

Sterling College

Working Hands. Working Minds.

A Sense of Place: Expedition 1

Equipment List

Welcome to Sterling College!

Learning to choose the right equipment for your adventure is an essential part of a fun and successful Expedition. We know that walking into an outdoor store can be a daunting experience, but preparing for your course need not feel overwhelming. This list is designed to help you make smart, prudent choices about the gear you bring on your trip.

When you arrive, your instructors will first look through all the equipment you've brought and help you decide what to take into the field. You'll then go into our Outfitting Department to rent any remaining items listed as available for rent. We do not recommend that you go out and purchase a lot of expensive, specialized gear for your course, try to borrow from friends and family when possible.

Here are some thoughts to guide you as you pack:

- **First, use gear you already own!** You'll be comfortable in tried-and-true clothing. Bring more layers than you think you'll need; your instructors will help you choose your best options.
- **Second, rent key items from Sterling College.** While you are not obligated to rent gear from us, there are several reasons why we suggest it. Our rental gear is chosen and maintained specifically for the use it receives on courses, and renting lets you try out gear so that you can make informed decisions on future adventures. If you plan to rent, you should send us an email ahead of time with the items you plan to rent.
- **Third, visit your local outdoor store.** Most gear shops are familiar with outdoor courses. They can advise you on purchases—but be wary of being “upsold” items that you don't really need! We encourage you to keep the tags on all

equipment and clothing (and the receipt) so that you may return any unneeded items if your instructors inform you of this when you arrive.

Equipment Fees

Anything that is listed as available for rent from Sterling College is available to you. If you have significant financial strain, please contact us so we can arrange equipment for you at a discounted or scholarship rate.

Quality Over Quantity

We fundamentally believe that you don't need to own a lot of expensive gear to live and travel comfortably in the backcountry. By purchasing high-quality items and learning to care for them, you're making a lifetime investment. Spend money on the few items that really matter, but don't get lured into splurging on the trendiest fabrics or unnecessary gadgets.

No Cotton

When packing for the trail, **NO COTTON**. Cotton clothes do not retain heat when wet and are miserable in hot conditions. Rain can lead to hypothermia in cotton clothes. **DO NOT** bring any of the following; jeans, cotton t-shirts, sweatshirts, or cotton socks.

Questions?






If you have any questions or would like more information regarding the items on this list, please contact your Admission Counselor and they will connect you with an Outdoor Education faculty member.

How to Use This List

Items under the **Required** heading are items that you **must** either bring yourself or rent from Sterling as available. Items under the **Optional** heading are not required, and you may bring them from home. If you see an **X** in the price column, it means that an item is not available for rent as indicated.

Upper Body Clothing

We layer our clothing, combining different garments to achieve optimum insulation and protection from wind and rain. We use either synthetic or wool fibers, both of which insulate when wet; merino wool products are increasingly popular. We avoid cotton, which is poor insulation when wet.




Equipment	Rent	Photo Example	Notes/Photo Example product name
Required Items			
Base Layer (midweight synthetic) (1)	X		Mid-weight underwear top made of wool, synthetic. (Patagonia Capilene® Midweight Crew)
Top Layer (synthetic or fleece jacket)	X		Synthetic full-length zip jacket. Fleece or fiberfill jacket of Polartec® 300 or equivalent weight. Hood is nice but not required. (Marmot Calen Hooded Insulated Jacket)
Rain Jacket	X		A sturdy, roomy waterproof jacket with a hood. Both coated nylon and breathable fabrics such as Gore-Tex® are acceptable. Good budget options are Frog Toggs. (Columbia Watertight II Jacket)
T-shirt (1)	X		A lightweight synthetic or wool shirt, Nike Dry-Fit, Under Armor are good if the label does not have any percentage cotton. (Patagonia Capilene® Daily T-shirt)
Sports Bra or Tank (1-2)	X		Synthetic sports bra or a synthetic sports tank are recommended if applicable. (New Balance Shapely Shaper Sports Bra)

Our advice? Bring all the sweaters, fleece jackets, and synthetic layers you think might work. We'll advise you on the best combination for your trip.


Lower Body Clothing

You will need 1 synthetic insulating layer (usually a base layer like long underwear). All layers must fit comfortably over each other so that they can be worn at the same time. If you tend to get cold easily, add a middle layer of midweight bottoms to the base layer.

