

Getting Started:

Go to the Writing Program's forum site (<http://www.classguide.net/rutgers/forums/>).

If this is your first time visiting these forums, you may want to read the FAQs. These cover some basic issues about registering and using the forums. You can read them by clicking on the **FAQ** button located near the top-right corner of the page. To return back to the main page, click on the "home" button, which you can find near the top-right corner of the page.

Once you have read the FAQs, you can register to become a member of the forums. To get to the registration page, "Register" button located near the top of the page. Read over the rules of the forums, and proceed as directed.

After you agree to follow the rules of the forums, you will be taken to a page where you will be asked to input some information. The first section is for registration information, so you will be required to fill out all of the fields:

1. First, choose a user name for yourself. This will be the name that will appear on the forums every time you make a post, or reply to someone else's post.
2. Then, make a password that you will be sure to remember. In the event that you lose your password, you can send a request to have your password emailed to you.
3. After you create a password, type in your e-mail address.
4. When you have entered the required information, you can type in optional information about yourself, such as an URL to your personal web site, your ICQ number or AIM screen name, location, interests, and whatever other fun facts about yourself that you want to include for other members of the forums to see.
5. The last section on the registration page is for forum preferences. The information you put here will determine how the forum appears in your web browser.
6. The **signature** text box is for entering text that you want to be seen after every post you make in the forums. This is optional. You don't have to have a signature, so you can choose to leave this blank.
7. If you're in a lab, or a place where other people use computers, set **automatically log in** to "no".
8. Also, set the **offset time** to -5, EST.
9. If there are fields where you don't know what you should select, leave it set to **use forum default**.

When you're done typing in all the information for registering, click on the **submit** button. This will create your membership account. You will be then taken to a page that will acknowledge your registration. This page will automatically forward you to the main forums page, where you will already be logged in. Next time you visit the forums, you can login using the login box located in the lower right-hand corner of the main forums page.

Main Page and Control Panel:

There are a number of features to notice on the main page:

- You can login by using the boxes located on the lower right corner of the main forum page.
- Once you are logged in, you'll have the option to view a list of all new posts since your last visit.
- Click on the **View New Posts** link, located below your member name near the upper right hand corner of the main page.
- If you scroll down past the list of forums you will see links that allow you to log out or mark all forums read.

You will also want to take a look at your control panel. Reach the control panel by clicking on "user cp" in the top navigation bar.

1. You'll first see the **My vB Home** page, which acts as something like a homepage for you in the forums. You'll be able to see any private messages waiting for you (see separate handout on the private messaging system) and you'll be able to track your subscribed forums and threads (more on subscribing below).
2. Click on **Edit Profile** in the control panel navigation bar. Here, you can change some of the information about yourself that you entered in the registration screen, such as signature, ICQ number, or homepage.
3. **Edit Options** in the control panel navigation bar lets you change options that affect your configuration of the forums. Options include logging in, messaging, and thread views. You'll find brief explanations of these options on this page.
4. **Change Password** in the control panel lets you change your forums password.
5. **Edit Buddy List** lets you control your buddy list for private messaging. Please see the separate handout on the private messaging system.
6. **Edit Ignore List** also controls the private messaging system. Here, you can list people from whom you don't want to receive private messages.
7. Finally, the **Private Messaging** page keeps track of your private messages. See also the separate [handout](#) on the private messaging system.

Making a New Thread:

When you're registered as a member, you will be able to begin posting threads in the forums. If you go to the main forums page, you will see that there are various forums for different classes and subjects. To go to a specific forum that you want to look at, just click on the link to the forum. The link will be in blue, bold text.

1. Make sure that you're in one of the forums. If you want to start a new thread, look for the **new thread** button, located near the upper-right corner of the page, and click on it.

