

Blackboard Tips: Adding a Virtual Background to Collaborate



Online meeting participants often do not wish others to see their current environment in the background while they are meeting. While virtual backgrounds are not currently built in to Blackboard (<https://blackboard.uscupstate.edu/>) Collaborate, virtual backgrounds from Snap Camera may be used for a similar effect.

Purpose and Applications

- Use a virtual background to ensure privacy of your surroundings during a Collaborate session.
- Share virtual backgrounds with students to ensure their privacy during Collaborate sessions, thus ensuring that students do not feel judged for the environment in which they are attending.
- Introduce students to other Snap Camera lenses to engage with Afrofuturist, artificial reality, animated, and other alternative forms of embodiment in courses that address these issues and themes.

Download and Install Snap Camera

- Go to [Snap Camera](https://snapcamera.snapchat.com/) at <https://snapcamera.snapchat.com/> and click on the Download button.
- Agree to the Privacy Policy. Your email address is not necessary to download the application.
- Download for either a Mac or PC.
- Open the Snap Camera application.



Figure 1. Snap Camera shortcut on desktop

- Found between the image of yourself on camera and featured filters and lenses, you will find the **Search Lenses** search bar.

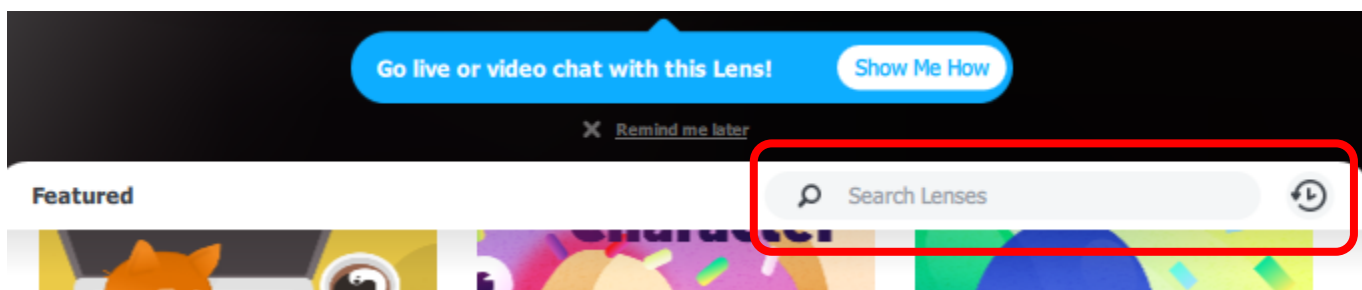


Figure 2. Search bar

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- Click on the search bar and type **Upstate**. Several Upstate-themed lenses will be shown.

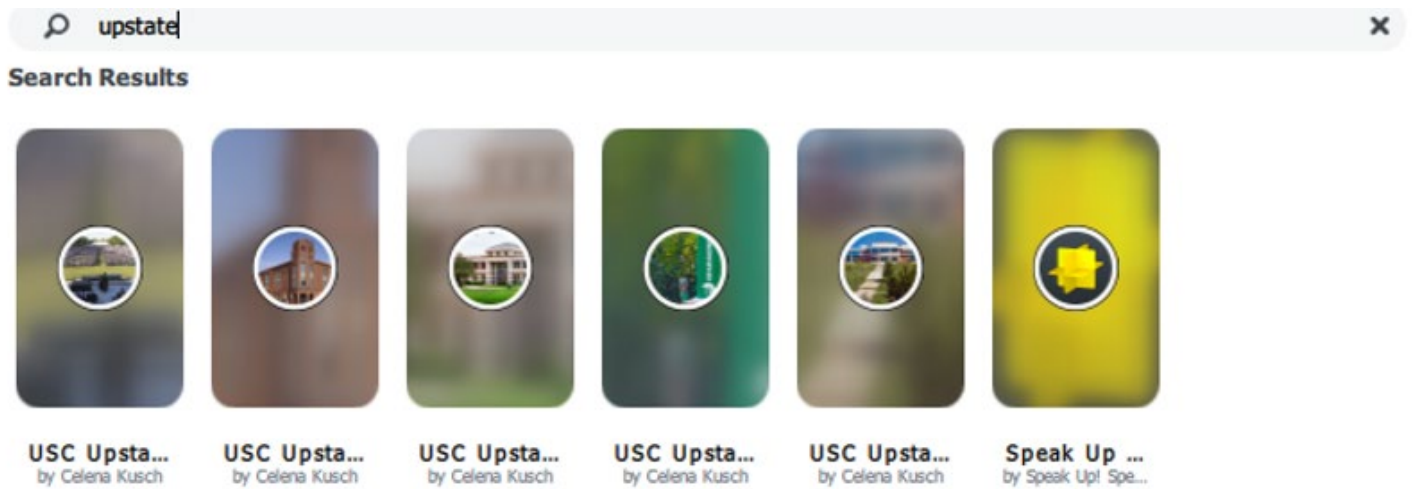


Figure 3. USC Upstate Snap Camera lenses

- After marking your lens favorites, close the search bar. You will return to the main screen.
- In the upper left-hand corner, a yellow star will now appear. These are your favorites. Click on this icon.

