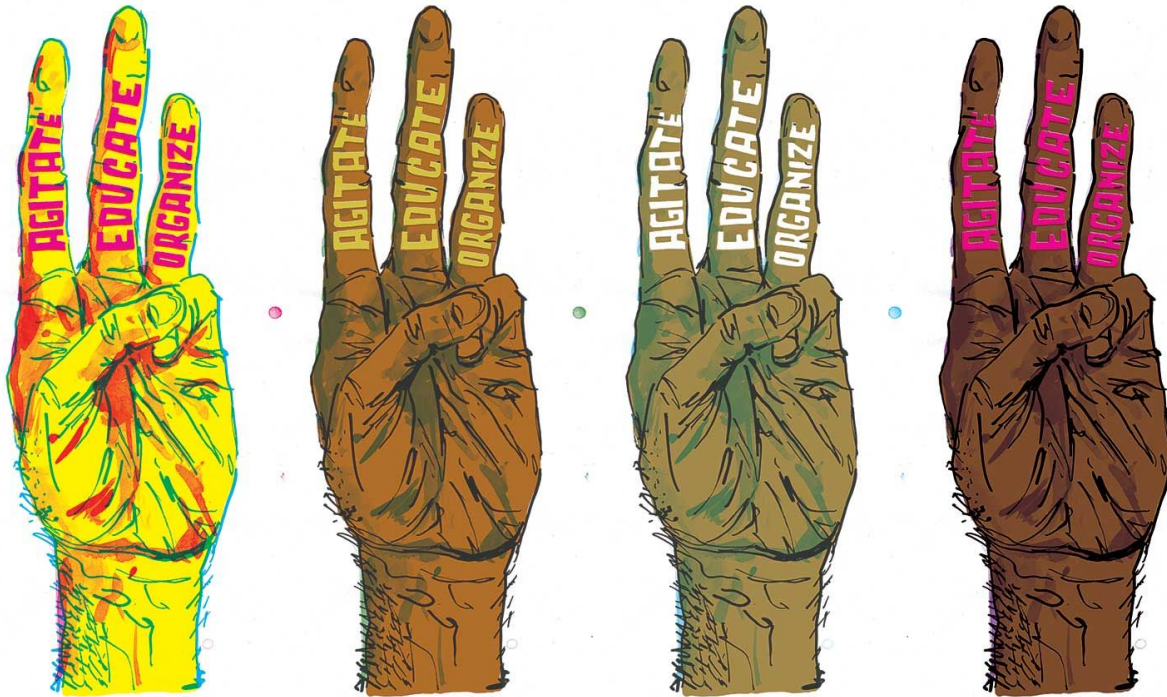


## Working Together in Research & Advising



Artwork: Josh MacPhee, Justseeds

### Overview

Welcome! I look forward to learning from and with you as we work together in research.

This document is intended to help guide students in better understanding my expectations of students whom I mentor or advise and to articulate what you should expect of me as your mentor or advisor. It is a document in process, so please let me know if you have questions, suggested edits, or additions.

In my scholarship and life, I'm a feminist. Dismantling hierarchical relations is important to me, yet I realize I do this within a very hierarchical institution (the university!). I'm also a scholar-activist, which means I view my service, research, and teaching/advising as means to challenge and change the status quo, working with others to contribute to positive social change.

My hope is that the research you are doing is something about which you are passionate, looking forward to spending some dedicated time to studying, and creates knowledge that can inform positive change in the world.

Navigating the research process can be challenging, especially when coupled with the demands of classwork and all the rest of life. Research can also be discouraging at times, because it always takes longer than we think and social change is very slow. Still, remember that your contributions are important and every social problem or question requires lots of contributions. We need your work!

Social science research involves an iterative process of grounding the data in collaborations, real world experience, existing scholarship, and your own reflection and problem-solving. The majority of challenges you meet in terms of process will be your responsibility to solve; however, even though the majority of your work will be done independently, you are not alone in the process. I am here to support you and to help as much as I can, as are others in our department and research collaborations.