2. You will be taken to a web page where you can type in a new thread. Look for the text box labeled **Subject**. Here, you can type in the name of what you want the thread to be.
3. After you type in a subject name, you can choose whether or not you want to include a message icon in your post. There are quite a few icons to choose from, such as smiley faces, thumbs up, and others. To pick one of the icons, use your mouse, and click on the radio button of the icon you want.
4. The next section after the message icons is for formatting your text. This is called **vB Code**, and it allows you to change the look of your text in your thread. You can use your mouse to select such options as making your text bold, italic, or underlined. You can change the size, font, and color of certain text. If you want to be a little daring, you can even add in hotlinks to web sites, e-mail addresses, and images to your thread. For images, however, the image must already be saved at an online location, such as your Rutgers eden or rci web space, in order for it to appear in the thread.
5. When you're done playing with the text features, you can then type in the actual message of your thread in the large **Message** text box. All you have to do is type in there as you would if you were using a word processor, or e-mail.
6. To make your message a little more fun looking, you can add in smilies. If you look to the left of the large message text box, you will see a small panel with smiley faces. By clicking on any one of them, you can add a code to your message that will make a little smiley appear in your message when it is posted. Please note that the code representing the smiley face is supposed to be there. When posted it will be displayed as the smiley icon.
7. Below the message box, there are some options for posting. You can do things such as having the signature you created (see above) appear after your message, or choose to have an e-mail sent to you every time someone replies in your thread.
8. Under the options section, you can choose to attach a file to your message. By clicking on the **Browse** button, you can search for you computer to find a file you want to attach to your message. If you have ever sent an e-mail with an attachment, this is very similar to doing that. You can find detailed instructions on adding an attachment below.
9. Finally, you can also choose to add a poll to your message. When you are finished typing in all your information for posting a new thread, you can choose to either preview what you have typed (do this by clicking on the **Preview Post** button), or you can just go straight ahead and click on the "Submit New Thread" button to post your thread in the forum. When you have submitted your thread, you will automatically be taken to the thread.

10. Be sure to **logout** on the main page when you're done in the forum.

Replying to a thread:

When you are in a forum, and you see a thread in which you want to make a reply, you can do so by clicking on the **post reply** button, located on the right side of the page.

1. When you click on the button, you will be taken to a page that looks just like the **post thread** web page in the previous step (see above).
2. In the **Subject** text box, type in the name of the subject that you want your reply to be. You can choose to have a message icon, as well. To choose one, use your mouse, and click on the radio button of the icon that you want to use.
3. Then, you can type in your reply in the large **Message** text box. To change the look of specific text in your reply, you can use the features of the **vB Code** section. You can add smileies to your reply by using the panel of smiley faces located to the left of the large **Message** text box.
4. Then, you'll see some options for posting, and attaching files. When you are finished typing your reply to the thread, you can choose to preview your reply. Do this by clicking on the **Preview Reply** button. Or, you can go ahead and post your reply by clicking on the **Submit Reply** button. After you submit your reply, the browser will show the thread you just replied to, now listing your reply with the rest of the page.
5. If you want to quote the message you are replying to in the thread, click on the **quote** button for the specific message you want to reply to. You will be taken to the same screen you'd use to a reply to a thread in general, but the message you want to quote will be included for you. Simply add your reply after it.
6. Be sure to logout from the main page when you're done in the forum.

Attaching a File to Your Post:

You can attach word processor documents (.doc, .wpd, .rtf, .txt file-types ONLY) and image files to your posts. Below the region where you type your message for a post, there is a field for attaching files.

Figure 1: Attaching a File

Click on the **Browse** button, navigate to your file on your computer, and select it. This will enter the file's location into the text box. When done, click on the **Submit** button to send your post with your attached file. When you are done, you will be taken back to the thread.

