



Checklist & Miscellaneous Information

Please do not be overwhelmed by all that you need to do. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Chris Barlow, 719-486-8200 x112 or cbarlow@hminet.org.

Things to do

- () Physical Exam (Exam must have been completed within 12 months of the **start** of HMI Gap)
- () Make Travel Plans by August 15th (fall) or December 15th (spring). Please review the travel information document specific to your program on the [For Enrolled Student webpage](#). This information will be released no later than July 15th and November 15th respectively.
- () [Request a course registration packet](#) from Western Colorado University at least 30 days before your course begins (only if you are interested in earning college credit on your semester)
- () Review the packing list and make a list of items that you need
- () Shopping (please review the equipment information carefully. If you plan to rent any items, we appreciate knowing in advance if possible.)
- () Get in Shape! (Start by reading the Pre-Gap Physical Fitness page)
- () Pack! (See the Packing List)

All the student/parent information and tuition paid in full is due by July 15th for fall courses and December 1st for spring courses. We appreciate receiving this as soon as possible.

Notes & Lists



Course Communication Information

Technology and Communication Policy

One of the guiding principles of HMI is "simple in means, rich in ends," and this principle strongly influences our policy for technology, especially for smartphones. We recognize the value of smartphones as a tool for students to maintain a connection to their friends and family and life outside of the HMI community, and for this reason **we recommend that you bring one smart/cell phone or small Internet-connected device, such as a tablet, for ease of communication.**

At the same time, we believe that these types of technology can strongly influence our participation in our immediate community and the way we experience the remarkable natural places we visit, **We want to prioritize each person's full engagement in every aspect of this journey, and for this reason, we have a policy that significantly limits the use of this technology throughout the semester.**

We respect that most students arrive at HMI accustomed to having their phones interwoven into nearly every part of their lives and that their removal can be uncomfortable and potentially stressful. We strive to support students in this transition through intentional conversations about the role technology plays in our lives. We appreciate each person's commitment to adhering to our policy with integrity and optimism in this new challenge.

Our technology policy is as follows:

- You are **not required** to bring a phone or tablet at all. In all the places we travel, you can have periodic access to public pay phones and/or internet cafes sufficient to stay connected to friends and family.
- If you do bring a phone or tablet, you may hold onto it during transition days. We ask that you only use the device during clearly designated times. This includes making calls, texting, posting to/reading social media, surfing the internet, watching videos, playing music/games, taking photos, or any other use of this device. We strive to schedule at least 1 hour of "personal time" during each transition day in which you may use your phone how you wish.
- During all field-based sections (whether at a base-camp or in the backcountry), we will ask you to give your device to program staff, who will hold onto it for the duration of the section.
- The following devices **are not appropriate** for HMI Gap programming. If a student arrives to the course with any of these, we will ask the student to ship them home immediately:
 - Laptop computers
 - 2-way radios
 - Satellite phone
 - Satellite-based texting device
 - Smart watches connected to a mobile network
 - Drones



- In addition to one internet/cellular-connected device, you are welcomed to bring an eReader (as long as it does not connect to a cellular network) and/or a 35mm or digital camera (we discourage large, complicated, or heavy set ups).

Due to the inconsistent access to communication, we encourage families to remember that **no news is good news** and to be prepared not to hear from you for extended periods of time. Friends and family can also check HMI's Facebook page, Instagram feed, and our [blog](#) for additional updates from our HMI Gap and other programs.

Finally, we understand that 12 weeks is a long time to disconnect, and we realize that students may have other obligations or tasks, such as applying for jobs or to college, that need their attention while at HMI. Unfortunately, it is very difficult logistically for students to work on these kinds of obligations outside of the 2-3 briefing transition periods each semester. **We strongly encourage students to set themselves up to have no outside projects or tasks to complete while at HMI.**

Packages

Our package policy is rooted in the same "Simple in means; rich in ends" philosophy and in an effort to address the impact of wealth disparities in our community. To help us achieve these values, we do not allow students to receive packages or order items online during their time here. The only exception to this policy is for the delivery of prescription medications or other health-related items (contact lenses or glasses, for example) that a student cannot procure themselves from a local pharmacy or store. This policy helps us build a more equitable community defined by things other than what some are able to purchase and others are not, reduce our collective environmental impact, and experience a journey traveling light and uncluttered.

We have ample resources and staff to help students get all the things they need to have a successful semester.

Mail

Due to the remote and itinerant nature of HMI Gap, we encourage students to ask their friends and family **not** to send mail during the program. We do have limited opportunities to deliver mail to the student groups during domestic portions of the program, although delivery of this can often take several days and even weeks. We are unable to deliver mail during international programming. Mail that arrives at HMI that we cannot deliver to you by the end of the program will be forwarded to your home address.

If someone would like to send you mail during the course, they can send it to:

[Your name] c/o HMI Gap
531 County Rd 5A
Leadville, CO 80461

Emergency Communication

While HMI Gap students spend significant amounts of time away from typical cellular service and the Internet, HMI staff carry emergency communication devices and have clear guidelines for how and when to communicate with our administrative team. Even with cellular and





satellite-compatible communication devices, communications between HMI and groups in the field can often be slow and/or challenging.

In the event of an emergency at home and/or a student needs to be reached by his/her family, please contact our main office at 719-486-8200 and ask to be put in touch with the Gap administrator “on call” who can coordinate communication with you in the field. HMI typically answers the main line during normal business hours; if someone calls outside of these hours and does not reach someone, they can leave a message, and an administrator will be in touch as soon as possible.

If parents and/or others listed as emergency contacts plan to travel while you are on course, please have them update us with their itinerary, availability/ability to respond, and alternative phone number or other method of contact (including WhatsApp, email, Google Hangouts, etc). They can send these updates to gap@hminet.org. Please have them include the above information and your name.

Absentee Voting Information

One of the most straightforward ways students live out our mission of “realizing their potential—as leaders, independent thinkers, and thoughtful citizens” is by participating in our country’s democracy by voting. Aside from prominent national elections that HMI will be aware of, we also encourage you to check on any local elections that occur while you’re at HMI.