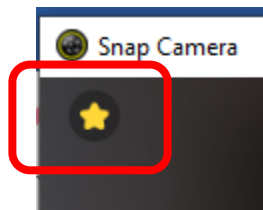


Figure 4. Select an image for use

- Select the image that you wish to use. You will immediately see the lens act as a background behind you.

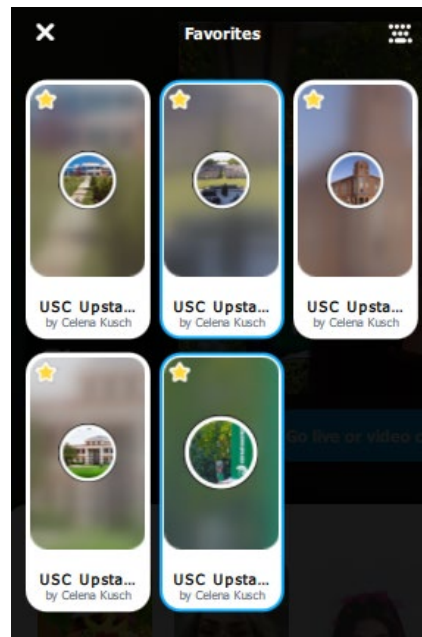


Figure 5. Snap Camera Favorites

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Using Snap Camera Lens as Background in Collaborate

- Be sure that you are already running Snap Camera before you join your Collaborate session.
- Login to Blackboard (<https://blackboard.uscupstate.edu/>) and navigate to the Collaborate meeting you wish to attend.
- Join the session or click on the link provided to you by the moderator.

Event Details



Figure 6. Join session in Collaborate

- When you enter the Collaborate room, click on the purple tab with two arrows found in the lower right-hand corner of the screen to edit the options.

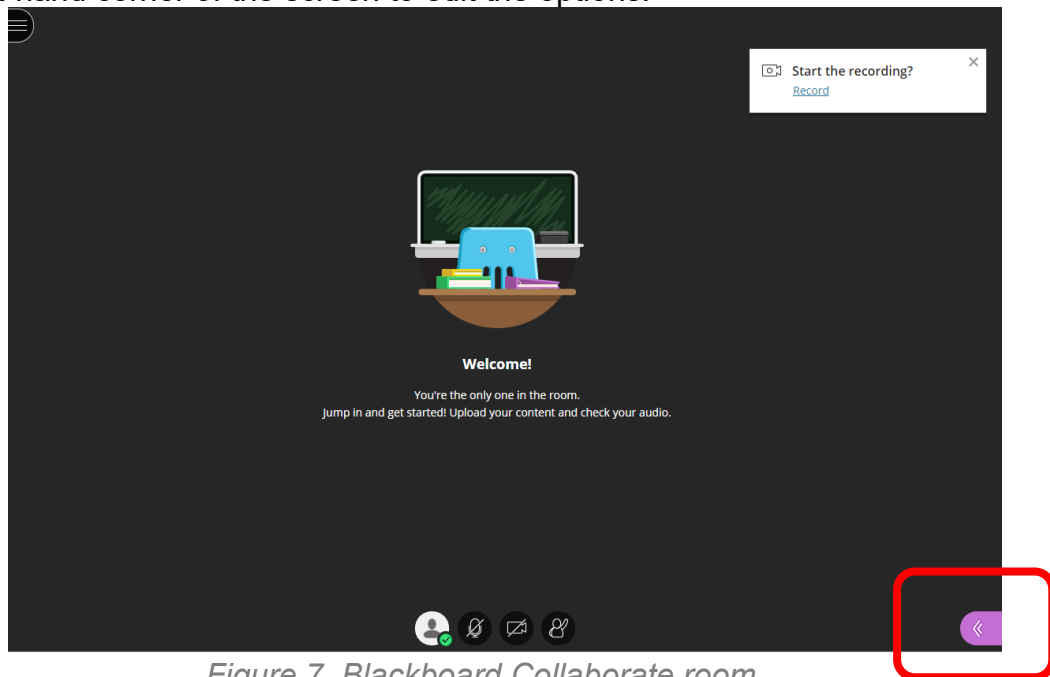


Figure 7. Blackboard Collaborate room

- Select the Gear icon (My Settings).