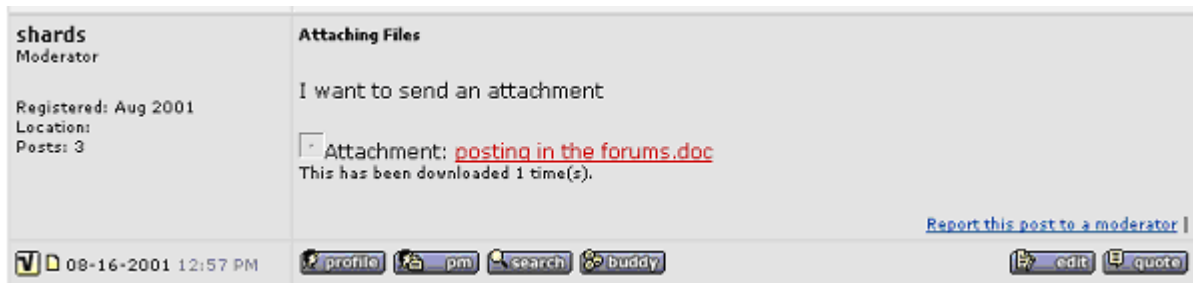


Viewing or Downloading an Attached File:

In a post with an attached file, click on the attachment's name to open it directly, as shown below.

Figure 2: How to view an attached file

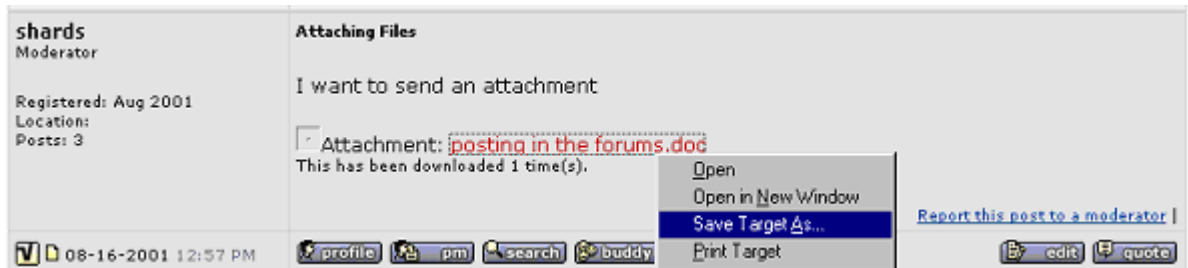
The attachment will now open in your web browser's window. To return to the post, click the "back" button from your web browser.



If you'd like to download the file instead, right-click the attachment name and select **Save Target As** (it may also say **Save Link As**, depending on your browser), as shown below.

Figure 3: How to save an attached file

The **Save As** window will pop up. Navigate to a location on your computer where you would like to save the attached file and click the **Save** button.



Editing Your Post:

To edit your post, click on the edit button on the lower right corner of the post you intend to edit. This will take you to a page that looks similar to the **post thread** web page (see above), only now your original message will already be in the region to type your message.

Make any changes that you wish. If you do not like the changes you made, you can click on the **Reset Message** button at the bottom of the page to put your message back to its original form. Once you are done editing your message, click on the **Save Changes** button at the bottom of the page to update your post. When you submit the change, you will be taken back to the thread. Note that when editing a post, you can no longer attach a file to it. This must be done when first posting.

Deleting Your Post:

To delete your post, click on the edit button on the lower right corner of the post you intend to delete. This will take you to the same page in Step #1 of **Posting in the forums - Editing Your Post** above.

The first table on the page is called **Delete Post**. Check the box next to **Delete?** and click the **Delete Now** button. Note that if the post you delete is the first message in a thread, deleting this message will delete the entire thread.

Note: This feature is useful if you accidentally make the same post twice. Please be sure to delete the duplicate.

Subscribing To Forums:

You may want to subscribe to the forum for your class. This will give you more direct access from your user control panel. In addition, you may also want to subscribe to threads that you have started or in which you're actively participating.