### **Mentorship**

Mentorship happens through formal and informal means. You may wish to set-up a more formal mentorship with someone on or off campus. If so, it's good to reach out to that person for a meeting and to ask them if they are willing to be a mentor. Articulate clearly why you've chosen them, what you hope to learn from them, and what your goals are through the mentorship. Don't feel badly if they say they do not have the time; likely, it is because they know mentorship requires a lot of time and they want to honor your needs by being honest. You can ask them if they know of someone else to suggest. If they say yes, be ready to be active in the mentorship by preparing questions for discussion, setting up meetings, and letting them know your needs.

Keep in mind that no one mentor will have all the answers, be able to answer all your questions, or address all your needs. You will choose advisors, mentors, or committee members for a lot of different reasons, but all of the decisions should be thoughtful and intentional. Maybe a scholar's theoretical perspective, methodological approaches, or background will contribute to your own research process. For example, maybe you need someone on your MS or PhD committee who is strong in feminist theory or critical race theory, engages in statistical analysis or participatory research, or has partnered with civic groups or conservation agencies. Maybe you need all of these things! Probably, these needs will be met by different people.

It's good to do advance research about people you're considering working with as an advisor or mentor. Read their work. Talk to their collaborators, colleagues, and current/former students. Sometimes someone is a rock star researcher, but not so great at making time to be a mentor. Sometimes someone may not be "famous" or well-known in your field, but is an amazing mentor. Also, people mentor differently, so it's good to learn about someone's mentorship style to know if it would be a good fit for your needs.

Beyond your advisor or committee, you can and should seek advice and knowledge from others in our department and on our campus. They may not devote as much time to your research

process as your advisor or committee members will, but they also teach classes and are eager to help out students with research challenges or interests. You may also find that your best mentors may even be people working at other campuses or outside of academia. I've often found people with similar research interests or whose career paths I think would be good fits for my own life at conferences, and have asked these people if they would help review articles, my job materials, or have discussions about career decisions over email, phone, or coffee at conferences. If you read something by someone that really resonates with you, you can send an email to that person to let them know -- scholars live for this! They will appreciate the feedback. Sometimes, these exchanges lead to future connections and relationships.

Remember, everyone you might consider to be a mentor has only achieved what they've accomplished because someone (probably a lot of people!) mentored them. It feels good to pass this on (sharing the mentorship karma) and so do not be afraid to ask people if you're interested in learning from them.

Finally, a mentor or advisor should understand if you need to change mentors or advisors. Still, this can be a hard conversation. Refer to the resource below about some guidelines to help navigate this and be sure to reach out to others for advice. Hopefully, your mentor or advisor will be supportive of you in the transition and understand that needs and interests change.

Some resources on mentorship:

- [Why is it so hard to find mentors?](#) (Inside Higher Ed)
- [Seeking the Mentors You Need](#) (Chronicle of Higher Ed)
- [What a Good Mentor Does](#) (University of Washington)
- [Changing Mentors or Advisors](#) (University of Washington)

### **Communities of Support and Self-Care**

Work to cultivate a community of support, be it other students or people from beyond academia. Others in your life may not understand higher education or the graduate student experience -- it's good to have a group of friends who can listen and rally for you through the many hoops that may not be well understood by people outside of academia. For me, it was invaluable to care for an "academic family" that met monthly for meals together throughout our graduate student experience. We continue to meet quarterly via Zoom or FaceTime today, talking across 4 time zones.

On the flip side, it's really great to have people outside of academia to spend time with, too, so you don't always have to hear about classes, advisors, research, etc. You might sign-up for a fitness or art class, and have a group of friends removed from your day-to-day life as a student.

Work-life balance and self-care are always very important, and often get ignored in academia. Make these a priority, every day. Ask your friends to hold you accountable to these goals by

joining you in creating a writing group, joining a fitness class, or planning a dinner club together. Be sure to make time for yourself and others.

### **Special Notes for Graduate Students**

I understand plans and life change. If, at any time, you realize that you need to change advisors, committee members, or add a co-advisor, know that I do not take this personally and hope we can talk together so that I can help you with the process. There may be responsibilities or funding obligations we need to work through related to the research we do together--we can work these things out if you need to make a change.

