Survey Results Summary

The attached survey was administered to students in the nine classes participating in the Spring 2023 OER Program. The primary purpose of this program is to increase faculty's use of quality, no-cost course materials. Students in these courses did not have to purchase any required course materials, saving over $94,000 during Spring 2023. Please see the OER Program website for more information: https://www.tntech.edu/library/textbooks/oer-program.php.

This survey aimed to gather data on the students completing the survey and feedback about their use of the no-cost course materials. Although we refer to the no-cost course materials as OERs, faculty could use a combination of free resources, OERs, and library materials as long as the cost to the students was $0.

Here are some highlights from the survey:

- Over 95% of respondents found the OERs to be about the same or better than traditional textbooks..
- Only 4% were unsatisfied with the OERs.
- If there were two sections of a course offered in the future, one with traditional textbooks and one with free course materials, only 1% of students would specifically choose the section with traditional textbooks.
- The students expressed much appreciation for no-cost course materials in the open-ended comments.

OER Program Student Survey - Spring 2023

The students completing this survey were enrolled in a course where faculty implemented OERs and other no-cost required course materials instead of using a traditional textbook. The response was 281 students out of a possible 606 (46% response rate). For more information about the program, please visit https://www.tntech.edu/library/textbooks/oer-program-sp23.php.

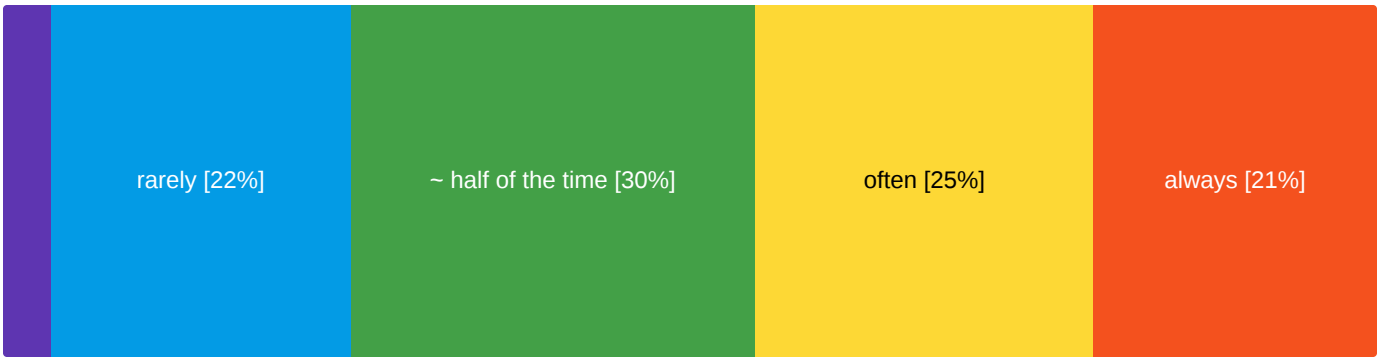
Select your class:

Response		Choice Count
Freshman	24.56%	69
Sophomore	21.71%	61
Junior	37.72%	106
Senior	16.01%	45
Total		281

What is your overall GPA (Grade Point Average) at Tech?

Response		Choice Count
This is my first semester	3.20%	9
0.0-0.9	1.07%	3
1.0-1.9	2.85%	8
2.0-2.9	24.20%	68
3.0-4.0	68.68%	193
Total		281

In general, how often do you purchase the required textbooks for your Tech classes?



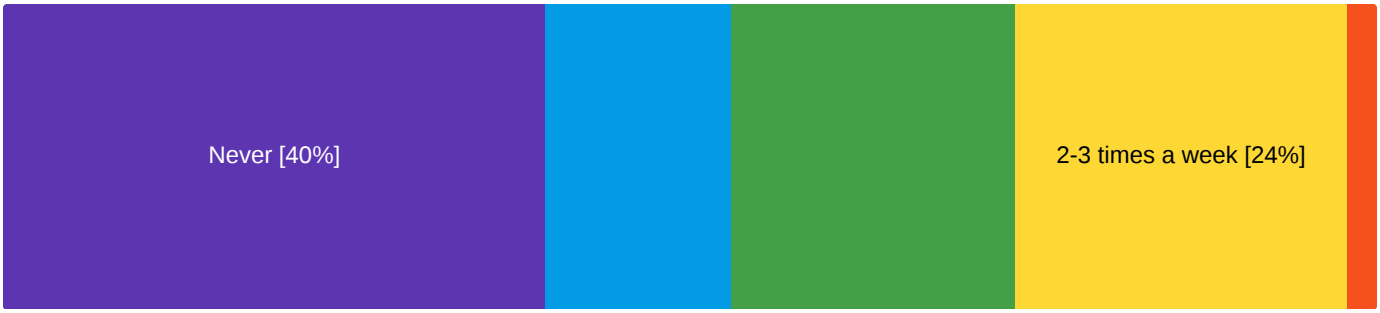
Responses by overall GPA at Tech

Response	0.0-0.9	1.0-1.9	2.0-2.9	3.0-4.0	First semester	Total
I have never purchased a required textbook	0	0	3	5	2	10
rarely	1	3	17	37	3	61
about half of the time	1	2	22	58	0	83
often	1	1	9	55	3	69
always	0	2	17	38	1	58

