

SELECTING A TEXTBOOK

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You are very likely to be able to obtain free copies of textbooks to consider for adoption for your course. Ask the department administrator for information on who handles this function for the department. Request review copies well in advance so you can compare the textbooks and chose one for your class.

When you compare textbooks consider the following:

- Does the book cover all the material in the course? Will you need to supplement the material in some sections?
- Is the content level of the material appropriate?
- Is the required math background appropriate for the course? Read several sections scattered across the book, including an especially difficult section.
- Is the material well presented and clearly explained? Are their sufficient figures and are they clearly labeled and explained?
- Is color used as an aid to understanding or is it just a costly addition?
- Look at the homework problems. Are they at an appropriate level? Are there a sufficient number to choose from?
- Are there conceptual or concept questions as well as numerical problems? Does the book come with instructor resources? If so, are they of any value? Test banks may not be nearly as useful as the publisher's representative will claim.
- Are there answer books for problems (hopefully for you but not the students)?
- Are there any websites or simulations or student homework aids or homework websites associated with the book? Copies of figures on PowerPoint or overheads may be quite valuable for supplementing your board work in lectures.
- Which textbook was used the previous time the course was taught and did the students find it helpful?
- Is there a department expectation as to what book you will use?
- How much will the book cost the students?

Your department administrator may take care of placing a textbook order with the campus bookstore. If so, let them handle this for you. Do check later and make sure the task was done. If there is a problem when the semester starts, you will be the one explaining it to the students.

Additional information below is from the Faculty Handbook 2010 Chapter 5: Academic Policies & Responsibilities.

Book Lists for Courses, page 84.

Faculty members are encouraged to submit textbook orders to the Cornell Store as promptly as possible in order to help the university manage students' total cost of education. Orders can be submitted to the store online (<http://www.store.cornell.edu/faculty.html>) or by email (textbooks@cornell.edu). Faculty may submit orders directly to the store, or work with the department's textbook coordinator. Deadlines for submitting text lists are April 15th for the fall term, November 10th for the spring term, and March 31st for the summer sessions. (These dates do vary from year to year, so please check the course materials section of the store's website for the latest information.) The Cornell Store is a department of the university and advocates for students by providing textbook shopping advice, many used books, a convenient returns process during drop/add, and paying good value for unneeded books at the end of each semester. In addition to providing traditional textbook services, The Cornell Store can assist faculty in providing departmentally authored materials, custom course packs and copyright clearance. Deadlines for such services are similar to book list deadlines. See the website for more information. Faculty can help minimize students' textbook expenses by informing the store well before the end of the term of the text they will use the following term. This enables students to receive the highest possible value for books they sell at the store's biannual textbook buyback event. Early adoptions also increase the store's ability to locate as many used books as possible from national wholesalers. The Cornell Store provides desk copy forms, as well as a database of publisher information, both are available online at the course materials section of the Store's website. Requests for desk copies should be made directly to publishers.