During Gap we will do our best to arrange an opportunity for students to engage in this important civic action. The backcountry nature of our programming makes the logistics of collecting, delivering, and mailing each student’s absentee ballots a complicated process. It is important to note that unforeseen circumstances could make getting a student’s ballot in on time difficult. This being said, we have had success facilitating the voting process when students prepare arrangements to vote with ample time before the course begins.

The following is a checklist with helpful links and information for students to research what they need to prepare in order to be able to either vote early or request an absentee ballot for their state:

- Make sure you are [registered to vote](#) in your home state
- Please read all the information specific to your home state at Vote.org’s [“State Election Center”](#) (scroll down to find your state)
- Decide whether you can vote early (before you start HMI Gap) or need to [request an absentee ballot](#). We strongly encourage students to vote before coming to HMI if they have this option.
 - If requesting an absentee ballot, please note that your home address is where you should be registered to vote; however, **HMI’s address is where you will have your absentee ballot sent.**

Some other helpful resources on voting:

- [Voter registration deadlines by state](#)
- [Rock the Vote](#)
- [Study Abroad and Vote Toolkit](#)



Pre-Course Physical Fitness

HMI Gap does not require any previous backpacking or rock climbing experience. However, it is important that you start your course in good physical condition. Shortly after students arrive, we head out on a wilderness expedition. You will not have time to "get into shape" once the course starts.

The vast majority of injuries that happen, especially in the first three weeks, are direct results of individuals not being in good physical condition. The likelihood of sprains and strains is dramatically increased by poor fitness. In addition, our wilderness expedition may take us above 10,000 feet in elevation. Poor physical fitness increases the chance that an individual will experience the deleterious effects of high altitude. Again, good basic fitness can decrease the likelihood of injury and assist in acclimatization.

There are two important aspects to physical fitness. The first is cardiopulmonary efficiency. This simply requires that you be physically active for extended periods of time (30-45 min) **4 or more times per week**, for several months. This level of activity will greatly improve your general endurance. If you are not currently active, you should begin slowly and gradually increase the intensity of exercise. A good rule of thumb for endurance training is that you should be able to talk freely (bring a friend to talk with) for most of the time you exercise. It is also valuable to incorporate short periods of higher intensity effort, such that you are breathing heavily, for 10-20% of your workout.

The second part of physical fitness is task-specific strength. Most of the activity during HMI Gap centers on hiking with a weighted pack and rock climbing. Swimming will help to increase your cardiopulmonary efficiency, but will not strengthen your arms and legs appropriately for rock climbing and carrying a backpack. At least half of your training should be task related; i.e. training that uses your legs over uneven terrain and training to build upper body strength. A recommended training schedule is climbing at a gym 1-2 days a week and going for brisk trail hikes with a backpack 1-2 days a week.

Your fitness training should **begin at least 6 weeks before attending HMI Gap**. If you are playing a sport, that may help your cardiopulmonary efficiency, but you will also need to get out and do task specific activities several times a week.

Our expectations of physical fitness are not intended to scare you. We simply want you to know that physical training before your arrival will greatly increase your enjoyment, particularly at the beginning of HMI Gap. It is much easier to enjoy the view or study the map carefully if you are not gasping for breath. If you have questions or would like assistance creating a training plan, please call us anytime.





Medications

Please do not bring non-prescription medications. In order to monitor your health, as well as reduce pack weight, we would like HMI staff to administer all non-prescription medications. We have a full selection of over the counter medications including ibuprofen, cold medication, Pepto-Bismol, and similar over-the-counter medications as need be. If you have specific non-prescription medications that you take regularly, please communicate this to us.

Prescription medications

Students will be responsible for carrying and administering their own prescription medications during HMI Gap. If you anticipate any challenges with taking your medications as prescribed, please contact us, and we will discuss a plan for helping you.

Please think about how you would like to manage your prescriptions during HMI Gap.

There are several options:

- a. You can fill the prescription at home for twelve weeks and bring enough to last the whole time. (Due to legal restrictions and insurance requirements, this may not always be possible). **As possible, HMI strongly encourages this option.**
- b. During domestic programming, you can ask your physician to call the prescription in or send the prescription (necessary for anything labeled a controlled substance) to the local pharmacy. We can let you know the best location and help you get the contact information for that location.
- c. We can take you to a local medical provider, and they can write you the appropriate prescription (this option is not recommended, as we cannot guarantee that you will be provided with the needed prescription).

Please do not begin new prescription medications less than 6 weeks before HMI Gap begins. It can be difficult for people to judge whether or not they are experiencing side effects from new medications while they are in a new environment (especially one as taxing as ours). Therefore, our physician-advisor strongly recommends that students **not** begin new medications just prior to the beginning of or during HMI Gap. If it is important for you to do so, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can discuss any new medications with our physician-advisor.

Please do not discontinue use of prescription medications before starting HMI Gap without thoughtful consideration with your doctor. For similar reasons as noted above, we encourage students to consult their doctor before discontinuing any prescription medications before your course begins. If you do discontinue any prescriptions, please contact us as soon as possible so that we can discuss this with our physician-advisor.

Students with a current prescription should take the medication as prescribed. Students should not discontinue, self-titrate off, or take the medication in any way other than as prescribed.



Money

Spending Money

You should bring an ATM card or a Debit Card. If you bring a credit card only, please be aware that you will need your pin number if you intend to withdraw cash and will be charged a significant fee if you do so internationally. The amount of money you will need is in large part up to you. As your tuition covers many of the most important expenses for your trip, there are very few things you'll have to spend money on. That said, a reasonable budget for personal expenses might range from \$5 to \$20 per week with a bit more for travel expenses. We also want to discourage students from accumulating too many additional items during the course, as our space and ability to store things is quite limited; please consider this when budgeting for personal expenses.