- *If I am your advisor or co-advisor*, I see it as my responsibility to support your success. I also expect (know!) that you will need the knowledge and assistance of others on your committee. Together, we will strategize, brainstorm, and plan who you might want to ask to serve on the committee, but in the end the decisions will be yours.
- *If I am on your committee as a committee member*, I expect that your advisor(s) are your primary source for support in navigating your project. I plan to help you with additional knowledge and assistance as a committee member.

### **Communication**

Communication is important in any relationship, and especially so in research partnerships. Here are some reminders and guidelines to help foster a relationship of open communication,

- None of us are mind readers. I expect clear and timely communication and will strive to provide this to you, too. I do not know you are struggling if you do not tell me.
- I expect that we will work to resolve challenges or conflicts pro-actively, be they with a research obstacle or with interpersonal misunderstandings.
- I expect that we will communicate through email in-between meetings. I try to answer my email within 24-48 hours, but also try to limit email time to work hours and limit it on weekends. I expect you to reply promptly to emails and urge you to consider ways to manage email so that it does not overwhelm.

In my role as an MTU professor and as your advisor, co-advisor, supervisor, or committee member, there are limitations to what I can offer in terms of communication.

- I am not a counselor, but I am glad to connect you to on- and off-campus resources related to mental health, safety, food resources.
- I am glad to have confidential conversations about things of concern to you in our program or on our campus; however, I have a legal obligation to report Title IX violations and will if these are shared with me. You can report Title IX violations yourself or find support resources by going to this link: <https://www.mtu.edu/title-ix/>

### **Meetings**

To help troubleshoot and discuss progress, I expect we will meet face-to-face regularly.

- *If I am your advisor, co-advisor, or supervisor*, you should plan that we will meet once per week or bi-weekly throughout the semester (late August-early May). We will set-up a mutually agreed upon schedule for communication in the summer.
- *If I am your committee member*, I expect that you will meet with me at least once a semester to check-in about your progress and how I can be of support. As you near exam, proposal, research, and writing stages, I expect you will keep me in the loop and meet with me more often, if needed.
- We will both be prepared for meetings. For you, being prepared means bringing an agenda of items and questions to discuss and a progress report. Your progress report should include questions, needs, work completed and ongoing, and upcoming plans for your research or project. For me, being prepared means I have reviewed any advance material you've given me to read for feedback and have ideas for any questions/challenges you've shared with me in advance of our meeting.
- I understand things come up last minute and emergencies happen. Should we need to cancel/reschedule, we should try to provide each other at least 24 hours advance notice.
- During the summer, we should maintain regular weekly or bi-weekly communication, but this might take different forms. I will not be on campus during the summer months (I am on a 9 month appointment), but will be available for video or phone call or in-person meetings when I am in town.
- In addition to discussing our research and your classwork, we will also engage in ongoing conversations about your goals after the project. For example, perhaps you want to apply to graduate school, seek academic jobs, seek non-academic jobs, etc.

### **Research Partner Relationships**

Our research is dependent upon our good relationships with our community partners and funders. Everything you do in your role as a research collaborator reflects upon me, others working on this project, our department, and the university as a whole.

- Communication with research partners should be respectful, timely, and reflect your care for the relationship. This includes using a formal writing style and checking emails and other communications for spelling and grammatical errors. I am glad to review emails before you send them out to partners.
- We will discuss and strategize together plans for partner communication so as to best minimize burden to our partners. Many are strapped for time and have limited staff. Perhaps you and I both need to reach out to a research partner -- if we discuss this in advance, we can combine two emails or two meetings into one.
- Document and save your partner communications. You never know what might be useful for future and want to avoid having to ask the same thing twice.



### Work Hours

Please let me know when you work best. I expect that you will find the right balance of what hours and where you work best. Some work, like writing or coding, can be done most anywhere. Other work may require that you be present and prepared at meetings at set hours. Some people are more productive at writing or deep-thinking tasks in the morning; others are night owls. Some students have commitments to other jobs, family, kids, and health obligations that influence your work schedule. These situations and commitments are unique and will likely change as you proceed in the program and in your research, and that is ok. Find what works best for you, communicate this with me, and make a plan to set that time aside. Remember also to engage in activities that you enjoy other than research and take time off when you need it to help avoid burnout.

