

Online Assignments Using LON-CAPA

LON-CAPA (Learning Online Network with Computer Assisted Personalized Approach) is a Learning Content Management and Assessment System (LCMAS). You will be using LON-CAPA this semester to access, complete and submit online problem sets. This will provide you with the opportunity to practice solving problems and to receive feedback about your performance.

The LON-CAPA system is under intense development, and while we are using the latest release of the software it is possible that you may occasionally experience some technical difficulty. Please report any difficulties you encounter with the system by E-Mail to Jeff Nugent, jsnugent@vcu.edu.

Accessing LON-CAPA

Access to LON-CAPA at VCU is restricted to registered students in specific courses. You may access LON-CAPA by going to either of the following URLs

<http://loncapa.vcu.edu> or <http://loncapa2.vcu.edu>

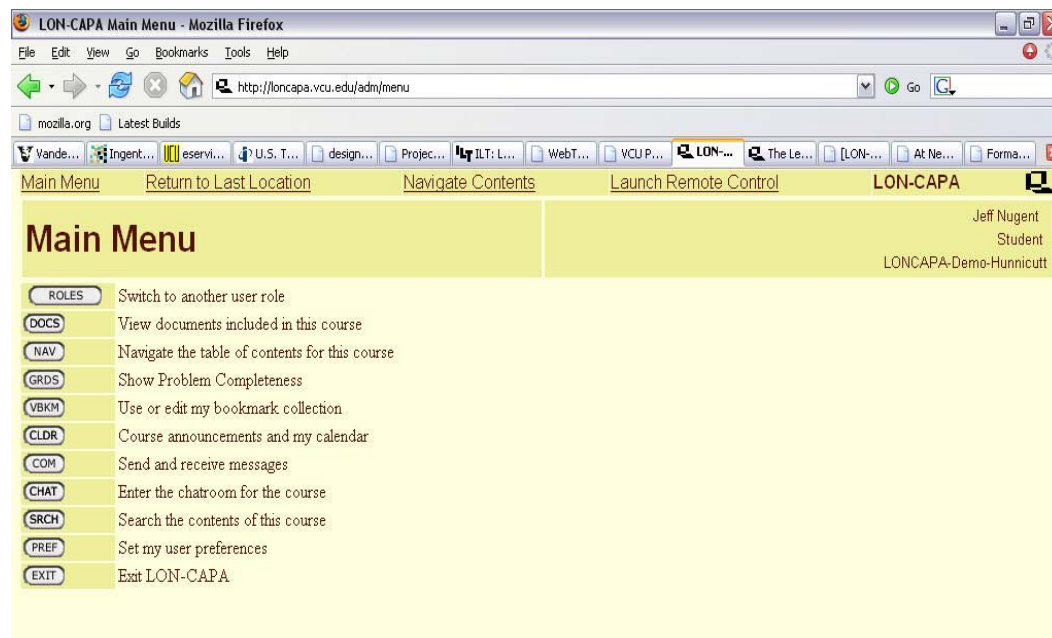
Login to LON-CAPA

At the login page you will need to provide a **username** and **password**. Your username is the prefix of your VCU email address, and the password is your **eight (8) digit student number**. This student number (which begins with a "7") can be accessed at the eServices home page:

https://iserver.adm.vcu.edu/AIS/STU/S_ESERV_HOME.html Login and click the link to "Student Number" to access your number.

Working in LON-CAPA

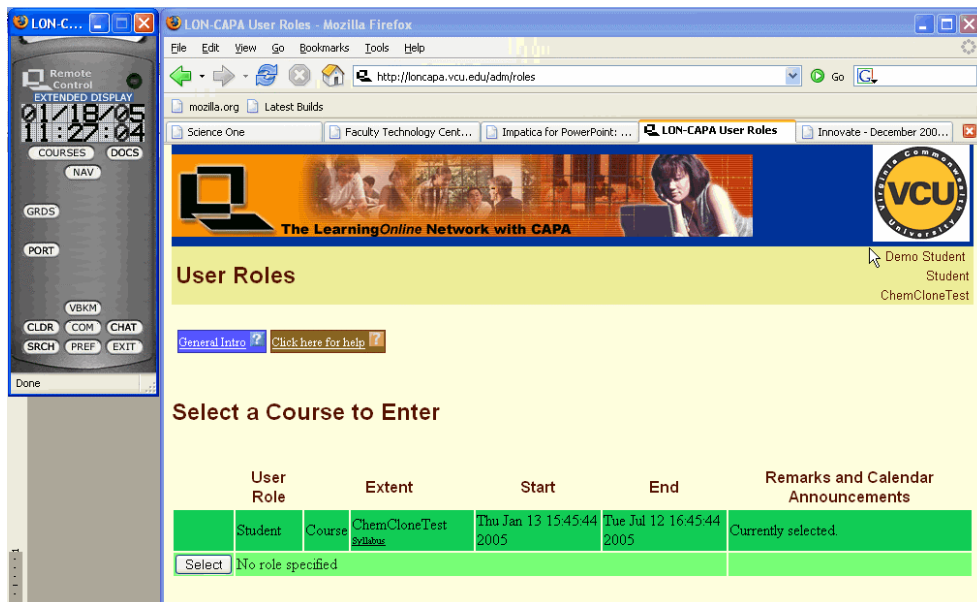
Once you have logged-in, your main browser window will show the course(s) in which you are enrolled. Depending on how your instructor has set certain course preferences you may be taken to the first homework assignment, a course syllabus, or an assignments page. A *pop-up* LON-CAPA Remote Control should also appear which will help you to navigate and work within LON-CAPA. You may also work in LON-CAPA without the *Remote Control*. Simply click on close ("X") in the right corner to collapse it. You will then be prompted to click "Continue" to use the inline menu shown below. The inline menu provides brief descriptions of each button area that you might find help when beginning to use LON-CAPA.