Please select your Spring 2023 course from the list below:

Field	Choice Count
Butler: ART 1035 Introduction to Art	60
Swartling: CHEM 3020 Organic Chemistry II	9
Crockett: CSC 3040 Professionalism, Communication, and Research in Computing	49
Bruckman: CUED 4700 Educational Data & Assessment	15
Jenkins: DS 3841 Management Information Systems	5
Li: GEOG 1012 Cultural Geography	59
Bhattacharya: GEOL 3210 Geology for Engineers	65
Henniger: PSY 3300 Introduction to Social Psychology	8
Williams: DS 3841: Management Information Systems	11
Total	281

Approximately how often did you use the required textbooks/materials for this course during the semester?

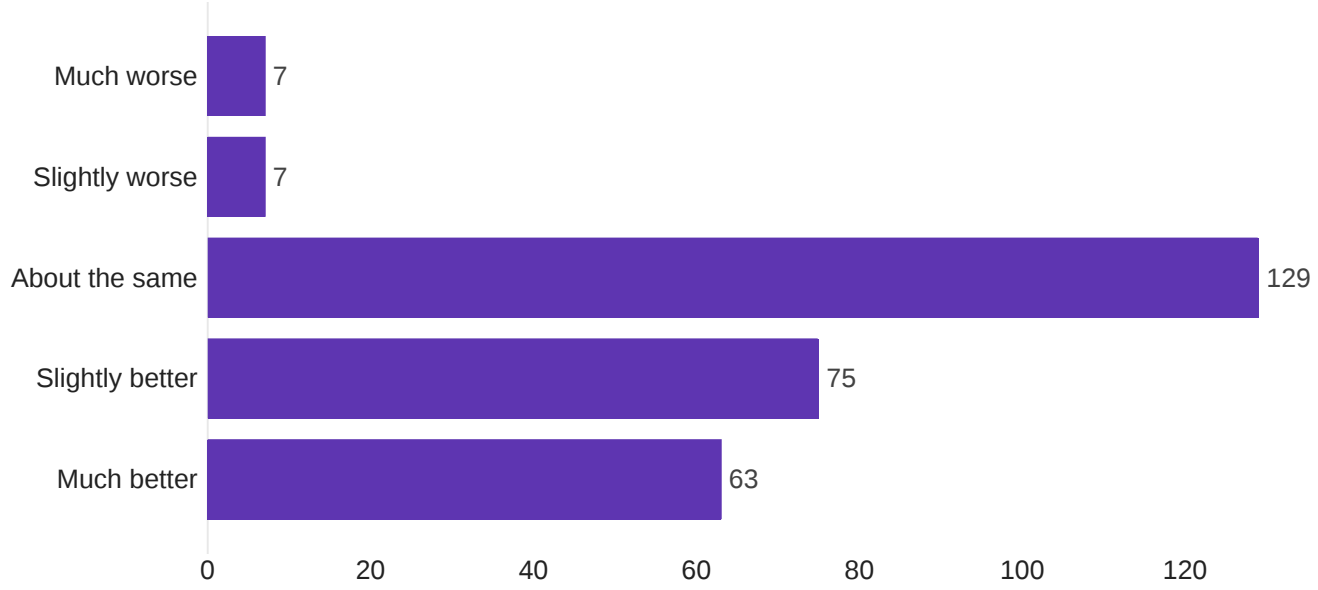


Never [40%, 111] 2-3 times [14%, 38] 2-3 times a month [21%, 58] 2-3 times a week [24%, 68]
4+ times a week [2%, 6]

Responses by course

Field	ART 1035	CHEM 3020	CSC 3040	CUED 4700	Jenkins: DS 3841	Williams: DS 3841	GEOG 1012	GEOL 3210	PSY 3300	Total
Never	22	0	24	8	0	1	25	30	1	111
2-3 times a semester	9	1	6	1	1	1	13	2	4	38
2-3 times a month	12	1	11	3	0	8	11	10	2	58
2-3 times a week	15	5	8	3	4	1	9	22	1	68
4+ times a week	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	6