You will want to have some spending money available for the following expenses:

- Personal needs, such as toiletries
- Money for traveling
- Airline baggage charges

Student Accounts

We require each student to establish an account at HMI of \$750. HMI will deduct money from this account for individual incidental expenses such as:

- Equipment rentals
- Emergencies, when the student is unable to use their own money

At the end of the semester, you will be given an invoice that lists all purchases. If there is money left in the account, it will be refunded to the person who made the deposit. If there is a balance due, HMI will send you an invoice.

You will not be allowed to withdraw money from your Student Account.



Special Travel Considerations

Please note that course-specific travel information, including travel dates and how to book flights, is published on our [For Enrolled Students page](#). The information below applies to all HMI Gap courses.

Food

During domestic courses/sections of HMI Gap, you will be eating food either packed out of HMI's ration room or purchased from a grocery store. We strive to accommodate a wide range of eating preferences, restrictions, and allergies. That said, as you are typically preparing food within your tent group of 3-4 people, we ask that you have a certain level of flexibility and open-mindedness to your food choices, as long as you manage to eat nutritious food that meets your needs. As much of our time is spent away from standard kitchens, we often carry and consume foods that are less perishable and durable for travel.

For the first section of your Gap course, your ration will be prepared in advance. After that, you will work with your tent-mates to plan and shop for your menu in a local grocery store, and HMI will purchase the food that you select.

On courses that travel abroad, we shop for most of our food in local grocery stores, which generally offer a comparable selection of food items as what you'd expect to find in the US. Specialized items may be harder to find or unavailable, and we will do our best to help you find adequate substitutes.

Food in the places we travel is generally safe to try. We encourage you to use good judgment in deciding to try food while abroad. The CDC recommends avoiding raw, undercooked, or room-temperature food items, unpasteurized dairy products, and foods of a dubious origin

Water

Tap water in all the places we travel with Gap is generally potable, including [municipal water in Chile](#). That said, we always encourage you to avoid drinking from suspect water sources without treatment. HMI provides several options for water treatment that we will share with you at the beginning of your course. You will also often be drinking from natural ground water sources (e.g. lakes, streams, etc). We expect that all students and staff treat any ground water with one of our approved methods.

Personal Care

Generally, HMI Gap travels in areas that have relatively low risks compared to many parts of the world. Nevertheless, some of the basic hazards of travel are present in all of our course areas, both within the US and in Chile. These include a combination of the hazards inherent in the activities we do (traveling in vehicles, backpacking, rock climbing, among many others) and the hazards of being in a new place and new culture (including petty crime and trip disruption). Our philosophy is that you, the student, are the best manager of these risks, and we strive to provide as much education and support as we can to help you manage these risks for yourself. At various points during the course, we will review various ways to manage risk, but here are a few broad guidelines that apply to all activities we do and areas we go:



- Maintain excellent hygiene, primarily by washing or sanitizing your hands and by avoiding sharing utensils, water bottles, or other vectors of germs.
- If you're unsure of what you're supposed to do, ask for clarification.
- Have a higher level of awareness of your surroundings and potential hazards; if you see something that gives you concern, verbalize it.
- Advocate for your personal basic needs; if they're not being met, please talk with our instructors promptly.
- Avoid traveling alone or after dark.
- Promote an ethic of respect and "Leave No Trace" in all the places you visit.
- Keep the few most essential items (passport, cell phone, emergency money) in a safe, inconspicuous place close to you.
- Embrace the challenge. Experiences like HMI Gap are not intended to be "easy"; some of the most important opportunities for growth come from facing the challenges inherent in rugged travel in a small community. Some of these challenges are foreseeable, and others will be a surprise. Your fortitude, nimbleness, and optimism through all of these will help you have a far more positive overall experience.

Additional Information for Courses that Travel to Chile

- Please ensure that your passport is valid and DOES NOT EXPIRE within 6 months of your departure from the US to Chile
- Routine vaccines are the only ones required for travel to Chile; however, when you have your physical filled out by your doctor, we encourage you to discuss specifically your planned international travel in addition to the other activities and requirements of this course. You can learn more about travel to Chile through the Center for Disease Control. The CDC does recommend additional vaccines for travelers; please discuss whether or not you should get these vaccines with your doctor.
- The US State Department publishes extensive recommendations for US citizens traveling abroad. Please visit and read thoroughly the following websites for more information about traveling in Chile.

Prescription Medications in Chile

Most prescription medications in the US are allowed in Chile; however, there are some special requirements for certain medications (particularly narcotics and psychotropics). Students should carry prescriptions in the original container with the pharmacy label on it, including the patient's name, the pharmacy information, and the dosage. If you lose your medication, you may not be able to fill a new prescription of the same medication while abroad. You can contact the [US Embassy in Chile](#) to confirm whether or not your medications are available.



Contagious Disease/Reporting

Compliance with Pertinent Laws and Regulations

HMI intends to comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations governing health policy and the privacy of health information.

General Policy

HMI wishes to demonstrate compassion and impartiality in dealing with members of the HMI who contract a serious contagious disease, and to protect all members of its community. A “serious contagious disease” is defined, for the purpose of this policy, as an illness that is required to be reported to the Colorado State Department of Public Health and Environment, and any other illness which may be transmitted to others in casual settings and which may pose a serious health risk to others. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- COVID-19
- Hepatitis
- Measles
- Mumps
- Meningitis
- Diphtheria
- Rubella
- Salmonella
- Tuberculosis
- Novel H1N1 (swine flu)
- Small pox
- Giardia
- Shingella
- SARS
- HIV/AIDS

If a student or employee contracts a serious contagious disease, HMI will strive to maintain a balance between its responsibility to the infected individual and its responsibility to the other members of the school community. To protect the school community, students and employees with a serious contagious disease are required to report that information to the Head of School as soon as possible. HMI will take appropriate steps to prevent further transmission and to determine how the situation will be handled.

Confidentiality and Reporting

HMI holds in confidence medical information it receives about an employee or student. This means HMI restricts access to such information to those with a legitimate need for the information, as determined by the Head of School. The Head of School will make every effort to appropriately balance the privacy needs of the affected individual with the need to protect others in the community. A report will also be made to all members of the HMI community, as the Head of School, in his sole discretion, determines is necessary and prudent to protect others in the community. The identity of the infected individual will remain confidential, unless a compelling reason to disclose such identity is determined necessary to protect others in the HMI community.