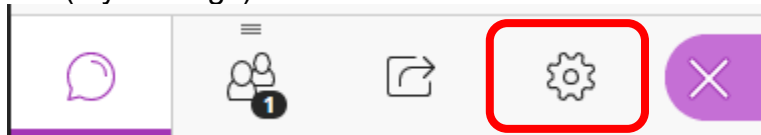


Figure 8. Options feature in Collaborate

- In the **Audio and Video Settings**, select *Set up your camera and microphone*.
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Audio and Video Settings ^


 Set up your camera and microphone

Figure 9. Snap Camera Favorites

- Perform the Audio test as necessary. Adjust the settings from the default if you prefer another method of listening to the session.

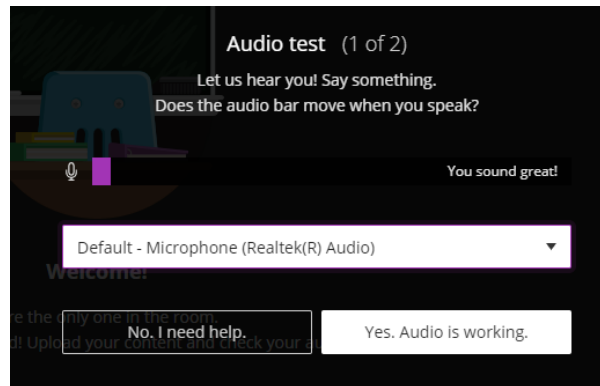


Figure 10. Audio test in Collaborate

- Perform the same process for the Video test. In this case, the default is for the integrated webcam on the computer.

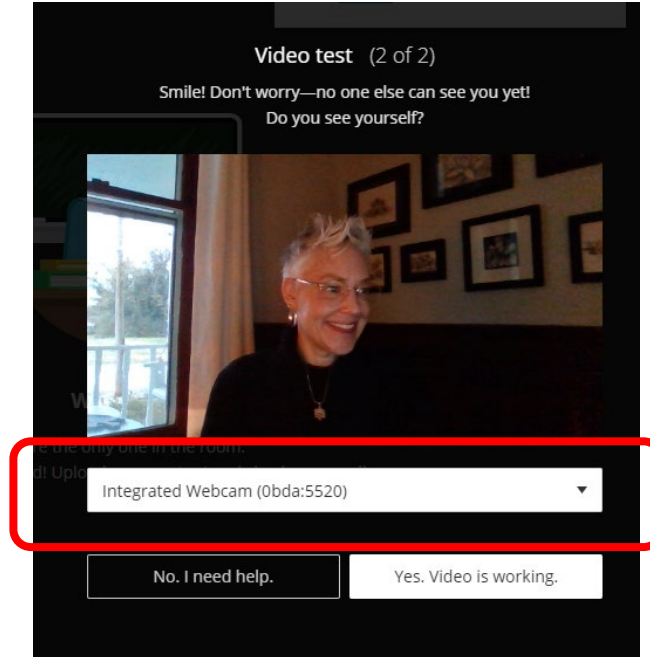


Figure 11. Video test in Collaborate

- Click the down arrow in the Integrated Webcam option to select Snap Camera.

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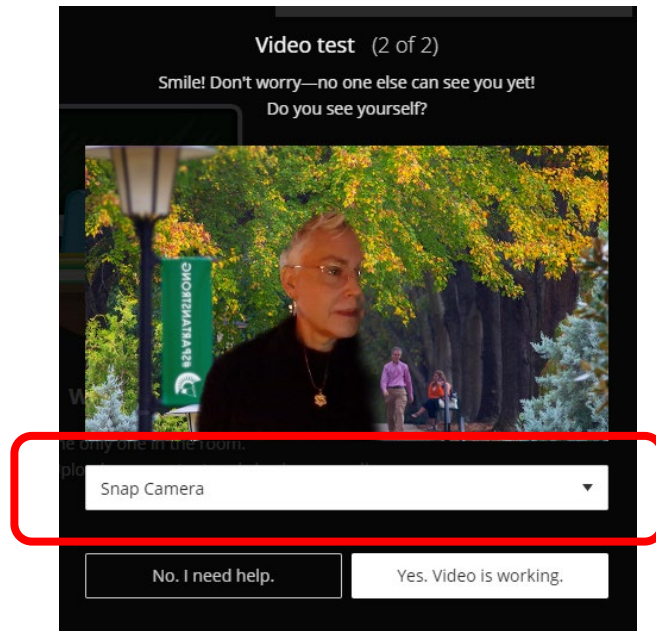


Figure 12. Snap Camera selected in video test

- When you chose to share your camera, the snap camera background image will be the one shared with your students or colleagues. This may be visible in the lower left-hand corner of the Collaborate room.

Quick Tips

- Background images can help people feel more comfortable during synchronous classes and online meetings. It helps protect their privacy and eliminate the feeling that they are being judged by their surroundings.
- Background images may be shared with colleagues and students to provide a uniform background for all participants.
- Give your background a professional atmosphere by using a lens.
- Although created for another university, the [Use a virtual background with Blackboard Collaborate](#) video (8:02) is very informative. Also refer to the University of Southampton [list of lenses](#) appropriate for professional communication during sessions.

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