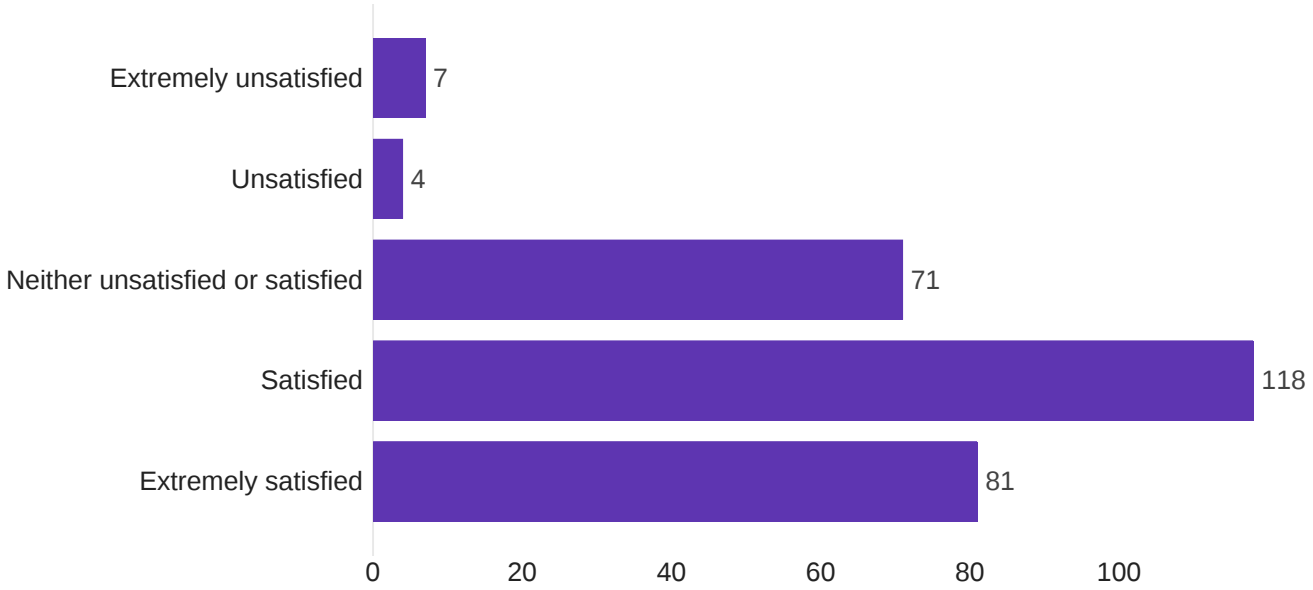
How would you compare the quality of the required textbooks/materials used in this course to your other courses?



Responses by course

Field	ART 1035	CHEM 3020	CSC 3040	CUED 4700	Jenkins: DS 3841	Williams: DS 3841	GEOG 1012	GEOL 3210	PSY 3300	Total
Much worse	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	7
Slightly worse	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	7
About the same	19	3	28	9	4	1	33	30	2	129
Slightly better	20	2	12	3	0	5	10	18	5	75
Much better	17	4	9	3	1	5	15	9	0	63

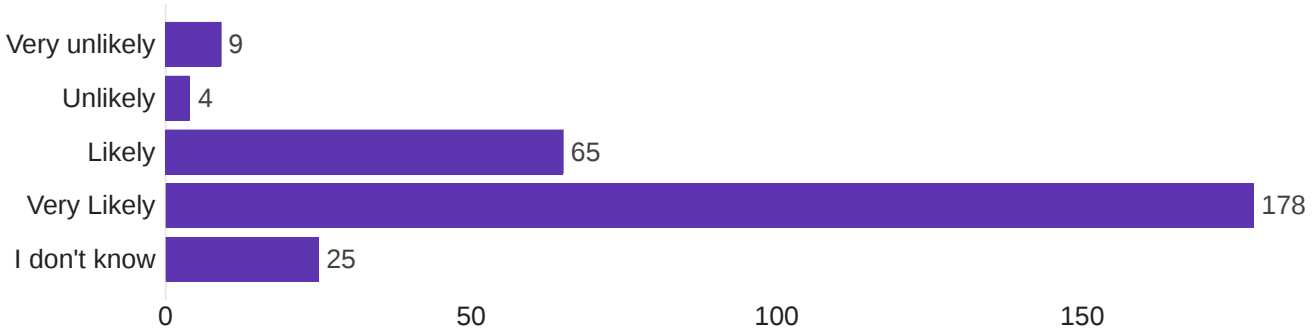
Overall, how satisfied are you with the required textbooks/materials used in this course?



