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 July 15th (please review the Arrival and Travel sections)
( ) 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 15, 2018. We appreciate receiving this as soon as possible.

Information we will send you soon:

( ) Travel Information
( ) Course itinerary – click here for a sample itinerary
( ) Registration information for Western State Colorado University (only necessary if you intend to enroll for college credit)

Notes & Lists

Course Communication Information

Mail
Due to the remote and itinerant nature of HMI Gap, we generally encourage students to ask their friends and family **not** to send mail and packages during the program. We do have limited opportunities to deliver mail to the student groups during domestic portions of the program. 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

We are unable to deliver mail to students during any international portion of the program. Any mail received for you when you're out of the country with Gap will be forwarded to the home address you have provided, and we will charge your student account for the postage.

Communication
During the backcountry portions of your course, you will not have access to phone or Internet service. During these times, friends and family should not expect to hear from you. However, during the non-backcountry portions of the semester, we will strive to provide regular opportunities for you to update your friends and family on your adventures. While you will have periodic access to public pay phones and/or computers when we are in towns, we recommend that you bring a smart phone or small Internet connected device, such as a tablet, for ease of communication. Time and access to using your phone or Internet-connected devices will still be limited both by course logistics and by community norms established by the group. We further ask that you only bring one device that can serve multiple purposes.

HMI's philosophy is to use technology very deliberately as a tool to improve your experience and not as entertainment. At the beginning of the semester, we facilitate a discussion among the student group to develop a set of norms about how you want to use your phone, and all students are expected to uphold those norms for the duration of the course. You should understand that, fundamentally, you'll probably use your phone and generally be in touch with people outside the course much less than during other times in your life, and we encourage you to let others know this before the course begins.

We strongly encourage students to **not** bring their personal laptops, as they will be challenging to travel with and may be damaged due to the rugged nature of travel with HMI Gap.

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.

Emergency Communication
While HMI Gap students spend significant amounts of time away from typical cellular service and the Internet, HMI staff do 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 cbarlow@hminet.org. Please have them include the above information and your name.

Pre-Course Physical Fitness

HMI Gap does not require any previous backpacking or rock climbing experience. However, it is important that you arrive to 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 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 rock climbing and backpacking. 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.

Please think about how you would like prescription medications refilled 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).

b. During domestic programming (primarily in Leadville, CO and Moab, UT), 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 help you get the contact information for any of these locations.

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).

d. Please be aware that your medication may not be available in all international destinations that the course travels to. For this reason, we strongly encourage you to bring enough of your prescription medications for the entire time you are outside the US.

Please do not begin new prescription medications just 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 just 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 money 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 $25 to $60 per week. 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:

- Laundry
- Visits to local businesses such as the coffee shop, thrift store, and grocery store
- Snacks when in town
- Money for traveling
- Airline baggage charges
- Souvenirs

International Travel and Money
Many businesses do not accept credit cards in Patagonia. We encourage you to have a debit card in order to withdraw cash before departing the United States and/or while abroad.

Student Accounts
We ask that each student establish a $500 student account at HMI. This account can be used to cover expenses such as:

- Activities
- Equipment rentals
- Emergencies

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.

Travel Information

ARRIVAL:
You should plan to arrive at Denver International Airport (DIA) before 2pm on the day your course starts. Please see this page for the specific course dates.

Driving
If you choose to be dropped off at DIA, you should plan to arrive at DIA sometime between 10 am and 2 pm.

Some students may drive directly to HMI's campus. If you choose to do this, please plan to arrive between 4pm and 6pm.

A further note on student vehicles:
HMI has limited space for students to store their cars. If you plan to leave a car on HMI's campus, please notify us as soon as possible. HMI cannot be held responsible for any damage to your personal vehicle while you are on course. Additionally, we cannot permit students to use their personal vehicles for any reason once the course has begun. While there may be a few opportunities to access items stored in your vehicle, you should plan to keep everything you will need for the semester with you for the course. Finally, you will need to arrange transportation back to HMI's campus after the course has ended to pick up your vehicle.

Flying
If you choose to fly, we will be glad to meet you at the **Denver International Airport** (DEN). We will be meeting flights that are scheduled to arrive between **10 AM and 2 PM only** on the day your course starts. From the airport, we'll load the van and drive to HMI.

The Denver International Airport consists of three separate concourses and the main terminal. All concourses are serviced by an easy-access, underground rail system that takes passengers from their arriving concourse to the terminal. The train is free and departs every 2 minutes. The train trip from the furthest concourse (Concourse C) to the terminal takes approximately 5 minutes.

