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Updated November, 2025

Requesting Letters of Recommendation

- I enjoy writing letters of recommendation and see doing so as an important part of my job. That said, please consider whether or not I'm the best person to write a letter for you. Have we interacted enough for me to get a good sense of your skills, experiences, strengths, and growth? I will always emphasize your strengths in letters, but integrity requires me to be honest about your performance in my classes and other interactions.
- I must have a [FERPA release](#) for any letters of recommendation or reference requests. If I receive an email or phone reference request, I'll reach out to you and ask for an updated FERPA release.
- If at all possible, please allow two weeks for the first letter you request from me. After I've written that first letter, a few days is usually sufficient lead time.
- When requesting letters, please provide me with your current resume/CV and a few bullet points describing which skills and experiences you'd like me to highlight in my letters about you. If possible, please send me your draft application essays so I can get a sense of how you're presenting yourself. Please also include deadlines and information about how to submit your letters. If you are applying to multiple graduate schools or scholarship programs requiring letters, it's a great idea to create a shared google spreadsheet with that information.
- As a matter of consistency, I will not share the letters I write on your behalf with you. If you encounter the rare graduate school or scholarship program that asks you to collect your own letters of recommendation, I will happily reach out to them directly to avoid this.
- I will let you know as I submit letters. I have never missed a deadline for a letter of recommendation, but it's still a great idea to give me an email reminder a couple of days before a deadline.
- Please follow-up! It's also wonderful to hear when your applications are successful.

Undergraduate Senior Thesis, Senior Project, or Honors Project

- If you'd like me to serve as an advisor for your thesis or project, please contact me as soon as you start thinking you might want to do a thesis or project. I can support you in choosing a project that is both meaningful to you and of an appropriate scope. I enjoy supporting students in this way, especially if the project relates to environmental justice and/or food systems.
- Consider the scope of your project or thesis: How much time do you have to commit to this effort? How many credits does your program of study require? The most successful projects and theses involve work over multiple quarters; does your schedule allow for this? Remember that 1 credit equates to 3 hours per week outside of class.
- Ultimately, this is YOUR thesis or project. While I can help you navigate content, research methods, and campus institutions, you are in the driver's seat and responsibility lies with you.
- After multiple conversations together, but before registering for thesis or project credits, you'll need to send me: 1) a paragraph description of your project or thesis, 2) a draft timeline (as detailed as possible), 3) funding needs (so I can help you apply to necessary grants), and 4) info on human subjects review, if applicable (see below). We will likely edit these documents as you dive into your work.
- Plan to join my "lab" for any quarter you are working on your thesis or project. Our group will meet for one hour most weeks to share current work, complete common readings, and support one another.
- **Human Research Protection Programs:** If your thesis or project includes studying or working with people, it is likely that you will need to go through [WWU's Human Research Protection Programs \(HRPP\) review](#) to ensure that you are doing so in an ethical manner. This is an important, and

sometimes lengthy process (often beyond control, depending on IRB office workload). Some things to consider:

- I respect the HRPP process and will not serve on committees or support senior theses/projects that skirt this process.
- For projects I supervise that require HRPP approval: I require that the HRPP application be submitted BEFORE your final quarter of thesis or project credits (and before I will sign off on registration). For example, if you are taking 6 credits of senior thesis in spring quarter of your senior year, you must submit your HRPP application in winter quarter before I will sign off on spring thesis credit registration. A better example: you plan to take 6 credits of senior thesis and enroll in 2 in winter quarter and 4 in spring quarter. In this case, I can support you in writing your HRPP application in winter quarter so you are all set to get going on your research in the spring.