Responses by course

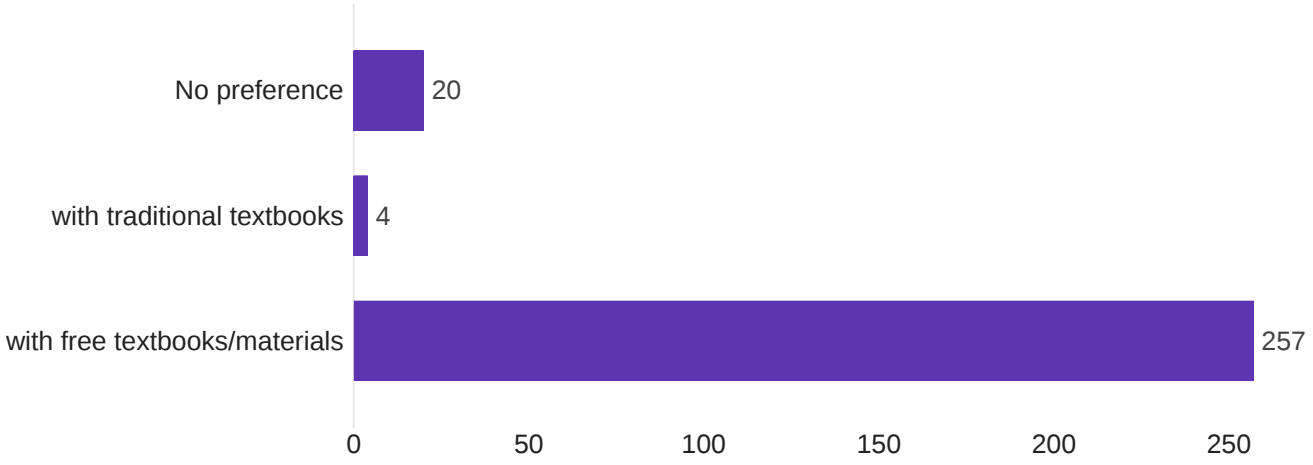
Field	ART 1035	CHEM 3020	CSC 3040	CUED 4700	Jenkins: DS 3841	Williams: DS 3841	GEOG 1012	GEOL 3210	PSY 3300	Total
Extremely unsatisfied	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	0	7
Unsatisfied	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	4
Neither unsatisfied or satisfied	16	2	15	4	2	1	13	17	1	71
Satisfied	28	5	19	8	3	3	22	25	5	118
Extremely satisfied	16	2	15	3	0	7	19	17	2	81

How likely are you to enroll in a future course that uses free required textbooks/materials like those used in this course?



Response	Choice Count	
Very unlikely	3.20%	9
Unlikely	1.42%	4
Likely	23.13%	65
Very Likely	63.35%	178
I don't know	8.90%	25
Total		281

Imagine a future course you are required to take has two sections with the same instructor during equally desirable time slots. If one section required traditional textbooks and one required free textbooks/materials like those used in this course, which section would you prefer?



Response		Choice Count
No preference	7.12%	20
The section with traditional textbooks	1.42%	4
The section with free textbooks/materials	91.46%	257
Total		281

Overall, what is your opinion of the required textbooks/materials used in this course?

Note: this was a required question on the survey, so students had to type something in order to complete the survey.

1. good
2. Its pretty good
3. I appreciate that a free textbook was offered.
4. very nice
5. N/A
6. I am very happy that a free textbook was offered because it makes college easier for me, financially.
7. Great class. I do not like using textbooks.
8. there is not required textbook, but one is available.
9. It's free, so it's great!
10. I'm not very opinionated on this subject.
11. I appreciate free textbooks very much. Tuition is already a burden and books get very expensive.
12. I like that I didn’t have to pay money
13. Much needed
14. We go over notes in class, so I rarely use the textbook. However, I like having a free resource that I can access if I need to.
15. I like the fact that the textbook is free and lessens the financial burden of college.
16. There is no point in have a textbook
17. useless
18. They are great because they provide good information at no cost
19. It was nice, and not having to pay for it made it better.
20. Very handy when needed.
21. I appreciate the free textbook resources.
22. Good
23. It is useful and very accessible.
24. Fantastic value. Provides everything we need as students without hurting us financially.
25. The PowerPoints are good
26. Good
27. A no cost textbook is good for any college student so this is a good textbook. It still includes the important topics of the class.
28. I didn't even know we had a book.
29. The tradeoff between quality and money saved is well worth it.
30. It's a very useful resource that I can use freely, which helps a lot.
31. N/A
32. i think they are a very good resource