Colorado law requires HMI to report certain diseases and conditions to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment for surveillance and disease control purposes. For more information about diseases and conditions that must be reported to the state, please see <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/report-a-disease>.



Packing List

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- 1) Typically, students bring more than they need. We have very limited capacity for luggage and storage during the semester. Your large backpack (at least 85 liters) and one medium duffel **or** climbing daypack should easily hold all your belongings!
- 2) We spend a lot of time during HMI Gap living out of our backpacks. We are able to carry everything we need for weeks at a time. As a result, when we return from the field, a few additional items feel like real luxuries. So in the spirit of "simple in means, rich in ends," please limit the quantity of stuff you bring with you. At the same time, failure to bring the right equipment will directly impact your ability to get the most out of your experience with HMI Gap.
- 3) The emphasis at HMI Gap is on comfortable, practical, appropriate clothing that demonstrates respect for our varied learning environments and the communities we visit. All clothes should be clean, neat, and in good repair unless indicated otherwise (e.g. work pants). Some of the places we travel may have more conservative views on what is considered appropriate attire. Out of respect for these communities, please avoid bringing particularly provocative and/or revealing clothing. We ask students not to bring or wear shorts that do not cover the mid-thigh, notably tight clothes, and/or clothing with labels or images that could be considered offensive.
- 4) We will be traveling through many different climates during the semester. The areas we go are all known for having highly variable and challenging weather. You should generally be prepared for weather to change dramatically and be more severe than general climate descriptions might convey. During any given semester, you will likely experience conditions as cold as 20°F (or possibly colder) and as warm as 85°F (and possibly warmer). In addition, our courses have experienced strong winds (gusting upwards of 70mph), significant snowfall (2 feet or more), periods of heavy rain that last several days, as well as hot, dry conditions with very strong sunlight (Please note that Patagonia has a very thin ozone cover, and the sun can be extremely intense). We have thought very carefully through the equipment we recommend to help you to take excellent care of yourself and continue participating fully in all course activities through these extreme weather variations.
- 5) You will have a chance to do laundry once each week that we are not in the field, so you should probably bring about 7 days' worth of socks and underwear. However, you do not need to bring a week's worth of casual/travel clothes as you can wear the same item several times before needing to wash it.
- 6) You will need all of the items on this list for the semester. It is very important that you can wear all of your layers (for example, rain jacket, puffy jacket, fleece, and base layer) at the same time. If you cannot wear them at the same time, your clothing will be too tight and constrict blood flow, and therefore not keep you warm. Your sizes may need to be progressively larger in size to accommodate this. Lightweight and compressible clothing and equipment will make your pack lighter and easier to pack.
- 7) After the Packing List, you'll find the Equipment Information section, which has extensive descriptions and examples of some items. Any item with additional description is noted in the Packing List.
- 8) Please put your name on your belongings.



PACKING AND EQUIPMENT LIST (Part 1)

Equipment Available for Rent

Noted items are available for rent from HMI with prices for the full semester rental indicated. We encourage you to bring your own equipment, as you'll be using it a lot, and we hope that you'll continue using it in the future.

If your course concludes outside the US, you will need to ship any rental items back to HMI within 30 days of the end of the course at your own expense. HMI will charge the student the replacement cost of the item plus a 15% service fee for any unreturned items.

Prior to the start of your course, we will send you a form for you to let us know what you intend to rent from HMI. If you do not complete this form, we may not be able to offer you a rental item, in which case we will help you purchase the item from a local retailer. This is especially true for courses that do not begin in Leadville, CO as we travel to remote program orientation sites with a limited rental fleet based on student form requests.

Items noted as "Free" are available from the HMI Gear Room at no charge. We only ask that you take care of these items and return them to us.

Noted items are available for purchase from HMI with prices indicated. These items may not be available from HMI for any course that does not begin in Leadville, CO; we will help you find these items at local stores if necessary.

Some items are only required for specific courses and are noted as such in the list. Please pay careful attention to whether a specific item is required for your course.

Item	Availability from HMI?	Price from HMI	Personal Notes
Backpacking and Other Storage Bags			
Backpack at least 85 cubic liters (Please read the Equipment Information.)	Rental	\$90	
3 Heavy Duty Trash Compactor or Contractor plastic bags	Free		
Medium travel duffel OR daypack (Please read the Equipment Information.)			
1-2 Small Stuff Sacks (Optional, these help you organize items in your pack)	Free		
Zip-Lock® Bags (1 Gallon size, to protect books and toiletries in your backpack.)	Free		
Small daypack (Optional, 8-16 liters, should be very compressible.)	Rental	\$25	
Sleeping Gear			
Sleeping Bag (synthetic, 0 degree; please read the Equipment Information.)	Rental	\$90	
Compression Stuff Sack (large with 3-4 straps, used to compress sleeping bag)	Free		
Sleeping Pad, full length (Please read the Equipment Information.)	Rental	\$30	
Sleeping Pad Stuff Sack (optional)	Free		
Boots and Footwear			
Hiking Boots (Please read the Boot Fitting Information page very carefully.)			
Wool or Synthetic Socks (medium-heavyweight, depending on how cold your feet get): 6-8 pairs	Purchase	\$17	
Running Shoes and/or Approach Shoes			
Athletic Socks (to wear with your running shoes/sneakers): 4-6 pairs			
Rock Climbing Shoes (Required only for Rock and Traverse courses ; please read the Equipment Information. Please note that we do not offer climbing shoe rentals to Rock course students.)	Rental for Traverse	\$20	
Sandals, (optional, but recommended for public shower facilities)			





