

Welcome to TA 101



College of Agriculture
& Life Sciences

Cardon Teaching Fellows

Fellows are elected members of the Bart Cardon Academy for Teaching Excellence in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs).

With the goal of enhancing the scholarship of teaching within the College, the Fellows:

- organize and conduct workshops
- mentor new faculty and teaching assistants
- promote and evaluate nominations for teaching awards
- coach teachers interested in student learning, and
- support the work of Career and Academic Services in CALS.



Today's Schedule

11:00 am

Welcome and Introduction

Module 1: Managing Your Life

Prof. Betsy Arnold (Plant Sciences)

11:40 am

Module 2: TA Responsibilities and Tasks

Prof. Jim Hunt (Family and Consumer Sciences; CAS/CALS)

12:15 pm

Lunch and Group Discussion

Module 3: Games Students Play

Prof. Dennis Ray (Plant Sciences)

1 :00 pm

Module 4: Professionalism and Ethics

Prof. Jennifer Ricketts (Nutritional Sciences)

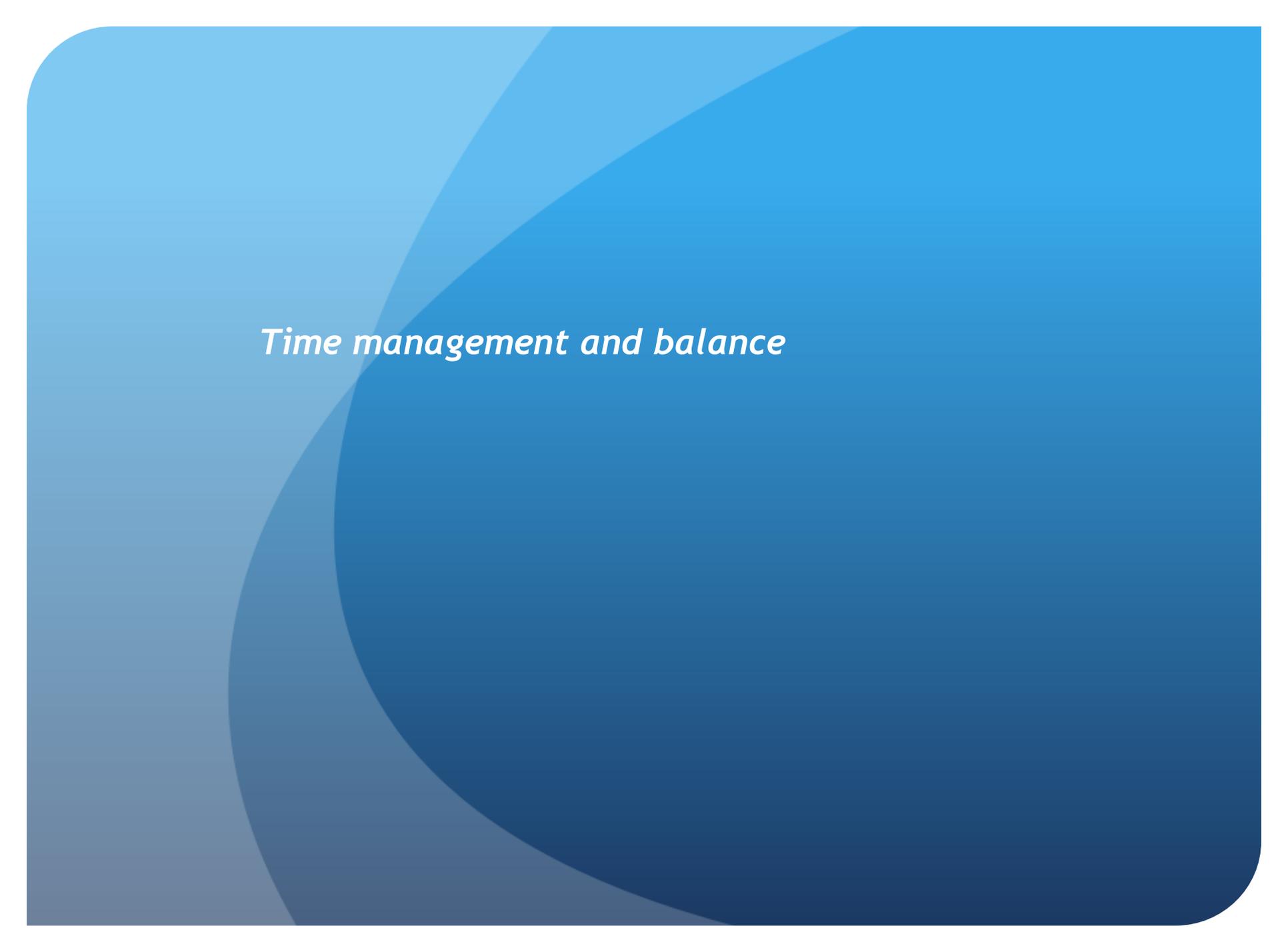
1:30 pm

Wrap Up

Professors Bobby Torres and Matt Mars (Agricultural Education)

The Process for Today

- Dr. Robert Torres & Dr. Matthew Mars

The background is a blue gradient with several overlapping, semi-transparent circular shapes of varying shades of blue, creating a layered effect. The text is centered in the upper-left quadrant.

