COLUMBIA JOURNALISM SCHOOL

Technology Guide 2025-2026

Greetings from the technology staff at the J-school. We oversee the computers, cameras, recorders and related gear that you'll be using during your time here. In this letter, we'll describe what you need to bring with you and what we have on hand for your use. We'll also give suggestions for those of you who want to acquire cameras and other optional equipment, and we'll tell you how to obtain a student discount (Links to an external site) when making your purchases.

This guide covers the following topics:

1. Items students must bring with them to school
2. Gear the school has available for student use
3. Items students may want to bring with them to school
4. Fees associated with using Journalism School equipment
5. Online technology training
6. Student discounts
7. Wi-Fi and student policies

1. ITEMS STUDENTS MUST BRING WITH THEM TO SCHOOL

   (See details via links)
   - Laptop computer
   - Smart phone
   - External hard drive
   - SD, SDHC, or SDXC card

2. GEAR THE SCHOOL HAS ON HAND FOR STUDENT USE

   (See details via links)
   - Digital SLR Cameras
   - Audio Recorders and Accessories
   - Video Cameras and Accessories

3. ITEMS STUDENTS MAY WANT TO BRING WITH THEM TO SCHOOL

   (See details via links)
   - DSLR camera
   - Audio Recorders and Accessories

4. FEES ASSOCIATED WITH USING JOURNALISM SCHOOL EQUIPMENT

   (See details via links)
   - Technology fee (all students)
   - Usage fees for specific gear/classes
   - Fees for software subscriptions

5. ONLINE TECHNOLOGY TRAINING

   (See details here)

6. ADDITIONAL STUDENT DISCOUNTS

   (See details here)

7. WIFI & STUDENT POLICIES

   (See details here)

In detail…

ITEMS STUDENTS MUST BRING WITH THEM TO SCHOOL

- Laptop - Students must own a laptop that meets the following specifications:

Minimum Hardware Specifications for Apple laptops	
Operating System	MacOS 12 or Newer (Monterey)
Processor	M1 or newer (8-Core CPU, **10-Core GPU**)
Memory	**16 GB Minimum** | 32 GB Recommended
Graphics Card	**10-Core GPU**
Storage Drive	256 GB or more (**with at least 80 GB of available storage space**)
Ports	USB-C, Thunderbolt-3, HDMI
Adapters	Adapters for USB-A or HDMI

Minimum Hardware Specifications for Windows laptops	
Operating System	Windows 11
Processor	Intel 8th-Gen i5 or newer. (or AMD equivalent).
Memory	**16 GB Minimum** | 32 GB Recommended
Graphics Card	**Dedicated GPU with 4 GB of video memory** (Nvidia or AMD equivalent)
Storage Drive	256 GB or more (**with at least 80 GB of available storage space**)
Ports	USB-C, Thunderbolt-3, HDMI
Adapters	Adapters for USB-A or HDMI

- Smartphone - Students must have their own smartphone.

We recommend either Apple iPhone or Android smartphones that support the latest available operating system; you can use them for mobile photo, video and audio capture; email or text your instructor if you encounter a problem (or just have a question) while you're out reporting; file stories from the field, and do research while you're on the move. Additionally, you will need USB-C adapters to transfer your data to external drives or using audio jacks. We recommend iPhone 11 and newer, or Android equivalents (e.g., Samsung Galaxy, Google Pixel, OnePlus, etc.).

- External hard drive - Students must own their own external drive

When Purchasing an external hard drive

Your portable hard drive must meet the following minimum specifications:

- USB-C, USB 3.0 and/or Thunderbolt connections
- 1TB or more recommended for students enrolled in digital media (video, audio) classes
- Speed of 7200 RPM (the speed is *very* important for students who are taking video) or Solid State (SSD) technology

We recommend the SanDisk Professional G-Drive. It offers good value for the price, durability, does not require a power supply, and supports USB3, USB-C connections. The drive comes in a variety of sizes and prices. Before you make a purchase, you should consider what type of work you plan on doing. If you think you plan to do a lot of video work, you may want to purchase a larger drive. If you don't expect to do much video or other multimedia, the capacity outlined above will be fine.

- SD card - Students must own their own full-sized SD card

When purchasing an SD card

This small, high-capacity memory card can be removed from the video camera when you turn it back into the equipment room, so that the next person to use the camera doesn't wipe out your work. To use the full capabilities of our video cameras, you must have a card rated UHS Speed Class U3 or higher.

Here are two card recommendations:
- 32GB Card: Amazon - 32GB SanDisk SDHC Card (Links to an external site.)
- 64GB Card: Amazon - 64GB SanDisk SDXC Card (Links to an external site.)

We strongly recommend that you buy a full-size SD card, and not a microSD card with the full-size adapter.

*Please note, our Tascam Audio Recorders do not accept SD cards larger than 128GB. So if you plan to use our Audio Recorders, please ensure you have an SD card that is 128GB or less.

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GEAR THE SCHOOL HAS ON HAND FOR STUDENT USE

- ● Digital SLR Camera

Our equipment room stocks a number of Canon Rebel T2i cameras and a more limited supply of T4i cameras available for student use. They will be available for student checkout during the school year. There is no equipment fee for checking out our Canon DSLR cameras. However, priority goes to students in classes that require them, so we don't guarantee they'll always be available to you for projects outside of class assignments.