Lower Body Layers			
Shorts (nylon/polyester, athletic or hiking/climbing shorts, pockets are nice): 2-3			
Work Pants (such as Carharts or jeans, but pants you don't mind getting beat up)			
Casual Pants (jeans, slacks, or sweatpants for travel and transition days): 1-2			
Expedition or Mid-weight Long Underwear Bottoms (Please read the Equipment Information.)	Purchase	\$31	
Puffy Pants (Please read the Equipment Information.)	Rental	\$80	
Light/medium-weight Hiking/climbing Pants (Please read the Equipment Information.)	Rental	\$40	
Rain Pants (Please read the Equipment Information.)	Rental	\$90	
Upper Body Layers			
Cotton T-shirts/Tank Tops (you may want to bring one nicer one for travel/transition days): 3-4			
Sweatshirt or Long-sleeve Cotton Shirt (optional): 1			
Synthetic T-shirts (Please read the Equipment Information): 1-2	Purchase	\$30	
Long-Sleeve Sun-Shirt (an old collared button down works really well)	Purchase	\$80	
Expedition or Mid-Weight Long Underwear Top (Please read the Equipment Information.)	Purchase	\$50	
Fleece Pullover/Jacket or "micro puff" (Please read the Equipment Information.)	Rental	\$35-50	
Expedition weight Synthetic "puffy" or Down Jacket (Please read the Equipment Information.)	Rental	\$105	
Hooded Rain Jacket (Please read the Equipment Information.)	Rental	\$75	
Wind layer (Optional; please read the Equipment Information.)			
Head Layers			
Wool, Fleece, or Synthetic Hat	Purchase	\$30	
Neck gaiter, scarf, or buff (optional)	Purchase	\$20	
Sun Hat (A baseball hat will work, but full coverage is recommended, especially for those who are more sun sensitive.)	Purchase	\$23	
Sunglasses (lenses must block 100% UV rays. If you wear glasses instead of contacts, we recommend prescription sunglasses.)	Purchase	\$25	
Head band, optional	Purchase	\$17	
Case for Sunglasses (optional)			
Eye Glass / Sunglass Retainer Strap	Purchase	\$10	
Prescription Glasses and Contacts (If you wear them, bring a spare as back-up)			
Hand Layers			
Mid-Weight Fleece or Wool Gloves (Gloves are better than mittens for dexterity.)	Purchase	\$30	
Work gloves and/or "belay" gloves (Gardening gloves are okay, but "box handler gloves" are better and can be found in most hardware stores. "Belay" gloves for rock climbing are found in most outdoors stores.)	Purchase	\$10	
Winter Mitten System (wool or fleece mittens with shells; required only for Spring Traverse courses)	Purchase	\$50	





HMI Gap 2024-25 Courses

Miscellaneous Personal Gear			
Headlamp (lightweight, durable LED, such as Petzl® Tikka or Black Diamond® Cosmo)	Purchase	\$40	
Extra batteries (2 sets, AA or AAA for your headlamp)	Purchase	\$2	
Notebook and pens			
2 1-Liter Water Bottles (wide mouth liter bottles)	Purchase	\$13	
Half-liter Nalgene® bottle for use as a cup (preferable to have a cup that seals) *Note that every HMI Gap student receives one of these complementary items when they arrive, so you don't need to bring one yourself. Additional ones are available for purchase.	Purchase	\$11	
Plastic Bowl w/ Lid (a 16oz. Tupperware® is great; the Nalgene® bowl is more durable.)	Purchase	\$10	
Lexan or Plastic Spoon (No knife or fork needed.)	Purchase	\$2	
Lip balm (SPF 15 or greater)	Purchase	\$3.50	
Dermatone (some use in addition to lip balm)	Purchase	\$7	
Sunscreen (SPF 15 or greater)	Purchase	\$6	
Bandanas (2)	Purchase	\$8	
Toiletries (toothbrush and small tube of toothpaste, brush or comb, skin lotion, soap, shampoo, menstrual products; travel size is ideal, and students will have opportunities to resupply during transitions. HMI provides soap for backcountry trips.)			
Hand sanitizer, small size	Purchase	\$5	
Towel (A standard cotton towel is fine, but please bring one that is compact.)			
Watch (waterproof athletic type; should have an alarm)	Purchase	\$50	
Underwear (A mixture of cotton and nylon is best): 7-9			
Sports bras: 2-4			
Trekking poles, optional	Rental	\$45	
Personal prescription medication(s) (must be listed on student's medical form)			
Personal Climbing Harness (Required only for Rock and Traverse courses ; please read the Equipment Information, and note that we do not offer climbing harness rentals to Rock course students.)	Rental (Traverse)	\$15	
Climbing Helmet (Required only for Rock and Traverse courses ; please read the Equipment Information, and note that we do not offer climbing helmet rentals to Rock course students.)	Rental (Traverse)	\$10	
Chalk bag (Required only for Rock courses)			
Lighters (2-3 small disposable lighters work fine.)			
Books to read (or eReader, as long as it does not connect to a cellular network)			
Telemark Ski Package (Required only for Spring Traverse courses ; skis, boots, poles, skins, avalanche transceiver, shovel)	Rental	\$170	
Ski Helmet	Rental	\$35	
Ski Goggles	Rental	\$25	
Gaiters, optional			
Things to bring only if you already own them (all are optional)			
Camera and extra batteries (Avoid heavy lenses. 35mm compact cameras or single use cameras are usually sufficient.)			
Belay Device (For Rock and Traverse courses only ; we will provide belay devices, but if you prefer to bring your own, make sure it is in great condition).			
Camelback or other Hydration Pack, optional			
Small pillow			
Crazy Creek			





Some Things Not to Bring

In addition to the items listed in the Course Communication section that we ask students not to bring, there are some outdoor/camping items that we also ask you to leave at home:

- Personal skis/snowboard
- Hammocks
- Pocket knives or blades
- Fire starters

Shopping Tips

Consistent with the idea of "simple in means, rich in ends," we encourage students not to spend a lot of money on new equipment. One could easily spend thousands of dollars, shopping blindly for all of the equipment desired for the HMI Gap. Instead, consider borrowing gear from friends and family, visit local outdoor second hand stores, or hunt for sales online.

In addition to the above suggestions, there are plenty of retail stores & web sites that offer good deals. There are many good stores out there. Please remember that the examples below are intended to guide your search; you do not need to purchase the exact items listed. Instead, use them as a guide to find comparable items based on the options you have available.