Even as you develop a schedule that best suits your unique situation, keep these guidelines in mind:

- You should not expect me or other project members / community partners to check emails or respond during non-business hours or over weekends.
- Sending emails at all hours makes people feel they are expected to respond at all hours. Try to send emails to others during traditional work hours even if your work schedule might be different--use the "send later" email features if you need or if prefer to work during evenings or on weekends.





### **Other Work**

I understand that you may have side projects or other work, classwork, and general life in addition to our work together. Communicate with me regularly and often about your obligations and goals so that we can adjust timelines as needed and still meet deliverable deadlines.

### **Time-tracking**

We have many demands on our time, and developing a disciplined method of accounting and making time for research will be important to your successful completion of the project.

- I expect you to use some method to track your time on your projects. I use an Excel spreadsheet to track my time, but there are apps and other platforms, such as Trello ([trello.com](https://trello.com) -- it's free), to help with project management. These are extremely helpful tools to manage your time, which is a critical skill that you should develop early in your career.
- If you see that you are spending too much time, or not finding time, for your work, please communicate with me. We can work together to strategize how to make improvements.

### **Vacation/Illness**

Vacation and self-care time are important. I take this time throughout the year as needed, and will communicate with you in advance. Similarly, I expect that you will communicate with me at least two weeks in advance of vacation or travel.

I do not expect you to work when sick. I take time off when not feeling well, and so should you. I expect that you will let me know if you will be out due to illness. If you need to take a break from our work for an extended time due to illness or other family/personal concerns, please speak with me so that we can come up with a plan together.

### **Feedback**

One of my most important expectations is that you will show curiosity about your work and strong initiative to tackle challenging questions. To support you, I ask and encourage you to share documents that you would like feedback on, early and often.

Given my teaching and other position responsibilities, you will need to allow me at least one week turnaround time for review of documents, whenever possible.

But, I know last minute things come up -- I have had advisors write last-minute job recommendations for me, and expect I'll be writing some of these for you, too. Please try to plan ahead, but know that I hope you will ask when you come across something urgent, even if it is less than a week turnaround.

### **Collaborative Writing**

Together, we may co-author journal articles, chapters, blogs, and presentations. Many professional societies and journals have strict guidelines on what constitutes “co-authorship.” Co-authors should engage in all three activities: 1) have planned & contributed to some component of the work leading to the paper or analysis of results; 2) have written a draft or revised the draft for intellectual content; 3) have given final review and approval for manuscript publication.

Authorship guidelines can be found in the following resources:

- [Guidance on Authorship in Scholarly or Scientific Publications \(Yale University\)](#)
- [Defining authorship \(Taylor & Francis\)](#)
- [A Graduate Student's Guide to Determining Authorship Credit and Authorship Order](#) (APA Science Student Council)

For your dissertation, thesis, or capstone work, I expect you to be the lead author and for the work to be your own. After successfully completing your dissertation, thesis, or capstone, you may seek co-authorship from me or other committee members depending upon our contribution to your work.

### **References and Job Searching**

For all students, I am very glad to be a scholarship and job reference and to review job and scholarship materials.

### **Conferences and Public Presentations**

If I am your advisor, co-advisor, or project supervisor, I will work with you to secure funding and opportunities to share your work at conferences or events to present new data to a wider audience. The right time to share your research is when you have completed a major stage of analysis and have something new to share. Usually (but not always) there are funds available through professional organizations or our university to support travel, and I expect that students will seek these opportunities to fund travel (see below). We should begin discussing this early.

Often, conferences will have opportunities for students to volunteer in exchange for discounted registration as well as graduate student room share sign-ups. Check the websites and be sure to get on the professional organization's email list, or their student email list, to be able to find out up-to-date information about these opportunities.