To subscribe to a forum:

1. Navigate to the forum you wish to subscribe to.
2. Towards the lower left corner of the page, you'll see a link for **Subscribe to this Forum** (below the New Thread button).
3. Click on this link. You will be subscribed to the forum and then returned to the forum's main page.
4. To unsubscribe from a forum, go to your user control panel from the top navigation bar. Make sure you're in the **My vB Home** menu. You'll see a list of all subscribed forums. Below the forum name is a link to **Unsubscribe**. Click this link to unsubscribe from the forum.

To subscribe to a thread:

1. Navigate to the thread you wish to subscribe to.
2. At the bottom of the thread you will see a link that says **Receive updates to this thread**. Click on this link to subscribe to the thread. You will be sent an email notifying you when a new posting has been made. You will not receive additional emails for further new postings until you check back in. This means that if 5 people post, you won't have to deal with 5 emails. You'll just get one email letting you know something is happening on your thread.
3. To unsubscribe from a thread, go to the user control panel from the top navigation bar. You will see a list of your subscribed threads. If you do not see any threads listed, it's probably because there hasn't been any new activity on those threads. **Click on View All Subscribed Threads**. You will then see a list of your threads, as well as a link you can use to unsubscribe from a thread.

Miscellaneous Features:

The software we're using for the forums is incredibly robust. There are a number of additional features that you might want to be aware of, though you may not ever use them.

- You can search through the forums by clicking on **search** on the top navigation bar. The search page has options to search by user name or by keyword, as well as options that let you specify which forum to search.
- Icons designate forums with new postings. A yellow indicates new posts in a forum. Icons also show activity in threads, as indicated below:
- Custom titles. After you've made 10 postings in the forum, you can have a custom title attached to your user name. You can set your title (such as "Super Poster") in the **Edit Profile** section of the user control panel.
- There are even more options with this software. We invite you to explore and try them all.

Private Messages:

Private Messages (pm) are messages sent to other members that only they can view. To use Private Messages, you need to have them turned on. To turn them on, edit your profile options in the user control panel. See the main forum handout for more information on the user control panel.

Sending a Private Message:

There are various ways to send a private message to another member. The first is through your personal control panel:

1. From the Forums home page, select **user cp** to access your personal control panel.
2. On the right side of the page, click on **Private Messaging**.
3. Near the bottom of the page, click on the **new message** button. This will take you to a page similar to the **post thread** page.
4. Type the name of the person you would like to send a private message to in the Recipient field or find their name by clicking on **Find user names**.
5. When you are done writing your message, click on the **Send Message** button near the bottom of the page. After clicking on **Send Message**, you will be taken to your own Private Message inbox.
6. Note: If you would like to send a private message a multiple recipients on your buddy list, click on **pm to buddies** instead of **new message**. Select the names of all your buddies you would like to write, and click **Compose Message** to write your private message.

The second is from the user list:

1. From the Forums home page, select **members** near the top right corner of the page. This will take you to a list of registered forum members.
2. Find the name of the member you wish to private message and click on their name. This will take you to their member profile.
3. Click on **Send "username" a Private Message!** where "username" is the person's name. You will now see a page similar to the **post thread** web page.
4. Follow the same procedures for posting and click on the **Send Message** button when done. After clicking on **Send Message**, you will be taken to your own Private Message inbox.

The third is from a post:

1. From a post, select **pm** from the buttons at the bottom of a post to private message the post's author.
2. Follow the same procedures as you would to post a message and click on the **Send Message** button

Checking Your Private Messages:

To check your private messages, click on **user cp** from the Forums home page. You will be taken to your user control panel.

Under the first heading, you will find all of your new private messages. To view all of your private messages, click on **view all private messages** on the right side of the page or click on **Private Messages** from the blue links. This will take you to your private messages inbox.

New messages will have a yellow message symbol (), while read messages will have a blue message symbol (). Click on the private message you would like to view.

To view private messages that you have sent, click on the **Jump to folder:** drop down menu and select **Sent Items**. You will be taken to a list of all your sent private messages.

Deleting Your Private Messages:

To delete a private message, go to private messaging in your user control panel to access your private messages inbox. Check the check box to the right of the message you would like to delete and click on the yellow **Delete** button.