We also recommend considering some of the following national stores:

Black Diamond

www.blackdiamondequipment.com

They offer mail-order service and many outdoor stores sell their products. Their clothing and equipment are very well designed. Black Diamond has been very generous to HMI, so please support them as much as you can.

REI

www.rei.com

You can find REI stores around the country, or use their mail-order services. They have a wide selection of reliable clothing and equipment and have an excellent return/exchange policy.

EMS

www.ems.com

There are many EMS stores around the country, especially on the East Coast.

Sierra Trading Post

www.sierra.com

They offer discounts on factory seconds, closeouts, and overstocked items from many companies. This is a great catalog to double-check before paying more elsewhere.

Larger Retail Stores (such as Target and Walmart)

There are many items on this list – especially many of the base clothing layers – that don't need to be highly specialized. For example, it is very common for our staff to wear board shorts or athletic shorts for hiking. Furthermore, many larger retailers are now carrying outdoor-oriented items or items that are made from the same materials and design as those described below. While you may not find the exact styles/brands described here, you likely can find comparable items, often at a lower cost.

Please pay careful attention to our description of each item you will need, and be sure to follow our guidelines when considering a substitute. You can even let us know when you plan to go shopping, and we can talk with you and/or the sales clerk. Remember, the sales staff people are usually educated by sales reps from the equipment manufacturers. Our descriptions are informed by the significant field experience of the HMI faculty working with students on backcountry expeditions to the places we actually go.



Equipment Information

Please pay careful attention to our description of the following items you will need, and be sure to follow our guidelines when considering a substitute.

Clothing

THE ART OF LAYERING

Having the proper clothing on your course is the key to your comfort. By using the "layering" principle, you will be comfortable in a wide variety of conditions. The secret to this approach is to wear just the right amount of insulation to match the conditions and your workload. Insulation comes from trapped air in the fabric fibers and between each layer. The recommended fabrics will keep their loft when wet and, therefore, keep you warm. Cotton will not keep you warm. The following is the best system for your layering technique:

1. Base Layers

This category includes the expedition/mid-weight long underwear and hiking shirt. These are the layers that you'll wear next to your skin. Most important is that these layers are made of synthetic fabrics (some version of polyester/nylon) or wool to wick moisture away from the skin. Cotton T-shirts are cool when hiking but cold when wet. If you perspire heavily as you hike, it will be to your benefit to have a dry layer to put on when you stop.

There are many options out for these, available both from companies and stores that specialize in outdoors clothing and in more general retail. As long as the layer fits and is a synthetic or wool fabric, it will probably work well. There are also several different "weights" of base layers from silk to expedition (meaning, the fabric is thicker and will keep you warmer). It's best to have a few different weights of top layers (e.g. 1-2 hiking t-shirts, 1 light top, and 1 medium top), but having only 1 medium or expedition weight (depending on how easily you get cold) will likely serve you well.



Examples of base layers: Patagonia Capilene® 2 (pictured), Hanes Cool Dri Long Sleeve, Marmot Midweight®

2. Sunshirts

You'll spend a lot of time outdoors in strong sunlight, and it's important to have sun protection beyond sunscreen. Commercially made sunshirts are available, such as the Black Diamond Alpenglow Hoody. Less expensive options are available at stores like Walmart. Most important is a very lightweight, breathable fabric that offers UV protection.

Another great option is an old, lightweight button-down dress shirt that is light in color and slightly too large. If you don't already have one, these are cheap and easy to find in most thrift stores.

3. Mid-weight Insulation

The next layer is the insulation layer for warmth. Sweaters, shirts, pullovers, tights and pants made of polar fleece, polypropylene, or wool are the most effective insulators. An alternative 2nd layer is a lightweight synthetic fill jacket. Colder students are encouraged to bring an additional 2nd layer.



Examples of 2nd layers: Patagonia R2® or R4® (at right in black), REI Groundbreaker 2.0 Fleece, Marmot Reactor®, North Face Denali® Jacket



Examples of alternative/additional 2nd layers: Patagonia Nano-puff, REI 650 Down Jacket 2.0, Mountain Hardwear Compressor Jacket (at right in red)

4. Expedition-weight Insulation

Given the typically colder conditions we are camping and traveling in, you should have an expedition-weight synthetic or down jacket and down pants. Synthetic layers are more durable than down. For pants, expedition-weight (i.e. the warmest thickness) fleece would be acceptable with additional insulation, rain, and wind pants.



Examples of heavy insulation: Belay Parka and Belay insulated pants.

5. Outer Layers

The outer layer protects the other layers and yourself from the wind and rain. This layer includes rain gear and wind pants.

Rain Shell Specifics

You will need a hooded rain jacket and rain pants. Both of these items must be waterproof. Rain layers should fit over all of your other layers, so you will most likely need these in a size larger than you normally wear. Be sure the jacket comes below your waist and has a good hood. For courses that include a winter/ski expedition, this jacket will also serve as your ski jacket. For rain pants, it is very nice to be able to put them on over your boots, so look for a pair with a zippered cuff.

When buying rain gear, be careful. The outdoor clothing industry has varying ideas of what is waterproof. Some of the very lightweight nylon jackets will not keep the rain out. In addition, ponchos are not acceptable. Whatever you buy, it must be waterproof. Verify its waterproof-ness by pouring water on it or by holding the material up to your mouth and attempting to breathe through the fabric. If you cannot move air through the material, then most likely water cannot move through it either.

The bottom line: Look for rain gear that is made of coated nylon or Gore-Tex®. A synthetic shell of Gore Tex® works well as a raincoat. Gore-Tex® is expensive but highly wind and waterproof while still being somewhat breathable.



Examples of rain gear: Patagonia Rain Shadow® (shown at right), REI Ultra Light® Jacket, Marmot Precip®

Wind/hiking Pants

These pants are lightweight, breathable, nylon pants, including soft shell hiking pants. They do not need to be waterproof. They should be large enough to wear over your base layers. Some have side zippers on the legs, which can be nice for putting them on and off over hiking boots. Light or medium weight "training joggers" or other styles of athletic pants can work well for these, too.