33. It was nice that it was free
34. No textbook required for this course.
35. The material is presented in an understandable and comprehensive manner. It works well to introduce new concepts and expand on them as the subject progresses.
36. I really enjoyed how I did not have to pay for a textbook.
37. The textbook is very good, so glad it's free
38. I like that it is free, else I probably would not use it.
39. I enjoy the accessibility of the textbook for all students and wish it was implemented for all classes.
40. I rarely used the book but it was incredibly healthful when I did
41. yes
42. I don't have a textbook:)
43. I like that it is an open resource available to us for free rather than us having to spend money on a textbook that we rarely use in class.
44. I'm glad that the textbook was free.
45. I appreciate the ability to use an free textbook for a reference and to gain a deeper understanding of material taught in the class. The quality of the book matches and is better than that of books I had to purchase in the past.
46. Good.
47. Isn't required to buy a textbook. Personally, I am a International Student, so it's better to save money (for my tuition fees). In addition, [Professor's] classes are very interesting and helpful with their PowerPoint slides.
48. I don't have anything major it is a textbook like any other, but I do like that it is free
49. bad
50. Very useful
51. .
52. I have never used it, I just use the notes posted on Ilearn
53. Dope
54. Saving me money so I don't complain
55. Free is always good, it doest put a hurting on my bank account.
56. good
57. It's good
58. I liked how the availability of the textbook
59. I believe it's very useful for the class
60. I like how the book is integrated with the online homework.
61. Helpful
62. The required textbooks made it easier to understand material, and it helped when trying to complete homework.
63. Good
64. n/a
65. It being free helps many college student struggling with money. Some of these books costing over $200 makes no sense and is terrible right after paying for tuition and maybe dues to an organization. Most the time I buy a book and end up using it about three times in the semester and sometimes they say its required and it is not used at

all. This class we have not used the book too much, but more than most of my other classes, it would have made sense to buy this one. But the option of having it free I think is helping everyone in the class.

66. I like that this textbook is free and it presents the information we talk about in class well.
67. I appreciate the fact that they were free. There have been several times in my college career where buying the required textbooks/materials has placed extreme financial hardship on me at the beginning of the semester.
68. Free textbooks are awesome! Save so much money
69. No comment, other then I like that we didn't have to buy it
70. Better than a lot of paid textbooks.
71. As a broke college student it was really nice that I had to buy one less book for the semester. College textbooks can be very expensive.
72. There was no noticeable difference between the open access textbook and the textbooks used in other classes. However, I learned most of what I needed from [Professor's] in-class lectures, not from the textbook.
73. It was fine.
74. We weren't required to use it
75. I think having a textbook provided was very helpful and allowed me to have access to the tools needed for studying.
76. I loved the material and I found all of the resources beneficial.
77. I have no opinion.
78. Bonita
79. It was online so it was easy to access.
80. It's very easy to use
81. In my opinion, i like to read through real books and not online but i have started coping up with online and that worked out well.
82. good
83. Them being online made it much easier to have with me when I needed them; however, she gave us most of the information we need while in class.
84. I like that we didn't have to purchase a textbook for this class and can use free, online resources to gain extra information on the subjects we discuss in class.
85. I like that it was online and free.
86. I like the fact that it's free and easily accessible.
87. They were of good quality and informative.
88. I think the use if open resources allows for those anyone in the class, no matter their financial situation, to be able to follow along with the material covered in class.
89. Good
90. I personally think using the free website is beneficial for college students especially if they are just taking the art history class as an elective. It allows the student free access when studying and not having to pay for an art book. It's very ready to access and she has them linked on the class schedule so we know what we will be going over before the class.