### **Funding Opportunities**

As I receive funding, I also try to build student funding into grants, but this is not always possible. The Social Sciences department has funds to support graduate student travel to conferences (\$500), as does the Graduate Student Government. Additionally, research centers on campus, such as the [Great Lakes Research Center Travel and Research Grant Applications](#)

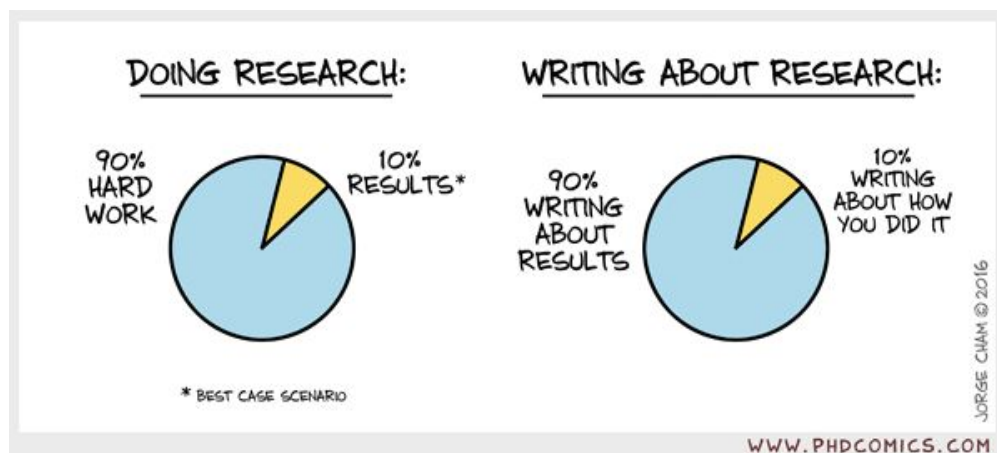


and [Environmental Science Center Travel and Research Grant Applications](#) (I'm a member of both centers) have funding for undergraduate and graduate students. Other opportunities for funding include the [Graduate School Doctoral Finishing Fellowship](#), [Graduate School Emergency Fund](#), and [Superior Ideas Crowdfunding](#). The graduate school lists additional funding opportunities here: <https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/financial/fellowship/>

### **File Retention/Management and Software**

You will have a free MTU Google Drive associated with your MTU email. We will use / share Google Drive files with one another throughout the research process. It is your responsibility to maintain electronic files for your project and to share these with me (because I am responsible for the project as your supervisor/advisor). For undergraduates (and graduates, if you wish), I will maintain your hard copies of consent forms and other sensitive material in my office file cabinet so that it is a locked, secured place.

- Save all drafts of presentations, reports, papers. You never know what could be useful for later.
- Upload scans of consent forms and other documents as soon as possible after collecting data.
- Type up your observational notes as soon as possible after collecting data.
- Keep a running log of emergent questions/ideas in a google doc -- these seemingly disconnected and unorganized things can really be key pieces of future analyses or research design.
- Keep a running annotated bibliography (you may use Google, or some students use Nvivo, EndNote, Zotero, Mendeley, or other system to organize this) of your readings -- this is valuable information to pull from for future papers, projects, and presentations.
- Nvivo, a qualitative data analysis software, is available for all students (grad and undergrad) in Social Sciences. You can use this for data analysis, but also to compile and organize literature reviews. You should be able to access it on any campus computer via your login.
- MTU IT has software for free download for students, faculty, and staff. You can find statistical analysis software (SPSS and SAS) and other software here: <https://downloads.it.mtu.edu/index.php/available-software>



## Student Expectations

### ***Undergraduate Students***

Research can be intimidating, but together we will develop a project plan. Depending on what your program / funding opportunity requires as a final “product”, you should begin preparing your final product (for example, a research poster) from the first day of work. I will work with you to prepare a schedule and plan of work to meet your needed goals. You should always plan to send documents that need my review at least one week in advance.

I expect that students will show curiosity, initiative, will be deeply self-motivated and will communicate honestly and professionally with all project members. Students should be reliable and show up as requested to meetings and turn in project deliverables on time. If you cannot fulfill the prior expectations, you should explore other opportunities outside of a research experience.

### ***Masters Students***

University and Departmental coursework expectations for MS can be found on the Graduate Studies website (<https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/policies-procedures/>) and the Social Sciences website in the Grad Student Handbook (<https://www.mtu.edu/social-sciences/graduate/programs/>).

MS students have two options: thesis or report option. Details are in the graduate student handbook. We will discuss what route best fits your goals.