Examples of wind/hiking pants: Patagonia Guide Pants, REI Sahara Convertible® Pants (shown at right) or Sun Up Pants, REI Acme® Pants, Marmot DriClimate®,



Sleeping Bag & Pad

We recommend synthetic filled sleeping bags (e.g. Quallofil®, Hollofil®, Polarguard HV®, etc). We do not recommend down sleeping bags. If they get wet, they cease to insulate and can take days in the field to dry. For this reason, we will not allow students to use down sleeping bags on expeditions, and we will require them to rent one of our synthetic bags. **You will want a sleeping bag that is rated to 0° F.** The overall weight of your sleeping bag should be about 4 to 4 ½ pounds. If it is much heavier than that, it may not compress well in a stuff sack. It is essential that you choose a sleeping bag that has a hood to go around your head. The hood makes a big difference in keeping you warm at night.

Examples of sleeping bags: Mountain Hardwear Lamina® 0°F (shown at bottom left), Montbell Super Stretch Burrow Bag® #0 (shown at right), Big Agnes Whiskey Park® 0°F, Sierra Designs Nahche® 0°F



Sleeping pads are either closed-cell foam or inflatable. Inflatable are usually more comfortable and lighter yet easily damaged (mainly getting punctured) and more expensive.

Example of closed-cell foam pad: Therm-A-Rest RidgeRest

Example of inflatable pad: Kelty Mistral SI, Therm-A-Rest Trail Scout

Pack Purchasing & Fitting

If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at cbarlow@hminet.org or call us at 719-486-8200. Ask for Chris at x112.

Expedition Backpack

Many students rent the expedition backpack from HMI, as it is rare to use such a large pack for trips other than HMI expeditions. If you do want to purchase your own, you will want to get an internal frame backpack. Your backpack should have a minimum capacity of 85+ liters (and ideally more). It should also have a top pocket (often called the “brain”). The shoulder straps and hip belt should be well padded. Look for a pack that has minimal straps, zippers, and side pockets. These simply add unnecessary weight.

Regardless of what brand you purchase, please be sure the salesperson takes time to fit your backpack properly to your back. Frame size is important and will affect your comfort when you are carrying a full pack. Many companies size their packs by your height. This can work, but it is best to measure your torso length (shoulders to just above your hips). If you are a smaller person, an 85L pack may be too big for your frame. Purchase the biggest pack that ALSO fits your torso. As a reference, someone who is 5’10” usually uses a medium size frame. Be aware also that your waist size may differ from your frame size. When determining your waist size, measure the narrowest part of the waist (generally around where the belly button is). The waist belt does not go directly around this part of the waist, but will slide down to balance on the hip bones. It is necessary to find a pack that fits both your torso and your waist comfortably.

There are also packs specifically designed for women. These packs are shorter in the torso, wider in the hips, and narrower in the shoulders. For smaller women in particular, it is worth trying these packs. Again, if you are a small person, choose the biggest pack that fits you (it may be a little less than 85L if you are five feet tall). In the end, fit is much more important than capacity, and it is fine to choose a smaller pack.





That said, don't be afraid to go big on space. It does not mean that you will carry more. It means that you will have a much easier time packing your pack, especially with cold hands. Remember, you can cinch down a pack to make it smaller, but you cannot make it bigger. (Strapping additional gear to the outside of your pack is not a good option.)

Examples of backpacks: Osprey Aether® 85, Osprey Xiniith® 105, Gregory Baltoro® 85, Gregory Deva® 85, Osprey Xena® 85, Arc'teryx Bora® 95

There are many other good packs out there; however, keep in mind that you should not have to spend more than \$350-\$450 on a quality pack and sub-\$300 options exist.

Medium Duffel or Crag Pack

We suggest a second travel bag that serves to carry all of your stuff while traveling (35-50 Liters). Alternatively, you could have a smaller "crag pack" that serves this purpose and can be used for day activities if you don't wish to use your larger pack.

Examples of duffel bags and/or crag packs: REI Roadtripper Duffel (shown right), Camp Rox Pack, Black Diamond Demon Duffel or Crag 40.



Boot Fitting Information

Your hiking boots may be the most important piece of equipment you will buy. You can avoid many foot problems (blisters, cold feet, etc.) by purchasing properly fitted boots. Please take extra time and care when buying your boots. Our information on boot fitting is relatively universal. If you end up with a salesperson that does not understand these instructions, switch to someone else. (Oftentimes, salespeople do not understand the kind of terrain and weather you will encounter during the Semester. When in doubt, follow our instructions, not that of the clerk in the store. Remember that he/she has probably never been an HMI student.)

What to Buy

You should purchase a sturdy, off-trail, backpacking boot, not a mountaineering boot. They should be a medium to heavyweight, ankle-high boot that provides good support for off-trail hiking. Please fit your boots for 1 pair of heavy socks or a liner sock and medium socks. You are likely to end up wearing just a medium weight pair of socks but you may want the extra cushioning and warmth that a heavy pair of wool socks provides. In addition, on extended backpacking trips, feet tend to swell slightly, so larger boots provide more flexibility.

We recommend the following boots: Asolo TPS 520 GV® (shown at right), Merrell Perimeter Gore-Tex®, Asolo Power Matic 200, Vasque St Elias GTX, Lowa Mauria GTX



If you find different boots of comparable quality and construction, they may be fine. Please call if you have any questions.

Tips for Fitting Your Boots

- 1) Shop for boots in the afternoon because your feet swell during the day.
- 2) Boots that are too small will cause more problems than boots that are too large. Start with a boot that is one size larger than your normal shoe size.



