Guide for Buying College Textbooks

Textbooks are surprisingly expensive, but textbooks are essential to success in college. Textbooks can cost as much as $600 per semester (https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/college-costs/quick-guide-college-costs). Below are a few tips for making textbook purchases.

Currently at OU, students cannot charge textbooks to their financial aid. Textbook purchases are considered an “out of pocket” expense. If you cannot afford to purchase the textbooks out of pocket and your financial aid is not complete, you should consider withdrawing and attending in a future term. See the Financial Aid Office for more information.

Visit the Bobcat Depot bookstore and take a copy of your class schedule.

- The bookstore will have textbooks for OU-C courses only. If you have classes from other campuses, you may have to order textbooks for those classes. Ask the Bobcat Depot personnel for assistance with this or visit www.bobcatedepot.ohio.edu.
- Look at the shelf tags, find the course, professor, class and section numbers to be sure you have the correct class and textbook.
  - Look at the tags nearby, as there may be more than one textbook required for the class.
  - Consult bookstore staff if you have questions. They can be a great help.
- Look at the textbook
  - Is it new, used, custom made textbook or workbook?
    - If the text is custom, you will likely only find it in the OU-C Bobcat Depot bookstore
    - If it is a workbook, you likely won’t be able to find it used.
  - If used, what is the condition?
    - Is there a lot of writing or highlighting? Texts with highlighting may be useful to some, distracting to others.
  - What is the price?
- What is the cost to rent the text for the semester?
  - If you will need the same text next term or want to keep it, purchasing may be the better option.
  - A valid credit card is required for rental.
- Make the decision to purchase then or purchase elsewhere. Make note of the author, publisher, edition, and ISBN number (if available)
  - An ISBN number is a unique number used to identify a text across any marketplace.
  - Have a smart phone? Take a pic of the textbook cover and or shelf tag for reference.
- Ask about the bookstore’s return policy, in case you choose to drop the class or have to make a schedule change.
- Remember that your local bookstore has other supplies and items that you may need. They are an excellent resource for supplies, but also the OU apparel!

If you choose to purchase or rent elsewhere, consider the following:
- Check out the publisher’s website. Some publishers offer the e-text that may be less expensive than the physical text.
- Try to search in search engines that specialize in book searches, like chegg.com, textspyder.com, wecomparebooks.com, addall.com, coursesmart.com, bookfinder.com. They compare prices from different online vendors.

Revised 1/29/15 CN
Be sure to search for the correct edition of the textbook.

- You won’t be able to inspect the condition of the textbook.
- What will shipping costs be? Will the cost to ship the text be more than the text in the OU Bobcat Depot bookstore?
- Will textbooks arrive in time for the start of classes?
- Be sure to read and understand seller’s policy on recalling a rented text.
- Ask about the online seller’s return policy, in case you choose to drop the class or have to make a schedule change.

**Other things to consider:**

- Ask friends or relatives, if they have texts for the courses you are taking.
- The OU-C Libraries typically won’t have copies of textbooks on the shelf to check out. However, many professors will place textbooks on “reserve” for students to use in the library for short periods of time.
- Other state university libraries may have the text you are seeking. Check the “OhioLink” database on the OU-C library webpage. An OU-C Librarian can assist you with this search.

**At the end of the term, you can:**

- Keep the text if you will use it for another class
- Sell the textbook back to the bookstore, called “book buyback”, at a reduced price
- Return the text to the bookstore if you rented it
- Sell it privately