Fuji mirrorless cameras, Canon and Fuji lenses, photo tripods, flashes, and other photo accessories are available to students taking certain specific photo classes, or who are doing a photo masters project, only if they choose to pay the optional equipment fee associated with the class (more on equipment fees below). *Only students enrolled in these specific classes who pay the optional equipment fee would have access to this equipment.

Some students choose to bring their own cameras. This is *not* a requirement, and if you aren't planning to seriously pursue photojournalism, there's no reason for you to bring one. But if you are planning to pursue photojournalism, there are advantages to having your own camera: You won't have to check it in or out of the equipment room; you won't be charged equipment fees for using one of ours (more on equipment fees below); and since no one else is using your personal camera, it will always be in the condition in which you last left it. One other benefit: When you graduate, you'll already own equipment with which you're comfortable.

Note: Whether you use your camera or our own, you will need to supply your own SD card and any other recording media.

Also note: We do **NOT** serve as a repair shop. You will be responsible for the maintenance and servicing of your own equipment.

- ● Audio Recorders and Accessories

Our equipment room has a large number of professional-quality Tascam DK-100 MKiii recorders and accessories on hand for students working on audio pieces. They will be available for student checkout during the school year. There is no equipment fee for checking out audio recorders. However, priority goes to students in classes that require them, so we don't guarantee they'll always be available to you for projects outside of class assignments.   Please note: You will need to supply your own SD cards for use with our audio recorders. The specifications are listed at the beginning of this document.

- Video Cameras and Accessories

The school provides state-of-the-art Canon XF400 and Canon EOS C200 cameras for video classes that require them, along with tripods, lighting, microphones, and other accessories. Fees apply for camera checkouts in video courses. (More information on equipment fees follows.) You are neither expected nor encouraged to purchase your own video cameras, but you are required to provide your own SD card.

ITEMS STUDENTS MAY WANT TO BRING WITH THEM TO SCHOOL

- DSLR camera

If you're planning to buy a camera

If you decide you do want to purchase a camera, make sure you buy one that meets the following minimum specifications:

- Records in standard formats — .jpg, .tiff, RAW (no proprietary software required)
- At least 10 megapixels
- Offers full manual controls
- Records to removable flash media

Here are some specific cameras that meet those requirements:

Mirrorless cameras	Mid-Tier SLR:	High-Tier SLRs
FUJIFILM X-T5	Canon 60D	Canon 5D Mk. III, VI
Canon R6, R7, R8	Canon T8i	Canon 90D
Nikon Z6, Z7, Z8, Z9	Canon T7	Nikon D780, D810, D850
	Nikon D7200, D7500	

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- Audio Recorders and Accessories

If you're planning to buy an audio recorder

If you decide you want to bring your own audio recorder, make sure that it meets the following specifications:

- Records digitally, preferably to removable media (flash card)
- Can transfer audio files to the computer via USB
- Has an external mic input for plugging in a professional microphone (either XLR, 1/4" or 1/8" adaptable to XLR)
- Records or converts to standard audio format (.wav) without third-party software.

We recommend the TASCAM DR-100 Mark III, or Zoom H4n units since they both accept XLR audio sources.

Important: Be wary of recorders that only record in WMA or other proprietary formats that require software conversion before being imported into Adobe Audition and other NLE Audio editors.

A good source of information on audio recorders for journalists is transom.org. (Links to an external site.)

FEES ASSOCIATED WITH USING JOURNALISM SCHOOL EQUIPMENT

- Technology fee: $1,200 (all students)

The technical services at the school include software licenses for the classroom and edit suites, access to LinkedIn Learning (a technology training site), copy paper, and the maintenance of equipment such as edit suites, radio and TV rooms, general-purpose computer workstations, etc.

NOTE: This fee does not cover the cost of purchasing your laptop, phone or any other gear.

- Usage fees for specific gear/classes

Ongoing maintenance and repairs to cameras and camera accessories.

- Video camera: 7-week class - $175
- Video camera: 15-week class or MP - $275
- DSLR camera: 7-week class - $50
- DSLR camera: 15-week class - $75

- Fees for software subscriptions

Certain classes may require students to supply specific hardware and software in order to participate. These requirements will be included with the course descriptions students receive before submitting course preference ballots. Below are educational discount links to some of the more popular required software used:

- Adobe Creative Cloud Student Pricing (Links to external site)
- Hindenburg Pro Student Pricing (Links to external site)
- AVID Pro Tools Student Pricing (Links to an external site)

ONLINE TECHNOLOGY TRAINING

- In addition to the training that you will receive, LinkedIn Learning (Links to external site) is available to you to help fuel your lifetime of learning and professional development.

ADDITIONAL STUDENT DISCOUNTS

- As a student at the J-school, you can obtain a student discount on the purchase of computers, software, cameras and other equipment from vendors such as Apple, Dell and B&H. The links are below; you will need to log in with your Columbia UNI and passcode the view the information:

  - Computer Information and Student Discount (Links to CU site)
  - Student Computer Discount (Links to Columbia Journalism site)
  - Audio/Video discounts via B&H (Links to external site)

WIFI & STUDENT POLICIES

- Columbia offers two wireless networks:
  - Columbia U Secure (Requires UNI credentials)
  - Columbia University (Open network for guests)
  Instructions to connect can be found here (Links to CU site)

- Students must adhere to all CJS and Columbia University policies.
  CJS and CU student policies can be found here (Links to Columbia Journalism site)