

## ADVICE FOR STUDENTS ON LOWER-COST ALTERNATIVES FOR OBTAINING TEXTBOOKS

(COMPILED BY AAUP-KSU)

**Alternatives to purchasing full-priced textbooks are available in many disciplines. The most commonly recommended alternatives are as follows:**

- Check the **KSU Libraries and OhioLINK** (both regular holdings and reserves) for your textbook. For Core courses, KSU has a **Core textbook reserve** program. If your text is not on reserve, consider asking your instructor to place a copy on reserve.
  - NOTE: textbooks may NOT be requested from non-OhioLINK libraries.
- Check the **publisher's website**; often the book costs less if purchased directly from the publisher compared to purchase through the KSU Bookstore. Try purchasing homework codes directly from the publisher (this can be cheaper than purchasing bundles, but compare prices first and check with your instructor).
- Buy **used texts online** from sites such as abebooks.com, Amazon, Chegg, directtextbook.com, Ebay, Flatworld, half.com, MyArtsLab, openstax.org textbooks.com. Bookfinder.com can be used to compare prices.
- Before buying used, **consult with your instructor** to see if an older and cheaper edition is acceptable.
- Look for an **international edition** of the text on international Amazon sites or other retail sales sites. These are often cheaper than the US versions.
- Compare hard-copy prices with **e-books** and purchase the electronic version if less expensive.
- **Rent a textbook** through Amazon, Chegg, Barnes and Noble or another online source.
- **Network with fellow students** in your major or minor and **share textbooks** or arrange to purchase used texts directly from other students.

**The following discipline-specific advice was provided by faculty members anonymously. AAUP-KSU recommends that you check with your instructor to confirm that he or she approves your strategy.**

### *Aeronautics*

\* Majority of the content and textbooks are FAA publications which can be purchased, but all of them are free to download via the internet on FAA.gov.

### *Art Education*

\* Buy the significantly reduced international copy or used books on Amazon, and other sites such as Half.com. I don't recommend renting them--students will need them again for their Major Review.

### *Art History*

\* Look for online options; Stokstad has an online e-book through MyArtsLab. Access paying through the site is less than half the cost of a new textbook; green access cards with a code for the site are a fraction still of paying through the site.

### *Business Administration*

\* Buy special KSU edition text from bookstore (which is at a reduced rate relative to other options). Use a recent past edition of the text.

\* In my PhD workshop, I have used the same textbooks for many years so that they can literally be passed down from student to student and shared within the departments.

### *Business Mgt and Related Tech*

\* I use Flatworld that they can order from directly. About half the cost of typical text books. Also suggest they can share or get from a previous student.

### *Chemistry*

\* Attend every lecture and take good notes. Read the notes very carefully and if there is any question(s), visit Professor's office hours for clarifications. This way you don't need the textbook(s)!

\* Oftentimes textbooks are available at a much lower cost directly from the publisher at a website, rather than from the University Bookstore, which adds very high (~40% sometimes) mark-ups.

### *Computer Science*

\* Don't buy the book, come to lecture. Buy a older version, the material is the same. Get another book that is cheaper - they are all pretty much the same. Use online resources (I have pointers to these on the course website)

### *Computer Technology*

\* Use electronic textbooks purchased from publishers. Instant access, you don't have to wait for texts to be mailed to you, cheaper, you can even rent chapters, use OpenSource software, use resources of SafariOnline subscription for tech books, Dreamspark for Microsoft OS and apps, Student Advantage program for Office, etc.

\* Rentals, libraries, share books, come to office hours to borrow mine, and I try to keep cost in mind when electing resources

### *Construction Management*

\* Students who join our Construction Management Student Organization receive free lunches and textbooks for most CMGT courses. This is a program I have been handling for the past 9 years.

### *Early Childhood Educ*

\* Don't sell your books at the end of the semester because you will need them again (we plan for books that build your professional library).