When you get off the plane, follow signs to the train that will take you to the Main Terminal and Baggage Claim. Exit the train at the terminal, and take the escalator up one flight to the atrium of the terminal. This is the Ground Transportation and Baggage Claim level. HMI Gap faculty members will be waiting for you in the center of the Great Hall with signs and wearing HMI clothing. From there, we will help you gather your baggage (please meet us **before** looking for your luggage).

If you cannot arrive at Denver International between 10 AM and 2 PM, you may need to arrange for ground transportation to our orientation site. (Please contact HMI for more information).

Important Information to Have with You
You will want to carry a calling card number or a cell phone and a few telephone numbers with you on the day you travel:

High Mountain Institute office 719-486-8200 (press 0 to get the faculty on duty)

Denver International Airport Information 303-342-2000
Denver International Airport paging 303-342-2300

If you are having trouble finding the HMI faculty at the airport, please call the High Mountain Institute office first before trying anything else.

International Travel
HMI works with STA Travel, a travel agency that specializes in educational programming, to help students make their flight arrangements. STA can help students book flights from their city of origin to Denver at the start of the course, the specific on-course flight to Patagonia, and the return to the US. By bundling these flights into a single itinerary, STA may be able to offer you significant savings compared to buying separate tickets.

The group will travel together to Balmaceda, Chile during HMI Gap. The course officially ends at 12pm on the last day of the program, at which point students depart from Balmaceda to travel home. When booking their return flights, students may decide to remain in Chile and travel independently after the course concludes.

We will send you more detailed instructions on how to book your international travel by May 15. **Please do not book your international flights before this date**.

You are responsible for purchasing your international travel by July 15th and should expect to pay $1200 – $2100 total. Depending on the exact details of your travel itinerary, like the origin/destination at the beginning/end of the course or a different date of a return flight, the cost of your travel may be greater than this estimate.

Special Travel Considerations

- Please ensure that your passport is valid and DOES NOT EXPIRE during the time that we will be abroad
- 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.

Travel Insurance
HMI encourages you to consider travel insurance to cover costs in case of unforeseen events while abroad. We have researched several travel insurance options and can recommend the ones below. All of them cover a combination of the following: travel disruption, lost/damaged baggage, trip cancellation, medical attention while abroad, repatriation/emergency travel, and tuition. Please review each policy carefully as each one has different coverage and exclusions and may not be valid in your state. Ultimately, it is up to you to decide what the right coverage is for yourself.

Policy Name	Price	Notes on Coverage	How to Purchase
ISIC Explorer	$199	• Covers all course activities • Covers student as long as s/he is more than 160 miles from home • Covers some pre-existing conditions • Includes the ISIC Travel Card, which provides travel-related discounted purchases	Please visit this page and select the "ISIC + Explorer" option.
iNext Platinum Supplemental	$90 for 1 year	• Only covers students when outside the US • 24-hour travel, medical, and legal assistance • Covers pre-existing conditions • Excludes certain course activities (e.g. rock climbing) • Optional "Trip Cancellation" policy upgrade	Please visit this page to purchase the preferred iNext policy. You will be asked to create an account. You can purchase an optional "Trip Cancellation" policy in addition to the iNext Platinum Policy.
World Nomads Explorer	Varies: $200-$400	• Covers student as long as s/he is more than 100 miles from home • Covers all course activities • 24-hour travel assistance • Includes up to $10,000 trip cancellation coverage, which may include tuition	Through World Nomad website. Please make sure to select the “Explorer” policy.

Food
During domestic portions 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 and restrictions. 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.

When 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 general 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 these places we travel with Gap is mostly 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, both domestically and abroad, that are relatively safe. Nevertheless, some of the basic hazards of travel are present in all of our course areas. 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 and especially 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) is 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.

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 75 liters) and one medium duffel or travel/crag bag 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 80˚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 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) Please put your name on your belongings, as everyone will be bringing similar equipment.

PACKING AND EQUIPMENT LIST (Part 1)

** Noted items are available for rent from HMI with prices indicated. We strongly 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. However, we are able to offer limited rental items as a service to our students. Please be aware that students are required to ship any rental equipment back to HMI within 30 days of the end of the course at their own expense. HMI will charge the student the replacement cost of the item plus a 15% service fee for any unreturned items.* ***Rentals are not available for any course that does not begin in Leadville, CO****.*

*** Noted items are available for purchase from HMI with prices indicated. These items are not available for purchase for any course that does not begin in Leadville, CO.*

BACKPACK AND OTHER STORAGE BAGS

- ❑ Backpack at least 75 cubic liters (Please read the Equipment Information page very carefully.) *$80
- ❑ 3 Heavy Duty Trash Compactor or Contractor plastic bags **$.50
- ❑ Medium travel duffel (45-70 liters) OR crag pack (45-70 liters to bring during climbing or work days)
- ❑ 1-2 Small Stuff Sacks (These help you organize items in your pack. These are optional.) *$1
- ❑ Zip-Lock® Bags (1 Gallon size, to protect cameras, books and toiletries in your backpack.)

