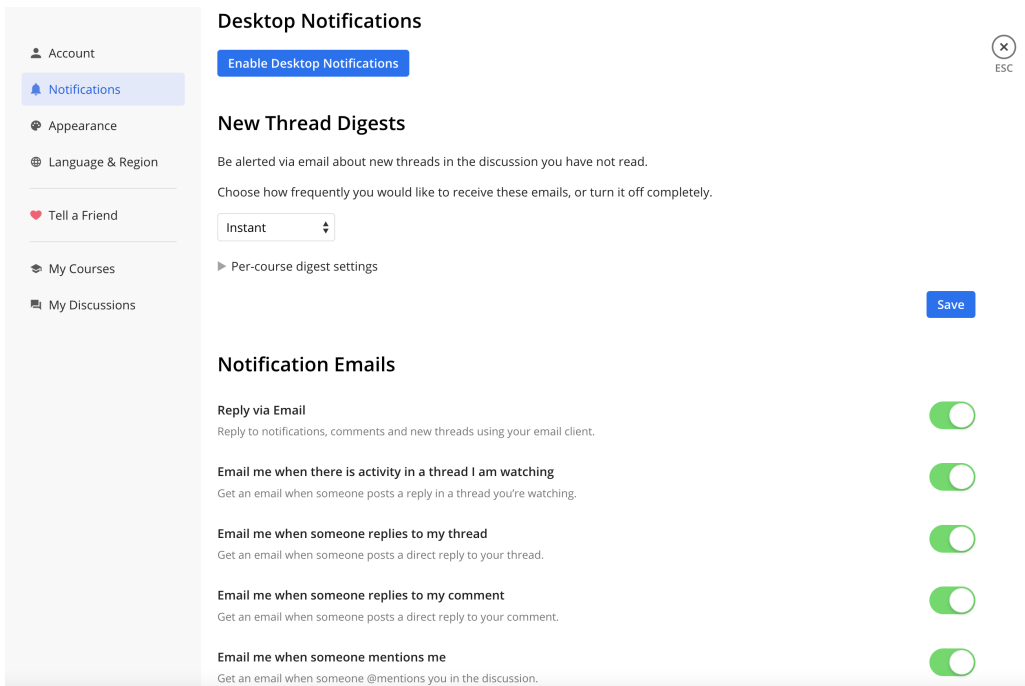
In Ed Discussion, there are ways to further customize your user experience in the **Settings** tab under your account profile:



From the Account section pictured above, check to make sure your primary email address is set to your Penn email address. This way, you will receive all Ed Discussion notification emails at this address.

For added security measures, you can also set a password or enable Two-Factor Authentication for your account.

To edit your notification settings, you can toggle to the **Notifications** tab shown below:

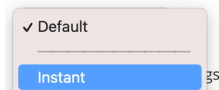


You can enable desktop notifications, choose how frequently you receive emails from Ed Discussion or turn this off entirely, and you can toggle various options for the email notifications you would like to receive.

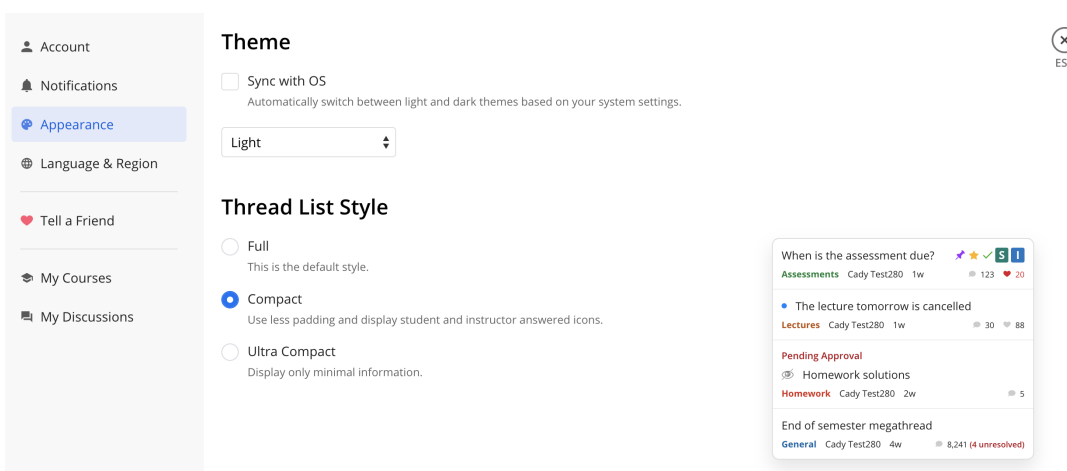
To receive automatic emails from Ed Discussion directly to your @upenn email address, the notifications should be changed to "Instant" rather than the default option:

New Thread Digests

Be alerted via email about new threads in the discussion you have not read.
Choose how frequently you would like to receive these emails, or turn it off completely.



Under the **Appearance** tab, Ed Discussion enables you to change from Light to Dark mode, even providing an option to sync the particular mode with your operating system's settings. In addition, you can change the threaded list style to full (default), compact, or ultra compact.



The **Language & Region** and **My Courses** tabs enable you to alter the language and time zone and view all courses you are teaching that utilize Ed Discussion. Under **My Discussions**, you can drill down to specific threads, answers,

and comments you have made on your course discussion boards, making it easy to return to a conversation without having to search through all user threads:

Cady Test280

Questions	Posts	Answers	Comments	Hearts	Endorsements	Days visited
0	1	1	1	1	0	4

All Threads Answers Comments

Cady Test280 commented on [Written Visual Analysis & Peer Feedback Thread E...](#) in Visual Analysis – Assignment Instructions February 4, 2022
Team 1 (insert group members) Visual Analysis Use of visual stimuli to get attention: Text here Use of visual stimuli to affect fluency: Text here Use of semiotic codes: Text here Use of visual stimuli to affect interpretation: Text here

Cady Test280 posted in Visual Analysis – Team 2 February 2, 2022
Team 2 Submission

Using Ed on a Mobile Device

For those who wish to post discussions and respond on a mobile device, it is recommended to add Ed to the phone's homescreen for easy access:

For **iOS**, visit edstem.org in Safari and tap **Share>Add to Home Screen**.

For **Android**, visit edstem.org in Chrome, tap the **menu icon** (3 dots in upper right corner), and select **Add to Home Screen**.

Questions?

If you need more assistance, please contact courseware@wharton.upenn.edu for support.