Using the Remote Control to Navigate

In order to view and use the Remote Control your web browser must be set to permit pop-ups from loncapa.vcu.edu (Please see *Technical Issues* below for more specific detail).

If the remote disappears, it may simply be behind the main browser window. If not, then your main browser window will provide some Menu options at the top, one of which is “Launch Remote Control”. If the browser fails to launch successfully your browser - or other installed software - is preventing popups. While you can navigate without the Remote Control, using options from the “Main Menu”, it is highly preferable to use a browser which permits the use of the Remote. It is best to resize your main browser window so that both it and the Remote Control can appear side by side. The remote control will not “float” on top of an open web browser window.



Use the Remote Control to navigate the course materials and access different feature within LON-CAPA. By placing your mouse over any button you can view its full name in the “Extended Display” area of the Remote Control. Some control buttons on the Remote are available only while you are in certain areas within LON-CAPA. Follow the general guidelines below to get started with your assignments:

- Use the “NAV” button to display the entire course map and select the resources you wish to view.
- Once you have accessed an assignment, you can use the arrow buttons on the remote to proceed sequentially through the homework. The due dates for open problems are shown both at the top of the respective pages and also in the NAV map for course contents.
- Before answering any questions you may find it convenient to obtain a printout of the assignment (for instructions see section below on Creating Assignment Printouts).
- Enter your answers to questions, on-line, paying special attention to use of units and significant figures, as directed in the questions.
- There are often multiple questions on one page. Be sure to scroll to the bottom, so as not to miss anything. Clicking on any “Submit” button will submit, for grading, all answers that you have typed on that page.
- You get a fixed number of tries at each question (set by your instructor). The (number of tries used) / (the maximum number of tries) is displayed below the “Submit Answer” button.
- Many students leave homework until the last moment. This can result in increased load on the LON-CAPA server and may cause delays in access and submitting your assignments. Keep up with assignment and complete them before the due date if possible.

- No answers will be accepted for credit after the due date and time. Problems have open and closed access dates, after the due date / time has been reached you will not be able to access the assignment.
- When you have finished a session (for security reasons), ALWAYS click on the "EXIT" button in the **Remote Control** and then *exit from the web browser*.

Creating Assignment Printouts in LON-CAPA

To print a set of homework questions in a condensed format, click on "PRT" while viewing any problem in the current set. Select the second choice "*Problem(s) in Assignment #...*", then click on the "Next" icon to advance to a screen which allows you to deselect certain problems (if desired).

Then click on "Next" again. A pdf file will be created, but not downloaded until you click on your name which will appear as the last item on the subsequent screen. It is advisable to obtain a printout BEFORE answering any questions; the question format changes in the display upon answering a question and may render the printout less convenient. If for any reason you get an error message when attempting to create a printout using this feature, forward details to: jsnugent@vcu.edu

Sending Messages in LON-CAPA

To send or read internal email (i.e. to other members of the class, including instructors use the "COM" (Communication) button. Any messages sent using the "COM" button are readable only from within *LON-CAPA*, by the specified (registered) recipients.

Discussing Assignments in LON-CAPA

A "Post Discussion" option appears at the bottom of many pages in the homework. Your instructor will determine whether or not to enable the discussion feature.

The role of the discussion feature is to enable you to discuss homework problems with your classmates. Please note that this is a group learning tool which is intended to promote the exchange of ideas, NOT answers. Feel free to use this feature to fully discuss the homework. However, **DO NOT post answers without explanations. Neither should you post (nor paste) complete questions with answers or with requests for the answers.** The amount you learn and remember depends on your own thought and effort. Instructors will monitor the discussion, and may choose to participate or provide guidance.

Technical Issues with LON-CAPA

Web Browser - Your web browser (Internet Explorer, Netscape, Firefox, etc.) must be set to allow both *JavaScript* and *Cookies*, for LON-CAPA to work. Most major, current web browsers are supported. However, there are known bugs with browsers on Macintosh computers (some HTML characters may not display correctly). Internet Explorer versions 3.x or lower are **NOT** supported. Also, IE 5.0 (which came with WIN98 installations) will probably **NOT** work and should be upgraded to a more recent version.

Windows XP - If you have recently installed Service Pack 2 for Windows XP, then you will need to permit pop-ups from *.vcu.edu if you want to use the *LON-CAPA* Remote Control in Internet Explorer.

Security Software - Any security software that filters pop-ups or blocks cookies can also prevent the correct functioning of your browser with LON-CAPA. In particular, if you try to use both Zone Alarm and the WinXP SP2 firewall at the same time you will almost certainly have difficulty accessing LON-CAPA.

Technical Support

The VCU Help desk does NOT provide support for LON-CAPA.

Please immediately report any technical problems or system failures to Jeff Nugent by email (jsnugent@vcu.edu) or phone 827-0563. In your email include as much detail as possible, i.e., your name, your course, what happened, when and the web browser / operating system / internet service provider (ISP) you were using at the time.