### *Economics*

\* Ask the professor if a previous version of the textbook would be acceptable (especially for introductory classes, but I would for all classes); used previous versions are often available for very low prices. Share a textbook with another student (but this means you have to start studying early for exams)

### *Engineering Technology*

\* purchase international version

### *English*

\* Ask the professor if there is a library copy - photocopies of anthology readings can be less expensive than the text itself.

\* Buy a Kindle. I try to use only books that are available for the Kindle (as well as in print.)

\* In ESL, we recommend getting texts from bookstore, library and/or online-on used textbook sites.

\* Start shopping for textbooks early. When students register for a course, they should check the list of required textbooks and begin to search for low-cost versions of them.

\* Buy a used copy months before the class begins, not a new copy the first week of the semester.

\* Lobby to encourage instructors to opt for books that can be bought used or in earlier editions. Buy books from fellow students.

\* You might also share a text (and the cost) with someone that you know. You could purchase an older edition and copy out the new materials that differ from someone who has the new edition. You could ask your instructor to put a copy of the text on reserve in the library so that you can access it without having to purchase it.

### *Epidemiology*

\* Many books are now available free online through the library. Also, we tend to reuse the same textbook, so used books are helpful.

\* They can google textbooks - there are many online in pdf form that they can use instead of purchasing. They can also check the library because we have some books on reserve.

## *Finance*

\* Stay with the packages (text, e-book, and homework/study software) that we work to negotiate; stay away from used books (you'll pay more for the software than the packages); use direct-to-student links from the publisher.

## *Geology*

\* lower division courses-online reading assignments from reliable scientific sites such as usgs, noaa, nasa, amnh, smithsonian,-free upper division course, combine online reading assignments from journals (free thru KSU) with used textbooks

## *History*

\* I always put copies of my books on library reserve. If it is a hardship to purchase textbooks, always check to see if copies can be borrowed from your campus library. If your instructor or professor has not put books on library reserve, encourage them to do so. At the same time, students should be aware that when it comes to learning a new subject - you pay for what you get. Good quality textbooks and readings cost money because it takes a lot of people to produce scholarship that is worth reading. That being said, most publishers now offer a variety of formats for textbooks - including e-versions that are often cheaper. Also, it usually seems to be cheaper to purchase textbooks online rather than at the campus bookstore. However, students who purchase online should do so in advance of the start of the course so that they can have all readings for the start of the semester.

\* Most history faculty take care to avoid using textbooks that cost over \$100; we can do this in our discipline b/c there is a lot of choice in the textbook market. For the other required readings, USE OHIOLINK. You can get practically every other book we use for free.

\* Provided the professor signs off on it, look for older editions of the course textbook, especially if you are taking a lower-division course. In my experience, new editions of lower-level course textbooks these days typically add new links to online resources and do not change much of the content. The older editions are cheaper as you can find them used on the internet.

## *Human Dev and Family Studies*

\* Explore electronic versions of the text. Rent a textbook, which is a shame if you want to keep it as a future reference. Ask professors in advance for the book information. In some cases they can pick a class based on what reading is offered.

### *Journalism and Mass Communic*

\* Shop online for the best deals. Avoid the bookstore on campus. This requires planning, since shipping can take time. - Ask the instructor if the previous edition of a text will get the job done. These editions, purchased online, often sell for a fraction of the current edition -Realize that many companies other than Amazon sell books online and have access to sizable inventories of used texts. -Lobby your home department for some relief. Ask that faculty consider less-costly options, including using smaller portions of texts (and a broader range of texts) that can be shared under the Fair Use Doctrine.

### *Library and Information Scienc*

\* I am a practicing librarian/associate professor, rather than a classroom teaching professor. My advice to students is to check if the textbook for their course is provided by the library as a "Core Textbook." There are pros and cons to using these. Pro: no purchase cost. Con: students have a time limit each time they use these.

\* Using the resources in the library; KSU has subscription to publishers such as Springer and their ebooks are available through KSU library. Try to use Open Access content

\* Post an announcement on the student listserv for used copies from other students

### *Management and Info Systems*

\* I work with publishers to try to get the best price for them. Sometimes publishers will provide a better price if students purchase through them rather than through a store.