91. I don't have much money to spare on unreasonably priced textbooks like this university enjoys to require, so having free resources is highly useful.
92. I think they are quite useful and they are actually interesting to learn through
93. I am very thankful and happy that I did not have to buy an expensive textbook! Also that the materials that we use are easily accessible.
94. LOVE HAVING FREE MATERIALS!!!
95. I appreciate having the required material provided rather than having to pay for them
96. I haven’t needed to use the textbook, therefore I cannot adequately review its quality.
97. I like that there is no textbook.
98. Great way to support students financially
99. I love it they provide power points that are clear to use
100. There are no texts books to buy. But the slides and other materials that are made are helpful and useful. More helpful than a textbook would be
101. Its blans
102. Fantastic material
103. Not needed
104. Not good
105. We do not have any required textbooks for this course.
106. We don’t have to purchase a textbook.
107. I appreciate that the lab materials were prepared beforehand and made available to students. It's frustrating to buy a "required" textbook edition that costs a ton and then never use it for the class or end up having to share it with colleagues just to afford it. I really like this idea and hope it continues in future semesters.
108. The materials are easy to understand and very applicable to lecture. I am overall vey satisfied with the material for this course
109. They are sufficient for great learning
110. None
111. It was good
112. don’t make them required
113. I am glad that there are no required textbooks that need to be purchased for the class. I have also been told to purchase textbooks in the past and then never used them.
114. I’m glad we do not have to pay for a textbook in this class!
115. Everything works well for the course
116. None
117. I like not paying money
118. I wasn’t required to buy anything for this course. They provided all materials and they were great. I would’ve been very upset if I had to buy anything for this course.
119. Open source text books are superior to having to purchase new textbooks every semester. [Material] gives me the information I need, and has plenty of resources for me to dig deeper. The textbooks used in, [class], have been useful to my overall learning. It's also less stressful than finding a cheap way to get a textbook.
120. I didn’t have one
121. I like the free etext much better over traditional textbooks
122. I don't really have an opinion because I haven't used the text box yet

123. I enjoyed not having additional costs to take a course that is not related to major. The articles were easy to access and directly related to the material discussed in lecture.
124. Much prefer them over a textbook I'll probably never look at.
125. I am very happy that the textbook is just introductory (and free) because it supplements my memorization of the material we learn in class without overloading me with outside readings.
126. I like the interactive learning that [material] provides and the way it presents the information.
127. WEEEEEEWOOOOO
128. I really like the fact that the textbook is free and I don't have to spend anywhere from 100-200+ dollars on a textbook.
129. It's very good especially since it saves me money at the end of they day since I'm already low on money from going to college
130. Good
131. I think using both online resources and the imagery and text given in class has made things a bit easier for me to comprehend, though it does get a bit confusing since she can't just say "Turn to page blah blah blah" or something similar.
132. I think having a free alternative/required textbooks and materials is great.
133. I have never used them :(
134. I really enjoyed the transition to the online textbooks simply because they are more accessible to students and now students don't have to worry about if they can afford a book. Overall, I am very happy as a student that Tennessee Tech decided to opt for free, online textbooks for certain courses.
135. After a couple weeks, I found that the material covered in the readings was almost always covered in class as well. I stopped reading because it no longer felt necessary, which seemed to prove correct given my performance in the class.
136. Pretty good, I've used it more than other textbooks. I haven't used it that much though.
137. I thought it was great
138. To be honest, I prefer to have free online resources than paying for a physical textbook. That is much better than having to read a 600-pages book for [class].
139. Good
140. I think not having to purchase a textbook allowed me to better engage with the material
141. Theyre great
142. I guess they're alright
143. We were told we didn't need to purchase a text book for this class
144. Great
145. I'm happy to have free textbooks because other classes do require books that are expensive.
146. I think the lab especially worked well. I honestly thought things worked better overall. I feel the class itself wasn't amazing, as there were arguably too many slides to keep up with.
147. Textbooks are useless

148. We have a required textbook?
149. All the information needed is there
150. No complaints.
151. Sufficient
152. Text books are a scam and should not be required
153. I think the material they give us is very helpful and important.
154. Good
155. .
156. I the material was very comprehensive
157. All of the material being in the PowerPoint slides allows for more focused studying.
158. The best kind of textbook
159. I believe it has laid out the course better for the students because we don't have to purchase books and it's all provided.
160. We didn't use textbooks and it's had a positive influence on my education experience because I don't learn well from textbooks.
161. N/A
162. It is very easy to navigate and to the point. I think it should be available for all classes as college students are constantly spending large amounts of money just to attend the class.
163. Overall my opinion of the required textbooks/ materials used in [class] course is good.
164. They're all very well written and good handouts
165. Fine
166. It does what it needs to do
167. It is great
168. [material] could be better
169. I'm glad it was free. I'm a broke college student
170. new phone who this
171. Good
172. Useful and essential
173. I think they cover the needed material for the course.
174. Love
175. The materials are great in general, but I would love to see a more descriptive list of the differences between [course-specific materials].
176. The textbook used in this course is great
177. Delighted to be able to save money.
178. Very informative and clear. The notes really rocked.
179. They covered the topics really well, and they provided adequate information for every topic.
180. awesome
181. Very efficiennt and actually just get taught more relavent material to the coare
182. i like it
183. Loved it!
184. They were very informative and concise. They helped me to prepare before class and review again for private studying or private exams.