Equipment	Rent	Photo Example	Notes/Photo example product name
Required Items			

Base Layer (midweight synthetic) (1)	X		Mid-weight bottoms of high performance polyester, synthetic, or wool. Cotton and cotton blends are not acceptable. (Patagonia Capilene® long underwear)
Wind / Hiking Pants	X		Breathable nylon wind pants or lightweight hiking pants, roomy enough to fit over lower body base layer. (Prana Stretch Zion Pants)
Underwear / Briefs (2-3 pairs)	X		Wear what's comfortable; silk or synthetics are fine. (Ex Officio Underwear)
Rain Pants	X		Some people like to use rain pants in conjunction with a rain jacket. (Frog Togg Rain Pants)

Optional Items


Nylon Shorts	X		Optional, we recommend hiking pants. Loose-fitting nylon athletic/river shorts. No cotton shorts please. (New Balance Running Shorts)
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Our advice? Bring all the synthetic base layers, rain gear, and exercise clothing you think might work. We'll advise you on the best combination for your trip.

Head, Neck, and Hand Layers

Equipment	Rent	Photo Example	Notes/Photo example product name
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Required Items


Baseball Cap or Brimmed Sun Hat	X	N/A	To protect ears and face from the sun; baseball hats are great.
Wool or Fleece Hat	X		A warm hat made of wool or fleece. Thick enough to keep you warm on chilly nights. (L.L.Bean Polartech Power Stretch hat)


Liner Gloves	X		Wool or fleece, cheap is good. (Smartwool Liner gloves)
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Packs and Bags

Equipment	Rent	Photo Example	Notes/Photo example product name
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Required Items

Backpack	(Some avail. for rent)		Our rental packs are large expedition models with a volume of 5000 to 6000 cubic inches. If you bring your own pack it must be in the range of 4500 to 6000 cubic inches (roughly 65-75 Liters). (Osprey Xenith 75 Liter pack)
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Small Stuff Sack (1-2)	X		Small nylon or mesh sacks for organizing items in your pack, any brand in a small or med size is good. (Outdoor Research Stuff Sack)
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Our advice? An expedition backpack is a major purchase. If you don't already own one, we think you should rent ours.

Sleeping Gear


Equipment	Rent	Photo Example	Notes/Photo example product name
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Required Items

Sleeping Bag	(Some avail. for rent)		Synthetic-filled bags (Quallofil®, Hollofil®, Polarguard®, etc.) perform well in the variety of conditions we may encounter. A bag with temperature rating of 35°F to 0°F. (Mountain Hardware Lamina)
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Compression Sack	(Some avail. for rent)		A sleeping bag stuff sack with straps attached to compress contents. *Make sure it is big enough to fit your sleeping bag. (Granite Gear Compression Sack)
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Plastic Trash Bag (2)	X	N/A	2 heavy-duty (3-6 mil) lawn-and-garden bags (33 gallon) to help waterproof your sleeping bag and backpack.
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Closed-Cell Foam or Inflatable Sleeping Pad	(Some avail. for rent)		Full-length closed cell foam or inflatable pad to insulate and pad between the ground and your sleeping bag. Please bring a patch kit if you bring an inflatable pad. (Therm-a-Rest Ridgerest)
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Miscellaneous Items

Equipment	Rent	Photo Example	Notes/Photo example product name
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Required Items




Bowl	X		Plastic or Tupperware bowl. A screw-on lid is handy. (500ml plastic Nalgene Bowl)
Spoon	X		One that fits inside your bowl is ideal. (Snowpeak Spork)
Water Bottle (2)	X		Wide-mouth quart- or liter-sized plastic bottles (2 liter capacity total). Gatorade 32 oz. bottles are cheap and work well. (Nalgene Everyday)
Work Gloves	X		Any basic yard/farm-work type glove. Leather is nice but anything that fits is great. (Kinco work gloves)
Lip Balm	X		Stick, cream, or tube-type moisturizing balm, SPF 15 or greater. (Dermatone SPF 23 Lip Balm)
Sunscreen	X	N/A	A 3- to 6-oz. tube, SPF 30 or greater.
Bandana/Buff (1-2)	X		These are always handy. (Buff Original Buff)
Headlamp	X		Durable and lightweight. Headlamps are preferred over flashlights. (Petzl Tikka Headlamp)