SLEEPING GEAR

- ❑ Sleeping Bag (synthetic, 0 degree) (Please read the Equipment Information page very carefully.) *$80
- ❑ Compression Stuff Sack (large stuff sack with 3-4 straps, used to compress your sleeping bag) *$1
- ❑ Sleeping Pad, full length (Closed cell foam pad or Therm-A-Rest®.) *$16
- ❑ Sleeping Pad Stuff Sack (optional) *$1

BOOTS AND FOOTWEAR

- ❑ Hiking Boots (Please read the Boot Fitting Information page very carefully.)
- ❑ Wool or Synthetic Socks: 5-6 pairs
- ❑ Gaiters (full-length, long)
- ❑ Running Shoes and/or Approach Shoes
- ❑ Athletic Socks (to wear with your running shoes/sneakers): 4-6 pairs
- ❑ Rock Climbing Shoes (These should be comfortable enough to wear on long climbing days, up to 8 hours. You are welcome to bring 2 pairs of climbing shoes if you wish to accommodate varied climbing terrain).
- ❑ Sandals, optional (ideally, ones with straps such as Chacos)

LOWER BODY LAYERS

- ❑ Shorts (nylon, athletic, and/or hiking/climbing shorts): 2-3
- ❑ Work Pants (such as Carharts, but something you don't mind getting beat up)
- ❑ Climbing Pants (durable, stretchy, cotton is acceptable): 1-2
- ❑ Casual Pants (jeans, slacks for travel and in-town days): 1-2
- ❑ Expedition or Mid-weight Long Underwear Bottoms (Patagonia Capilene®, other synthetic, or wool) **$40
- ❑ Puffy Pants (such as Black Diamond Stance Belay Pants) *$80
- ❑ Wind Pants (synthetic, such as Patagonia Tribune Pants, could be used as climbing pants)
- ❑ Rain Pants (such as Patagonia Rain Shadow Pants) *$50
- ❑ Underwear (Cotton underwear is better than nylon for women. Most women prefer sports bras): 7

UPPER BODY LAYERS

- ❑ Cotton T-shirts/Tank Tops: 3-4
- ❑ Nicer Shirts (for in-town and travel days): 1-2
- ❑ Sweatshirt or Long-sleeve Cotton Shirt (optional): 1
- ❑ Synthetic T-shirts to hike in (such as Patagonia silk weight t-shirt or a cotton shirt): 1-2
- ❑ Long-Sleeve Sun-Shirt (old collared button down works really well)
- ❑ Expedition or Mid-Weight Long Underwear Top (such as Patagonia R1 or Capilene®) **$45
- ❑ Fleece Pullover, or Fleece Jacket (such as Patagonia R2, other synthetic, or wool)
- ❑ Expedition weight Synthetic "puffy" or Down Jacket (such as Black Diamond Stance Belay Parka) *$90
- ❑ Hooded Rain Jacket (such as Patagonia Rain Shadow) *$65
- ❑ Wind layer (such as Patagonia Houdini) - optional

Packing and Equipment List (Part 2)

HEAD LAYERS
- ❑ Wool, Fleece, or Synthetic Hat
- ❑ Sun Hat (we recommend a full coverage hat as the sun is very intense, but a baseball hat will work).
- ❑ Sunglasses (lenses must block 100% UV rays. If you wear glasses instead of contacts, we recommend prescription sunglasses.)
- ❑ Case for Sunglasses (optional)
- ❑ Eye Glass / Sunglass Retainer Strap
- ❑ Prescription Glasses and Contacts (If you wear them, bring a spare pair as back-up)

HAND LAYERS
- ❑ Mid-Weight Fleece or Wool Gloves
- ❑ Work gloves and/or belay gloves

MISCELLANEOUS PERSONAL GEAR
- ❑ Headlamp (lightweight and durable LED model, such as Petzl® Tikka or Black Diamond® Cosmo)
- ❑ Notebook and pens
- ❑ 2 1-Liter Water Bottles (wide mouth liter bottles)
- ❑ Half-liter Nalgene® water bottle for use as a cup (preferable to have a cup that seals) **$10
- ❑ Plastic Bowl (16 oz. Nalgene® Lexan wide mouth container with lid or similar Tupperware®) **$6.50
- ❑ Lexan or Plastic Spoon (No knife or fork needed.) **$.50
- ❑ Lip balm (SPF 15 or greater)
- ❑ Sunscreen (SPF 15 or greater)
- ❑ Bandanas (2)
- ❑ Lighters (2-3 small disposable lighters work fine.)
- ❑ Toiletries (toothbrush and small tube of toothpaste, brush or comb, skin lotion, tampons. Travel size is ideal for wilderness trips and travel to Patagonia.)
- ❑ Towel
- ❑ Watch (waterproof athletic type; should have an alarm on your watch)
- ❑ Personal prescription medication(s) (must be listed on student's medical form)
- ❑ Camera and Extra Film (Avoid heavy lenses. 35mm compact cameras or single use cameras are usually sufficient.)
- ❑ Extra Camera Batteries
- ❑ Personal Climbing Harness (Please make sure it is in great condition and know that we may ask you to replace it if it does not meet our safety standards. Some good, inexpensive harnesses are the Black Diamond Momentum or Primrose harness.)
- ❑ Chalk bag

