

Summer 2010

<http://teaching.berkeley.edu/textbooks>

## Tips for Students on Textbook Affordability

Textbook costs are a major concern for most students. You can reduce the amount you spend on course materials in a variety of ways:

- Use "View Books" (linked to the online Schedule of Classes) to find out before the semester begins the textbooks required for your courses. Check with your instructor, if possible, to confirm the books are required.
- Find out the availability of different formats for your textbooks (e.g., new, used, rental, electronic, loose-leaf) and comparison shop.
- Decide where to purchase or rent your textbooks: the Cal Student Store (note that the ASUC receives proceeds from the Cal Student Store to support student organizations and groups), other bookstores (such as Ned's), or online vendors (such as Amazon).
- Explore online websites that search for lowest priced copies of new and used textbooks. These include <http://www.dealoz.com>, <http://www.campusbooks.com>, <http://www.cheap-textbooks.com>, among others.
- If you buy or rent online, try to use established, reliable vendors by reading users' reviews, and make sure you are obtaining the correct version of the textbook (use the ISBN, which is typically located on the back cover by the bar code and on the copyright page). Also, keep in mind that shipping may entail extra costs and may take one to three weeks.
- When buying used books, check both online and brick-and-mortar sources. Consider buying used books from other Berkeley students, such as through the ASUC Bookswap (<http://www.asuc.org/bookswap/>) or Berkeley Book Exchange (<http://www.comegetused.com/>)
- Electronic versions of textbooks may be cheaper than hard copy books; these may be available from the Cal Student Store or other local stores, directly from publishers, and from e-vendors such as CourseSmart (<http://www.coursesmart.com>), a consortium of major textbook publishers.
- Check to see if your textbooks are on reserve at the library.
- Check to see if any of your friends have taken the course and if you can borrow the textbook.
- Ask the instructor if it is possible to purchase an earlier, less expensive edition of the textbook or international edition.
- Be aware of return dates and policies if you wish to return what you purchased.
- Hold on to a textbook for an extra semester if it is from a course only taught once a year. The bookstore won't give top dollar if the book is not being used in the following semester. At the end of the next semester, the book can be bought back at a higher rate since it will be used in the coming semester.