If you are viewing a specific private message and would like to delete it, check the **Delete?** check box near the top left corner of the message and click on the **Delete** button.

Replying to a Private Message:

When viewing a specific private message, click on the **send reply** button near the

bottom of the message. Type your message as you would a regular post, and click on the **Send Message** button. You will be taken back to your private messages inbox page. The message you replied to will now have a blue message symbol with an arrow over it () to indicate that you have sent a reply.

Message Tracking:

Message tracking lets you find out if your sent private messages have been viewed by their recipients. From your private messages inbox, click on the **pm tracking** button near the bottom of the page. You will be taken to the **Message Tracking** page.

All of the private messages you have sent that have not yet been viewed will be shown. Here, you can cancel any messages that you do not want sent so long as the recipient has not yet read them. You can also restore any messages that you have cancelled so that they will be sent again.

Moderating Forums

All instructors who have requested forums will also be created as moderators for their forums. Log into the moderator control panel by first signing in on the main forums screen at <http://www.classguide.net/rutgers/forums> and then going to the moderator control panel screen at <http://www.classguide.net/rutgers/forums/mod/>

Adding an Announcement:

You can add an announcement that will be visible on the main page of your forum.

1. Log into the forum and then go to the [moderator control panel](#).
2. To add an announcement, click on **Add** from the left menu. The **Add New Announcement** page will open.
3. Type in your title in the **Title** field. This title will display like subjects in a post.
4. Enter the announcement's start and end dates to ensure that the announcement is inserted and removed when you want.
5. Type your announcement message in the appropriate box.
6. To select which forum to display your announcement in, click on the **Forum** drop down box and select the forum you want from the list of forums that you moderate.
7. To add the announcement, click on the **Save** button at the bottom of the page.

Editing an Announcement:

While logged into the moderator control panel, to edit an announcement, click on **Edit** from the left menu. A list of all forums and announcements will open. Find the announcement you want and click on **Edit** to the right of it.

Make any changes you wish to the announcement. If you would like to move your announcement to another forum, click on the **Forum** drop down box and select the appropriate forum.

When you are done, click on the **Save Changes** button at the bottom of the window. You will be brought back to the list of all forums and announcements page with a confirmation at the top that should say **Record updated!**

Deleting an Announcement:

While logged into the moderator control panel, to delete an announcement, first navigate to the list of current announcements by clicking on **Edit** under **Announcements** on the left panel of the screen.

Find the announcement you want and click on **Remove** next to the announcement you would like to delete. A page will open asking to confirm the deletion.

Click on **Yes**. The announcement will be deleted.

Moderating New Posts:

This function allows you to screen posts and validate them before they are viewable to all forum users. Since this function not only slows down the flow of communication between users and gives the moderator the hefty task of going through a large amount of posts for validation, it is highly recommended that this function not be used.

Banning Users:

You may wish to ban users who you do not want to post to your forum or who abuse their privileges. Before taking this action, please speak with Barclay Barrios to try and resolve the problem.

1. However, if you need to ban a user, click on **Ban** under **Users** on the left menu in the moderator's control panel.
2. Next, type in the user's name that you wish to ban.
3. You now have the option to ban the user or to view the user's profile. Although you can view a user's profile, you cannot change any of the given information. Banning a user puts them into the **Banned by Moderators** user group. You can only ban normal registered users, not other moderators or super moderators.
4. If you wish to readmit a banner user, please e-mail Barclay Barrios at barriosb@rci.rutgers.edu with the user name.

Mass Move/Prune:

This thread control function moves large amounts of posts from one forum to another. You should not have much use for this function and should refrain from moving posts from your forum to someone else's.

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Contact Barclay Barrios (barclay.barrios@rutgers.edu)

This thread control function deletes posts older than a specified date. You can also delete all posts within a forum by a specified user. Unless you have a large amount of posts within your forum, you generally should not have to use this function.