For part-time MS students: The information in the graduate student handbook related to timeline is for full-time students. Together, we will work on developing a program plan that fits your schedule.

My general expectation for an MS student is to produce a product for public use (if report option) or a publication in a scholarly journal or book (if thesis option). In addition, you may wish to also develop other outreach products such as blog posts, news articles, curriculum, tools, or educational or policy briefs.

If you wish to gain teaching experience, please let me know. We can work together for you to lead one of my classes. I can assist with lesson development and also provide you an evaluation, if you wish.

My expectation is that the primary focus for MS students will be on projects related to thesis research. I will not ask students to spend significant time on side research projects without first discussing such opportunities together to assess pros/cons, time management, etc. Similarly, before you embark on a side research project unrelated to your thesis, let's have a discussion to assess pros/cons, time management, etc. I understand some students need to engage in other research projects and on-/off-campus work to earn income. My hope is that we discuss these obligations together about the impacts of such work on your primary focus (completing the MS).

### ***PhD Students***

University and Departmental coursework expectations for MS can be found on the Graduate Studies website (<https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/policies-procedures/>) and the Social Sciences website in the Grad Student Handbook (<https://www.mtu.edu/social-sciences/graduate/programs/>).

For part-time PhD students: The information in the graduate student handbook related to timeline is for full-time students. Together, we will work on developing a program plan that fits your schedule.

My general expectation for a PhD student is to produce three articles for publication in scholarly journals or books. In addition, you may wish to also develop other outreach products such as blog posts, news articles, curriculum, tools, or educational or policy briefs.

If you wish to gain teaching experience, please let me know. We can work together for you to lead one of my classes. I can assist with lesson development and also provide you an evaluation, if you wish.

My expectation is that the primary focus for PhD students will be on projects related to thesis research. I will not ask students to spend significant time on side research projects without first discussing such opportunities together to assess pros/cons, time management, etc. Similarly, before you embark on a side research project unrelated to your thesis, let's have a discussion to assess pros/cons, time management, etc. I understand some students need to engage in other research projects and on-/off-campus work to earn income. My hope is that we discuss these

obligations together about the impacts of such work on your primary focus (completing the PhD).

**Resources** (just a sampling -- growing list here and please send me more to add!)

- Husky Food Access Network (and food pantry open to all):  
<https://www.mtu.edu/huskyfan/>
- MTU Multiliteracies Center (you can get a weekly writing coach): <http://mtmc.hu.mtu.edu/>
- MTU Counseling (you can join different groups to help you through in addition to one-on-one counseling): <https://www.mtu.edu/counseling/>
- MTU International Programs and Services: <https://www.mtu.edu/international/>
- Michigan Tech Graduate School: <https://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/>
- Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)
  - [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html)
- Cultivating Mentoring Relationships in Graduate School
  - <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/summer-2018/cultivating-mentoring-relationships-in-grad-school>
- Navigating Graduate School with Mental Illness
  - <https://psychcentral.com/lib/navigating-graduate-school-with-a-mental-illness/>
- University of Washington: What a Good Mentor Does and associated resources
  - <https://grad.uw.edu/for-students-and-post-docs/core-programs/mentoring/mentoring-guides-for-students/what-a-good-mentor-does/>
- Duke: What is a Mentor? and associated resources
  - <https://gradschool.duke.edu/professional-development/mentoring/what-mentor>
  - <https://gradschool.duke.edu/professional-development/mentoring/graduate-students>
- Making a Writing Group that Works:  
<https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/gradhacker/making-writing-group-works>
- Conditionally Accepted: A Space for Scholars on the Margins of Academia:  
<https://www.insidehighered.com/users/conditionally-accepted>
- Professor is In (resources/blogs about all things related to academia and also finding non-academic jobs): <http://theprofessorisin.com/>
- Rising Tide Center Negotiations Resources:  
<https://umaine.edu/risingtide/grad-student-resources/>
- Non Tenure Track Jobs: <http://www.beyondthetenuretrack.com/>
- Beyond the Professoriate: <https://www.beyondprof.com/>
- Versatile PhD: <https://versatilephd.com/>
- On twitter: #academictwitter and #PostAc may be useful to follow
- PhD Comics: <http://phdcomics.com/>

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