Time management and balance

Time management and balance



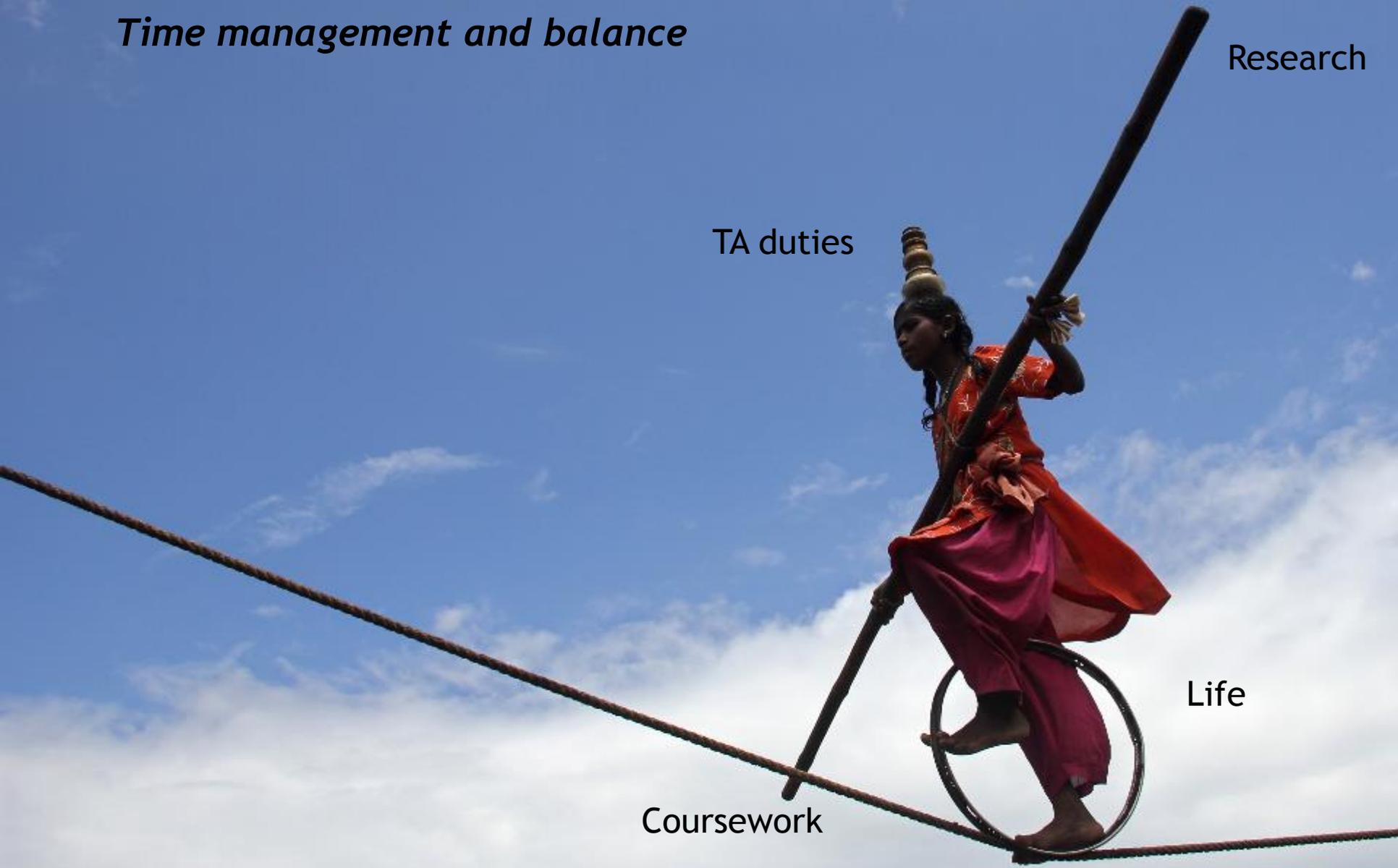
Time management and balance

Research

TA duties

Life

Coursework



Time management and balance



TA duties

Coursework

Research

Life

Time management and balance

*It might not
always seem
like it....*



Time management and balance

*It might not
always seem
like it....*

*But your advisor, your professor, your
students, your friends, your family, and
you are all on the same page*



