Note-taking Options

Evernote

Pros: Syncs across all devices, reliable organization system, records audio, supports attached files like photos or diagrams, doubles as a scanner for importing documents.

Cons: Handwriting support is limited.

livescribe

Pros: Immediate control over your own notes, ability to return to the recorded lecture synced with your handwritten notes. You can return to fill in gaps, add drawings, and write indicators in the margins to stay organized.

Cons: The smartpen, notebooks, and desktop software are individual tools to learn and maintain. Audio quality may be poor in large lecture halls.

* SDS can help with demos, trainings, and materials!

NOTESHELF

Pros: Annotative style allows you to input diagrams, photos, and pdfs and provides the ability to write directly on the images. Saves to Google Drive for storage, organization, and sharing.

Cons: Records audio but does not sync audio to notes and requires a $4.99 one-time purchase.

NOTABILITY

Pros: User-friendly and clean organizational tools, import files, work with documents side-by-side, convert handwriting to searchable text, and export notes to save or share.

Cons: Does not sync across devices and requires a $9 one-time purchase.

OneNote

Pros: Excellent formatting mimicking a binder: pages can be rearranged, edited, and shared. Works with full Microsoft suite and has cohesive offline functionality.

Cons: Limited features on mobile apps and browsers; the breadth of features can take time to explore and learn.

*immediate free access with UChicago student login (CNET ID)

Google Keep

Pros: Simple interface that looks like a bulletin board of "sticky-notes" for short-form notetaking: make lists, record voice memos, and collect diagrams and photos with detailed captions. It's cloud based and syncs across devices.

Cons: Not ideal for long paragraphs or outlines.

* Pairs well with other technology—use an audio-recorder to capture the lecture, then take note of keywords and timestamps in the app.

*immediate free access with UChicago student login (CNET ID)

AudioNote
Notepad and Voice Recorder

Pros: Records audio and syncs with notes.

Cons: Lacks some organization. While you can handwrite notes and draw from a tablet, some features like highlighting are only available if you type out notes.

otter.ai

Pros: Records audio and transcribes lecture in real-time with high accuracy and recognition of lingo and terms, highlight key points, generate a word cloud of important terms, insert photos or other audio tracks, and sync to Zoom. Can export files to save, collaborate, and organize.

Cons: The transcriptions may require "quality control" for punctuation and some harder vocabulary.

Peer Notetaker

Pros: Another student in class takes notes and uploads them to AIM for you to download, even if you miss class. This is a low-tech option.

Cons: Notes are "filtered" through another student and are not a transcript of the lecture. There could be a delay in receiving notes—sometimes hiring a notetaker can take time and uploads may not be consistent. Notetakers may also prefer different styles and methods, so notes may not match your personal preference.

*If your needs are better met by having a "backup" of notes, an app or a recording of the lecture may help supplement the notes you're already taking!

Note-Taking Accommodation Options

Key: use the following symbols to match the options to your personal learning style and preference

👁 Visual

🎧 Auditory

💬 Verbal

✋ Physical/Kinetic

💡 Logical/Mathematical

👥 Social

👤 Solitary

$ Free for UChicago Students

$$$ Additional cost

 IOS compatible only

👁 🎧 💬 ✋ 💡 👥 👤 $ $$$