

Required Course Materials During COVID-19

Planning for the Fall 2020 semester, Leonard Lief Library faculty encourage active input from campus faculty to address identifying alternate or low-no cost online textbooks and resources to facilitate student access to required course materials.

Student success is contingent upon access to required course materials. The Library's Reserve collection provides access to textbooks for students at point of need – whether they don't possess the textbook or never purchased it due to affordability. CUNY students face daily challenges accessing textbooks, even before the pandemic. CUNY faculty [research the myriad benefits of OER and ZTC materials](#) in their courses.

Library faculty and staff are exploring options for alternatives to the print Course Reserves collection. Reserve books primarily consist of print copies of required textbooks, which students must access by physically visiting the Library. Once we reopen, we most likely will have to allow for the need to quarantine textbooks for several days between checkouts.

Unfortunately, commercial textbook publishers consistently don't offer electronic purchasing options for libraries. Many existing course textbooks are simply unavailable to any library regardless of budget in formats other than print.

The following publishers will not permit us to purchase an eTextbook version of their publications:

- Pearson
- Cengage
- McGraw Hill
- Oxford University Press
- most publishers of common reads, popular fiction, and popular non-fiction
- many health sciences texts

This means that for courses adopting textbooks by these publishers, students who do not purchase the textbook will not have any alternative access to textbook content.

Library faculty are partnering with instructors to investigate and identify viable textbook alternatives:

- Adopting an existing eBook in the relevant subject area from the [Library's eBook collection](#) or requesting that we purchase one. However, many academic eBooks aren't considered textbooks, and therefore are not available for purchase.
- Teaching with an [Open Educational Resource \(OER\)](#). OERs are freely available educational materials openly licensed to allow for re-use and modification by instructors.
- Creating an Online Reserve Packet by:
 - posting individual book chapters or excerpts and scanned copies of content, subject to copyright limitations
 - linking to content from the Library's existing collection of electronic resources (eBooks, journal articles, streaming media, and other digital materials)

Library faculty are available to assist discipline faculty in locating alternatives to required textbooks, including eBooks in our collection and OER:

- Head of Access Services - Stephen Walker, Stephen.Walker@lehman.cuny.edu
- Open Educational Resources - Stacy Katz, Stacy.Katz@lehman.cuny.edu
- Electronic Resources Librarian - Michelle Ehrenpreis, Michelle.Ehrenpreis@lehman.cuny.edu

Acknowledgements

- University of Guelph Libraries for sharing language [documenting these challenges](#)
- Grand Valley State University developed a [statement on textbooks in the library collection](#)