185. I like this system much better than having to buy my own textbooks.
186. they were great
187. I like that the textbook is accessible and I can always have it available.
188. No comment
189. N/A
190. It is very helpful online resources.
191. bueno
192. The materials [Professor] has provided has been extremely useful in going more in-depth to the topics we talk about in class. They have always been interesting to read and learn more from.
193. I like the material that [Professor] provides. However, the content of the class is simple enough to not feel the need for an in depth textbook
194. I enjoy not being forced to pay inflated prices of college materials.
195. I think it is very nice and allows the students to save money.
196. Thought it was a good idea
197. It helped not having to buy materials for the class. The resources she provides for us is very helpful. She gives us a lot of different options.
198. It is not textbooks to read but interactives websites and powerpoints, which is really more interesting.
199. I don't have an opinion on it.
200. There are no required textbooks/materials used in [class]. This saved me a lot of money from not having to buy books, and also helps me understand where to find the material better as well (because all of the information is in the same place not in the different books and websites etc.).
201. Not applicable. No required textbooks for this course
202. We haven't really used any textbooks or anything.
203. When you don't have a textbook, the information that is shared is much more concise and accurate to what you need to know for the class. This class was very well put together and that made it easy for me to study and feel confident I know the right information.
204. Since it was a textbook-free class, the lack of information slowly creeped up on me and made the later exams a bit hard to study for, but I can see why you would need to actually take correct notes or just take pictures of the powerpoint, as she didn't post them.
205. I think the text we used was more than sufficient.
206. .
207. n/a
208. We don't have any, and I appreciate that greatly as that money comes directly out of my pocket.
209. Useful for studying but overall unnecessary
210. I like the resources and I like that they are free
211. It’s been good since we haven’t had to get anything.
212. They were good. Didn't really notice a huge difference between textbook content and her content

213. Since they're provided for free, it's awesome.
214. I have relied solely on lecture and powerpoint notes
215. ..
216. The materials given to us like [material] were very helpful compared to the traditional textbook as they provided questions alongside the videos we watched.
217. Good
218. I prefer not having to buy the required readings because I can use them as I need them sometimes if I don't purchase something I realize I need it too late to get it or I purchase it and never need it at all
219. I like not having to pay for additional resources
220. There wasn't any required textbooks this semester
221. I did not know we had a textbook.
222. I like how things are done with resources.
223. didnt have one
224. n/a
225. I didn't use them so I have no opinion.
226. There are no real required textbooks/materials that I actively use in the course.
227. I didn't even know we had a required text book for this class.
228. I think the materials used in this class are quite nice.
229. They were pretty helpful overall.
230. I appreciate the fact that I did not need a textbook. I was supplied with all the materials I needed to do all the assignments.
231. The materials are very thorough, but sometimes the way they are presented in slideshows feel copy/paste and my brain turns off with large amounts of text rather than key points being highlighted/presented
232. i believe that you can learn so much online now a days to the point where you dont need a text book
233. good.
234. I appreciate not having to spend money on textbooks/materials. The slides are clear and to the point. They do a good job educating and preparing for the exams.
235. N/A
236. I didn't know we had a textbook? The [material] she provides are nice though.
237. The online readings are much more convenient than a regular textbook. Not only because it is cheaper, but I feel that I find myself buying these $100 textbooks and never having to use them.
238. better than all classes there was a free option for the book
239. I like how her content is free- i’m broke
240. Very good i enjoy that it was given to us free and i like the book layout and summary at the end of each chapter.
241. It was free so I enjoyed that. It was full of helpful material and provided me with what I needed to succeed in the course.
242. I am satisfied with the resources in the textbook that is required for this course.
243. I definitely prefer online textbooks and homework. I can tell that my ability in this subject has been improved by this setup.

244. I'm fine with them!
245. I'm not a big fan of some of the research articles, but I wouldn't be a fan of them even if they were in a textbook. I did like that I didn't have to spend $100 on texts I didn't like.
246. I love using the free materials in [Professor's] course! The quality is fine, but sometimes we don't understand the material provided. So, as long as the material is appropriate, then I think it's a great asset for the class.
247. They're nice.
248. It's pretty awesome not to pay for books.
249. My only issue with the text may or may not be on the teacher side. None of the information I am required study for the exams are located in the same chapter. So, I am instead having to hop all over the text and reading a maximum of 4 pages then jumping somewhere else. I also believe that we are not using half the content of the text.
250. [Professor] did not require a textbook. We were given links to different texts weekly thorough our syllabus. I loved this! It allowed us to broaden our knowledge and see different perspectives in the writing we read in order to formulate our own opinions.
251. I don't think the textbook is really that needed for this course but I do support free textbooks for students in order to make them more accessible.
252. They were ok
253. The resource for the reading was more just like a cliff notes style from a normal text book, which is a good thing.
254. The textbook is easy to understand and the questions are not complicated. I've enjoyed using it.
255. The textbooks/ materials were good over all.
256. n/a
257. I enjoyed the fact that it provided affordable learning. It covered the basics and cost nothing. It's a positive for me.
258. Very easy to use and I like that it is free
259. There were none, and I appreciated that. I learned a lot without a required book, they usually cost more than students get out of them anyway. The professor found her own materials and I learned more from specific required materials that the professor knew would apply more to what we needed to know.
260. I LIKE IT
261. I think it worked well. The only complaint that I have is that some of the links didn't work and some of the websites had articles that were deleted.
262. Most of the expensive textbooks are outdated and if they are computer-based, they do not work. The free one has never been a problem.
263. It was fine, the only issue was that you had to download the syllabus every time you wanted to click on a link for an assignment.
264. We did not have any required textbooks.
265. The textbook was a great resource for preparing for exams and reinforcing the lesson from lecture. [Professor] did a fantastic job incorporating the book and helping show the class the key information we needed.