Toiletries	X	N/A	Toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, and menstrual products. Travel or trial sizes are plenty!
Watch	X		A watch with an alarm is a nice feature. (Timex Chrono-Fast Wrap Alarm watch)
Pen/Pencil (2)	X	N/A	For journaling and taking notes during classes.
Sunglasses	X	N/A	Any good quality sunglasses with dark lenses with 100% UV-blocking protection will work fine. If you wear prescription lenses and have limited vision without them, bring your own prescription sunglasses or look for a quality pair of clip-on polarized shades.
Glasses / Contact Lenses	X	N/A	Please bring a backup set as well, in case first pair is damaged or lost.
Prescription Medications	X	N/A	Please be sure you have enough for your entire course and travel days.
Optional Items			
Insect Repellent	X		1 small bottle is optional. No aerosol spray cans. (Off Deep Woods)
Notepad	X		A small, lightweight journal for personal journaling is fine, but you will have a workbook to take notes in. (Rite in the Rain 148 All-Weather Notebook)
Book	X	N/A	A small paperback reading book is okay.
Trekking Poles	(Some avail. for rent)		Highly recommended on the Long Trail. Sturdy 2-3 section poles for easy packing. Good for steep, muddy trails. (Black Diamond Trail Sport 2)
Camera	X		Lightweight, compact digital cameras are sufficient; bring a protective case. Avoid heavy lenses and elaborate set-ups. (Please note: you may NOT bring your smartphone or tablet into the field to use as a digital camera.) (Olympus Stylus Tough)

Camp Chair	X		Crazy Creek-style. (Crazy Creek The Chair)
Hydration System	X		Very handy and popular, though water bottles serve the same purpose and tend to leak less. (Camelbak Crux Reservoir)
Sunglasses Retainer	X		Chums or Croakies for keeping track of your glasses or sunglasses. (Croakies Terra Cord)
Pocketknife	X		Not needed. Should you want to bring one, please choose a very small knife or multi-tool. (Gerber Ultralight I st)

Our advice? Keep the toiletries, pocket knife and other gear to small sizes. We work to keep our pack weight as low as possible. Saving every ounce is essential!

Footwear

Equipment	Rent	Photo Example	Notes/Photo example product name
Required Items			
Boots	X		Sturdy, broken-in, hiking boots with good ankle support and proper fit are critical for hiking on uneven terrain with expedition packs. All-leather or leather-and-synthetic uppers are fine. The most common mistake is buying boots that are too small. (See "Boot Recommendations" below.) (Keen Targhee II Mid)
Synthetic Socks (3)	X		Mid-weight wool/synthetic socks. All pairs of socks should fit comfortably in your boots. (Darn Tough Micro Crew ¾ hiking sock)
Camp Shoes	X		Running, tennis, or cross-training athletic shoes, old sneakers are fine. (Crocs™ Specialist)
Optional Items			

<p>Sock Liners (1-2)</p>	<p>X</p>		<p>Some people like them for blister control. Some don't. (Fox River Therm-A-Wick Sock Liners)</p>
<p>Gaiters</p>	<p>(Some avail. for rent)</p>		<p>Gaiters keep dirt and other debris from entering the boot. (Outdoor Research Crocodile Gaiter)</p>
<p>Our advice? Your boots will be a critical piece of gear. If they're not sturdy, don't provide enough support, or don't fit properly with hiking socks, we won't let you use them. If you have any doubts about boots, feel free to check in with your Admission Counselor.</p>			

Boot Recommendations

We want you to have boots that provide adequate protection for your feet, are durable enough to withstand wear, and provide reasonable comfort. Many boots available on the market do not meet these criteria.

Medium-weight boots work best. They provide good support for hiking with heavy packs, and usually require less break-in time than heavyweight boots. Here are some features to look for:

- Constructed from full-grain, one-piece leather upper or a combination of nylon, Gore-Tex, and leather.
- A sole that provides good traction, like Vibram® or other lugged sole.
- 1/2- to 3/4-length shank or full poly mid-sole stiffener within the sole to provide foot support and protection.
- Ankle support! Trail running shoes and below-the-ankle hiking boots are not acceptable.
- Comfortable fit with your preferred hiking socks. Boots that are too small commonly cause blisters.

The following list of acceptable boots is not exhaustive and is to be used for suggestions only. It is fine to substitute a similar boot for one of those listed here.

Asolo: Power Matic series; Garmont: Dakota; La Sportiva: Thunder II; Keen: Targhee II Mid; Montrail: Feather Peak; Oboz: Wind River; Scarpa: Mustang; Vasque: St Elias; Merrell: Moab Mid.

***Please note that boot manufacturers often rename their product line. Visit the manufacturer's website or contact us if you have questions.**

Shared Group Equipment—Sterling College will supply this and more

Expedition members share both the use of and the responsibility for the group gear that Sterling College issues. Sterling College charges only for group equipment lost or damaged.

Tents and Shelters

Trowel or Shovel

Camp Stoves

Fuel Bottles and Fuel

Cooking Gear

Maps and Compasses

Reference Books

First Aid Kits:

Our instructors carry adequate first aid kits. There is no need to bring your own.