\*I advocate they start with the following website: [www.findbookprices.com](http://www.findbookprices.com)

\* 1. Use a previous edition 2. Use International Editions of books, especially for the graduate classes 3. Rent from Chegg or Amazon

### *Managerial Marketing*

\* I use a custom book in order to reduce the cost of the textbook to less than \$40. Used books are also available, particularly through direct sales from one student to another (our seniors to our juniors).

## *Marketing*

- \* Clegg or older editions as long as they are willing to adapt certain parts of the information to newer edition.
- \* 1. Do not attempt to reduce your expenses. Buy the required textbook. 2. IF you choose to not purchase the required book, see if you can rent it, borrow it, or find a used edition. 3. If you cannot do that, get an earlier edition, but realize it may affect your grade.
- \* I got rid of a textbook. Some readings they can get for free. About 10 they pay \$3.99 for at Harvard Business Publishing. I try to keep the cost ~\$50.

## *Mathematics*

- \* If the course uses electronic grading of homework, I would suggest that the student contact the publisher of the textbook to determine if there is a microsite available that the student may purchase the text and the access code for turning in homework. This may be more competitive than purchasing through the bookstore (and so would not be very popular with them).
- \* (1) Use e-Textbook if the instructor uses the publisher software. (2) Use the older version of the textbook
- \* if student is using online homework system he may not buy a textbook and e\_book provided. He should pay for only access to online website
- \* Listen to their instructor who will give information on the best place to purchase materials.
- \* Custom-made bundles are usually best deals. Otherwise, purchase used books or e-books whenever possible.
- \* Consider multiple sections of the same course. Some professors use less expensive materials. Shop around; prices may vary greatly even for the same text depending on who is selling it, whether it is new or used, etc.
- \* Many authors permitted to download copies of their books from their own websites at no charge. Use them!

## *Music*

- \* Check the library for Core classes - those textbooks are available there. Also, because music majors spend so much time together (shared classes, ensembles, etc.), sharing a book with a friend sometimes works.

\* Use scores in the public domain via IMSLP.org and other open-source sites like openmusiclibrary.org. For recordings, search on Spotify (free) and YouTube.

*No Subject* [The variety of advice offered here makes it important that you check with your instructor]

\* Look for an instructor that does not use a textbook or (more importantly) does not use additional required software that must be purchased.

\* Many science and math instructors will provide a list of end-of-chapter homework problems for older textbook editions upon request. Ask your instructor if this is an option. If your instructor requires online homework, buy a used (previous edition) textbook and then purchase the homework code directly from the book publisher. Try this option instead of textbook/homework code bundles often sold by retailers. This strategy can save hundreds of dollars.

\* Buy online, and EARLY, at least have the books when the semester begins.

\* The library has a 'core textbook on reserve program' that makes a number of textbooks available to student for short term loan. I would like the students to see at the time of registration which textbooks are available in the library for loan.

\* Don't NOT buy the books, for my class at least. For others, perhaps the books aren't necessary or helpful. I see students reduce expenses by not getting the books, then end up in the dark.

\* Don't bother getting the book. We cover everything in lectures, handouts, and Ppoints.

\* The cheapest text (old or new) is the best. Except when there is online material (homework, etc). In that case choosing the exact text and/or online support is very important.

### *Nursing*

\* rent, share, or borrow texts; buy use online (problem with these ideas is that anything but new texts often results in students not having access to online resources that normally come with new texts)

\* We utilize bundling from the publishers which decreases the cost of each text by 35-40% and this is available from the bookstore.

\* I teach in the graduate program and we use the same books throughout the whole program.



## *Philosophy*

- \* For Kent Core classes, the library has copies of the texts to check out.
- \* The faculty often use primary sources that are available as used editions (many are found in the \$9-\$12 range). Logic texts and contemporary philosophy tend to be the most expensive in our discipline. Students might want to look for online sources for those items.
- \* Check prices at Amazon.com. See whether students who took the course the previous semester would be willing to sell you their text for the buy-back price the bookstore would give them.