266. I generally just use it when studying for exams, but it is very helpful with that if I missed something in my notes.
267. I liked that the book was free and available to all students online. It made it more accessible for people to use.
268. There was no required materials and textbooks for this course. I liked that I did not have to spend hours reading. I also think that the readings that were assigned were very informative and helpful.
269. Did not use the costly text book much
270. Don’t really need them
271. I do not enjoy using [material] for homework.
272. I think the article are much more helpful than a text book.
273. We didn't have a required textbook, but we used different articles she supplied. Some of them were too difficult to read, but some were great.
274. There was no required textbook.
275. None
276. I did not have a textbook.
277. I think it very helpful with vocabulary and general concepts. It is a little outdated with the examples, but not to the point where it was hard to understand.
278. They were a good resource to learn the material.
279. The textbook was the same as all the other textbooks, but it was free, which I enjoyed.
280. I thought the textbook helped me learn the material and that it was thought-provoking. Some of the links and resources it provided were outdated as well as some of the questions but not to the extent that it hindered the class.
281. I like that it is free

Additional Comments (optional)

A. I believe classes with free textbooks and materials are better.
B. i feel that since most classes have required textbooks that they should be free. if required course materials are free then more students would access them and would do better in their courses. having to pay 100 dollars and more for required materials when most students struggle to buy groceries is a crime.
C. I love [Professor] i, this man is amazing
D. Jalin Hyatt scored 5 touchdowns against Alabama. Bro got that dawg in him.
E. His classes are better with free material than a traditional textbook.
F. University students that aren't on a scholarship already pay enough to just be able to attend class. It's completely ridiculous that students have to pay for textbooks especially at a high price.
G. The price of textbooks used in all the courses i've had this year if overwhelming.
H. Free textbooks save students. Books come out of pocket and it's extremely difficult to find the money.
I. Thanks!
J. We didnt have a textbook so :)
K. I love free textbooks! This is a no brainer.
L. Textbooks are really expensive, and most students don't have a lot of extra money, so free textbooks would be nice.
M. I prefer this format. I'm an international student. So, for me is difficult to pay extra amount of money for books to my tuition fee.
N. Honestly he has not mentioned having a textbook for this class. I do think however free textbook use would be very beneficial for many students.
O. [Professor] is amazing for supplying us with free tools for this class!
P. The textbook is not the problem. If you have professors who don't seem excited about what they are teaching, students are not going to be engaged with the lesson. You can make textbooks for all classes free and though it might change the grades a little bit, it's mainly the energy that is brought the the classrooms.
Q. It is so easy in today's age to get access to "free" textbooks or materials that is, in my opinion, ridiculous to have people pay for textbooks.
R. It is so easy to get away with not using textbooks due to the ease of access to information, and it is even easier to FIND textbooks for free, either from previous students or just as PDF files online, that most people don't buy textbooks anymore. There is no reason for the average student to waste the money.
S. Free material is good. I like the idea for accessibility purposes.
T. I don't care cause I have never needed to read a text book for a class
U. Paying $400 for a used copy of a textbook that teaches you things which are available for free online is the greatest scam of modern time.
V. I happen to be a member of the Low Class, so I don't have much money to spare for expensive textbooks. I'm glad that these materials are free to use, because it allows me to spend my money on more vital resources.
W. Thank you for saving the students money.

X. Traditional textbooks require additional expenses. Why would students prefer to learn from $100 or $200 textbooks knowing there are more affordable options. We already do research trying to find the cheapest option for required books. This option makes it easier and affordable for students.
Y. None. I did not have the textbook and I still managed to learn a lot and complete my assignment well.