THINGS TO BRING ONLY IF YOU ALREADY OWN THEM
- ❑ Climbing Helmet (we will provide helmets, but if you prefer to bring your own, make sure it is in great condition and know that we may ask you to not use it if it does not fit our safety standards).
- ❑ Belay Device (we will provide belay devices, but if you prefer to bring your own, make sure it is in great condition and know that we may ask you to not use it if it does not fit our safety standards).
- ❑ Camelback or other Hydration Pack, optional

OPTIONAL
- ❑ Books to read
- ❑ Small pillow
- ❑ Crazy Creek

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 and 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. Try local shops that carry brand names such as Black Diamond ®, Mont-Bell ®, Patagonia ®, and North Face® etc. We also recommend considering some of the following national stores:

Backcountry.com **www.backcountry.com**
We've partnered with Backcountry.com to provide a great resource for equipment purchasing and questions. HMI students receive 15% off MSRP (some exclusions apply).
In order to receive the discount, or if you have any gear related questions, please contact Ben Rabinowitz at the below email or phone number and mention you are enrolled in an HMI program. Ben also serves as a resource to help you purchase the right equipment, and we encourage you to reach out to him with questions as you purchase your gear.

Ben Rabinowitz
Customer Account Manager

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.sierratradingpost.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.

Please pay careful attention to our description of each item you will need, and be sure to follow our guidelines when considering a substitute. If you are confused or unsure, give us a call at 719-486-8200. Feel free to call us directly from a store, and we will talk with you and/or the sales clerk. Ask for Chris at ext. 112. 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.

Clothing Details

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.

THE ART OF LAYERING
Having the proper clothing on your Semester expeditions 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 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

The inner layer should be something thin and light such as a T-shirt or long underwear made of wool or a synthetic fabric such as polypropylene or Capilene®. These fabrics are effective at wicking 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.

Examples of base layers: Patagonia Capilene® 2 (pictured), Smartwool Midweight NTS®, Marmot Midweight®, Arc'teryx Rho AR®

2. 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® (to right in black), Smartwool Wintersport®, Marmot Reactor®, Arc'teryx Delta SV® North Face Denali® Jacket

Examples of alternative/additional 2nd layers: Patagonia Nano-puff, Mountain Hardwear Compressor Jacket (shown in red)

3. HEAVY INSULATION

Given the typically colder conditions we are camping and traveling in, we recommend bringing an expedition 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: Stance Belay Parka and Stance Belay insulated pants.

4. 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 must bring 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. In the spring semester, 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, Arc'teryx Alpha SL® or Beta AR®, Marmot Precip®, Montbell Particle® or Versalite®

WIND/HIKING PANTS
Wind 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 all of your layers. Side zippers on the legs are especially nice for putting them on and off over hiking boots.

Examples of wind/hiking pants: Patagonia Guide Pants, REI Sahara Convertible® Pants (shown at right), REI Acme® Pants, Marmot DriClime®, Arc'teryx Gamma LT® Pants

Sleeping Bags

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 bottom right), Big Agnes Whiskey Park® 0°F, Sierra Designs Nahche® 0°F

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 BACKPACKS
You will want to purchase an internal frame backpack. Your backpack should have a minimum capacity of 5000 cubic inches (75+ liters). 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, a 5000 cubic inch 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 5000 cubic inches 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: Black Diamond Mission® 75, Osprey Aether® 85, Osprey Xinith® 105, Gregory Baltoro® 85, Gregory Deva® 85 (shown at right), 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 BAG OR CRAG PACK
We suggest a second travel bag that serves to carry all of your stuff while traveling (45-70 Liters). Alternatively, you could have a smaller "crag pack" that serves this purpose and can be used for all day activities if you don't wish to use your larger pack.

Examples of duffel bags and/or crag packs: Patagonia Black Hole Duffel (shown right), Camp Rox Pack, or Black Diamond Demon Duffel).

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 ext. 112.

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. (Often times, 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 wear just 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).