

The real question is: What helps me decide whether or not I will write a recommendation for a student? Here are some of the ways NOT to behave if students want a professor to agree to give them a recommendation in the first place. The "rules" I state below are all based on my personal experience, sadly enough. They are unusually egregious violations of common sense. Milder versions of these violations are much more common, and are generally enough to convince me that I'd rather not inflict the student on anyone else.

How Not to Impress A Professor

- 1. Fail a course that the professor teaches by ceasing to attend class or hand in any work after midterms, and then show up a week before finals (having missed the withdrawal deadline) and ask for an Incomplete with the excuse that you were "really busy this semester."*
- 2. Show up an hour late for a midterm that lasts an hour and a half.*
- 3. Send emails to the professor with the salutation "Yo" or "Hey there."*
- 4. Copy a proposal from the Internet which the professor discovers you've plagiarized.*
- 5. Use class time to catch up on your sleep.*
- 6. Regularly show up late to class, fail to do the reading, and have no relevant answers when called on in class to participate in discussion.*
- 7. Copy the problem set of another student in the class and hand it in as your own work.*
- 8. Come to the professor and demand a higher grade because the class they teach is in the biological sciences, and biology classes are easy, so you deserve a higher grade, even if you failed to hand in the work.*
- 9. Vociferously argue that the professor is wrong about something, even after he has patiently explained it to you for the third time, and shown you relevant references in textbooks that support his argument.*
- 10. Show up two weeks after classes have begun, and explain that you didn't know when the semester started.*

*— Dr. Hillel Chiel
Case Western Reserve University*