## *Physical Educ - Professional*

- \* Buy the textbooks early on as you will use them throughout the program. Purchase only the required texts.

## *Physical Therapist Assist Tech*

- \* I suggest they rent books for "non-essential" reference texts; that is, for classes which they may not require the text book to study for their licensure exam upon completion of the program

## *Physics*

- \* Make sure they contact their professor and ask IF it is necessary to buy a book for the course. Also make sure that they get the correct product for auxiliary stuff like clickers, online testing etc.
- \* Ask for reference copy (or copies) of the text to be made available through the Kent State Library or request instructor to use e-book or provide detailed notes in lieu of a textbook.
- \* The online version of the textbook may be less expensive if combined with an online homework grading system. Keep very good notes. Ask professor to post his/her slides on blackboard. All of the above are not great answers.... I wish we could find less expensive textbooks.... and this is something we should work on!
- \* I have a free online book in one class, but most of the time the publishers make it hard to buy books online. It usually isn't worth it to try to save money instead of buying the new book.

## *Psychology*

- \* Be sure to check out all of the available formats for the textbooks before making your decision. Renting and electronic versions will usually save you money if you don't mind not having your own version to keep.
- \* I post a document on Blackboard learn with all of the textbook options available for my course and the relative advantages and disadvantages of each: 1) new book (most expensive); 2) ebook (less expensive, but do not get to sell it back or easily share with others); 3) loose-leaf/binder-ready (cheaper but no sell-back); 4) used book on amazon; 5) early edition (use at your own risk), etc. If his/her other professors do not provide this information for their courses, then I suggest that he/she (the student) contact the publishers of their course textbooks and see if there are cheaper options available.
- \* Renting online (usually from the publisher) is the cheapest, or try to buy from people who took the class last semester. Other online sites are good to investigate.

## *Respiratory Therapy Technology*

- \* Certain textbooks can be used throughout the program and are required. Ask your instructor prior to the start of each semester which textbooks should be purchased and which can be rented to save money.

## *School Psychology*

- \* Selecting a single book series (four volumes) that covers virtually all of the content area for this program. What this means is that the students have a set of texts, costing about \$240, that carries them through six full semesters.

## *Social and Behavioral Sciences*

- \* Purchase used books; check with faculty regarding whether prior editions are still acceptable.

## *Sociology*

- \* Ask the instructor if you can use an earlier edition of the book. I say yes to that unless differences between editions are very pronounced. I will put a copy of the textbook on reserve

at the library, and any student can come and use it for two hours. They can opt to make copies of important pages.

\* Look early, campus book store will price match now.

### *Spanish*

\* I prefer my students purchase their books rather than rent or borrow because I want students to keep the books as reference materials. I let them know when earlier editions are acceptable.

\* Lower division courses in Spanish require students to purchase a book with access to an electronic platform. Unfortunately, there are a few options on how to save money when purchasing this textbook. The publisher offers a package, which initially seems like a good deal only if the students continue for 4 semesters. For upper division courses, if possible they can purchase used editions.

### *Speech Pathology and Audiology*

\* Rent the text. I try to use a text more than one year so that you can purchase used from the class ahead of you.

### *Sports Administration*

\* I don't use textbooks and only use research articles that are available from the library, which I make available to students via Blackboard Learn. Thus there are no textbook costs for my classes.

### *Technology*

\* Buy the Book, it covers foundational material you will encounter the rest of your career.

### *Theatre*

\* Much of this depends on the specific class. But plays and many theatre books can be gotten inexpensively second hand, or from places like abebooks.com

\* I specifically mention half.com and that they shouldn't buy them retail from a bookstore when they can get them for pennies on the dollar used online. My texts are on reserve on the library as well.

\* Art supplies are important to invest in good quality products, not the cheapest nor the most expensive. They will last longer and serve you better by being easier to use.