- 3) Boots should fit comfortably with one pair of heavy wool socks or a pair of liner socks and a medium weight pair of hiking socks. Please do not let the salesperson talk you into wearing only a thinner pair of socks. In our experience, many students who have had foot problems bought boots that were fitted with one pair of thinner socks.
- 4) Most likely, the boot that fits you best will feel a little large and look huge. When you walk around the store, your heel should lift up slightly, but not be sloppy. Your toes should have enough room to wiggle.
- 5) Once you have found a pair of boots that feel comfortable walking around the store, test them for a proper fit. Lace the boots (snug but not tight) and then kick your foot against the wall. Your toes should just nudge the front of the boot on the 3rd kick. If your toes hit on the 1st or 2nd kick, the boots are too small. (You do not want your toes to jam into the front of your boot when walking downhill.)
- 6) Finding the proper fit takes time. Please be patient. It is worth it to try on lots of different boots because different brands and models fit differently. Their internal shapes vary. Also, do not forget to try a size larger.
- 7) Remember, sizing bigger is better. As they are broken in, leather boots will actually shrink over the years.
- 8) Be aware that replacement insoles such as Super Feet® can change the way a boot fits by raising the height of your heel in the boot. It is best to try on boots with the insoles you plan on using. If you have foot problems or concerns, see a podiatrist to be accurately diagnosed and properly treated. If you do use orthotics or insoles such as Super Feet®, please bring the original insoles to your boots with you to HMI.

What Not to Buy

Please do not buy lightweight hiking boots. Remember, you want a backpacking boot that is made to support you while carrying a heavy backpack. You may be hiking off trail through terrain such as loose gravel, snow, scree, mud, streams, and tall, wet grass for 7-14 days in a row.

New Boots

Once you have new boots, there are a few things you should do: Waterproof them by putting several coats of SnoSeal® or Nikwax® on them (unless they are Gore-tex); and break in your new boots by walking or hiking in them before coming to HMI (see the fitness plan).

Rock Climbing Equipment

For Rock and Traverse courses only.

Climbing Shoes

Climbing shoes are only necessary for Rock and Traverse courses, as these are the courses that include substantial sections focused on rock climbing. Trek 1 courses often do include limited time climbing; however, HMI can provide climbing shoes (and other equipment) for these short sections.

Precise fit is more important for climbing shoes than any other piece of equipment on the list. We encourage you to actually try on the pair of shoes you intend to purchase as sizing can vary from different brands and even different models made by the same brand. It is helpful to remember that climbing shoes are designed to transfer as much force as possible the tip of your toe to a small edge on the rock and to maximize grip. They are not designed to be comfortable or supportive when walking around.

There are three different styles of climbing shoe that you may consider for HMI Gap, and the recommended fit differs for each style. There are a few general climbing shoe fit guidelines:

- 1) They should not be painfully tight but should be snug enough that you would not want to wear them for long periods of time. The ideal tightness of a shoe varies by style, which is discussed below.
- 2) Climbing shoes will generally stretch slightly, especially horizontally across your toes. As opposed to hiking boots, if you are choosing between a slightly too tight and slightly too loose, it's better to err on tighter as long as it's not painful.
- 3) You should strive for a glove-like fit. Different brand/models are designed to fit different foot shapes. You'll likely have to try on a few different models before finding the one that fits you the best. Try to avoid empty space in the shoe, places where the leather ripples or sags, or notable pressure points.
- 4) Many models come in Velcro or lace-up versions. This is almost always personal preference. Lace-up tend to offer a more secure fit while Velcro is easier to put on and take off.

For most of the climbing you'll do at HMI, a "generalist" climbing shoe will work very well. These have a "neutral" down turn yet are soft enough to feel the variations in the rock underfoot. Most HMI Gap students come to HMI with one pair of shoes, and it's one of these or something like it. For fit, strive for a level of tightness that you can wear up to an hour or so without being in pain, Ideally, the shoe will slightly scrunch your toes.



"Generalist" examples by brand:

Evolv – Kronos, Defy
La Sportiva – Muira, Tarantula, Otaki
Black Diamond – Momentum (at left), Aspect
Scarpa – Vapor V, Helix
Five Ten – Rogue

For Rock courses, some students may want to bring a sturdier, more supportive shoe for longer days on the rock, especially when climbing multi-pitch routes. These shoes offer a stiffer sole and ankle support and protection. For fit, strive to get a size that you could wear for multiple hours without taking them off.

"Traditional" examples by brand:

Evolv – The General (at right)
La Sportiva – TC Pro
Scarpa – Maestro Eco



Students who come to HMI with significant previous climbing experience may want to bring a pair of "aggressive" climbing shoes for steeper, more challenging routes. These shoes have a more down-turned (and less comfortable) construction to put your foot in its most powerful position. They are generally softer to allow your toes to grab the rock. They also tend to be more expensive.



"Aggressive" examples by brand:

Evolv – Geshido, Supra
La Sportiva – Skwama (at left), Solution





Black Diamond – Zone
Scarpa – Instinct, Mago
Five Ten – Hiangle

Again, most students only bring 1 pair of "generalist" climbing shoes. Particularly for our Rock courses, students may want to bring two pairs. In this case, we recommend two different styles: either a "generalist" or a "traditional" and an "aggressive" style. It is unnecessary to bring more than 2 pairs of climbing shoes to HMI.

Climbing Harness

There are numerous brands and models of harnesses out there, yet what you need for HMI is a basic, "all-around" harness. We will inspect any harness a student brings to the program that it is in good condition and an appropriate design. Your harness should be a standard waist-belt, leg-loops, and belay-loop design and have "gear loops."

The main focus for fit is the waist belt. The waist belt should ride just above your hip bones. It should tighten so that you cannot fit anymore than your fingers (and not your whole hand) between the belt and your waist. Another test is that you're unable to slide it down over your hips without loosening the belt. The harness should be adjustable enough to wear snugly with only a t-shirt on underneath and to accommodate wearing multiple jackets and tucking them into the waist belt.



Examples of harnesses: Black Diamond Momentum (at right) or Solution, C.A.M.P Energy CR-3, Edelrid Finn III

Climbing Helmet



Similar to harnesses, a basic model helmet will work best for HMI Gap, and we will also inspect your helmet when you arrive. Your helmet must be designed and tested for rock climbing; it should have a chin-strap and an adjustable back-of-head suspension system.

Examples of helmets: Black Diamond Half Dome (at left), Petzl Boreo