Time management and balance

*It might not
always seem
like it....*

*But your advisor, your professor, your
students, your friends, your family, and
you are all on the same page*

A balanced Life

TA duties

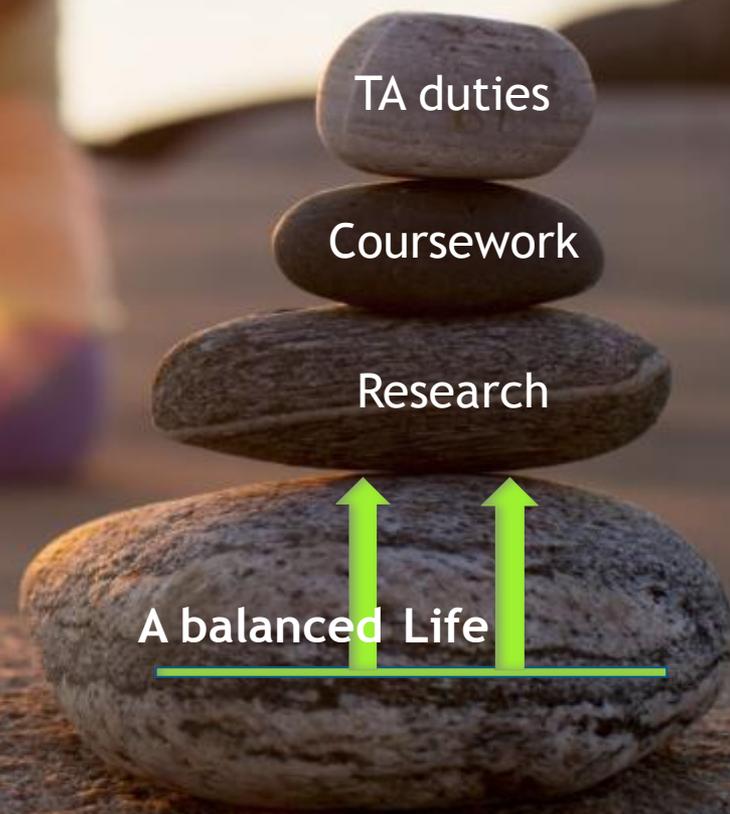
Coursework

Research

Time management and balance

*It might not
always seem
like it....*

*But your advisor, your professor, your
students, your friends, your family, and
you are all on the same page*



Time management and balance: let's discuss "real life"

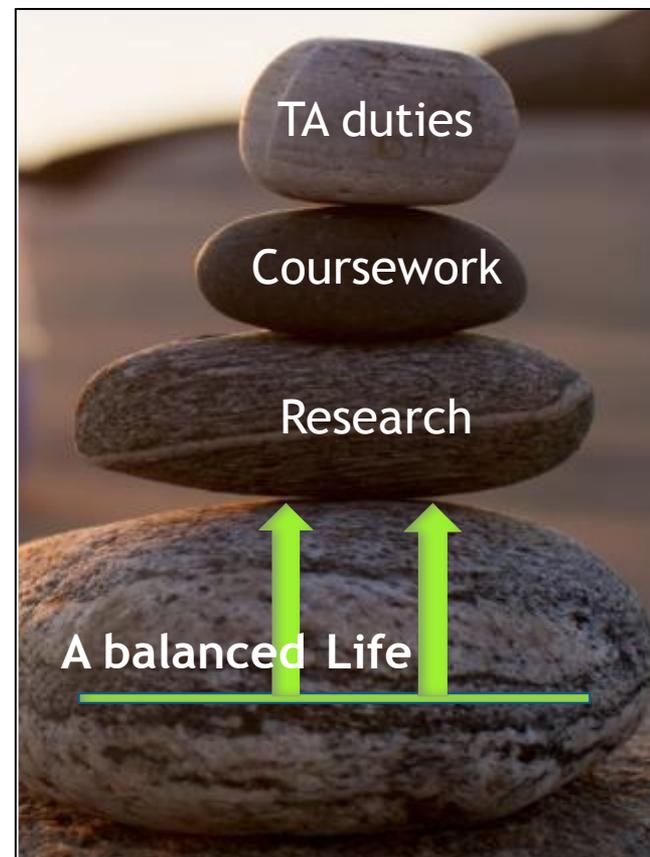


Time management and balance: let's discuss “real life”

- *Think* about your use of time in ‘real life.’

How do you spend your time?

What's important to you ‘at the end of the day’?



Time management and balance: let's discuss “real life”

- **Think** about your use of time in ‘real life.’

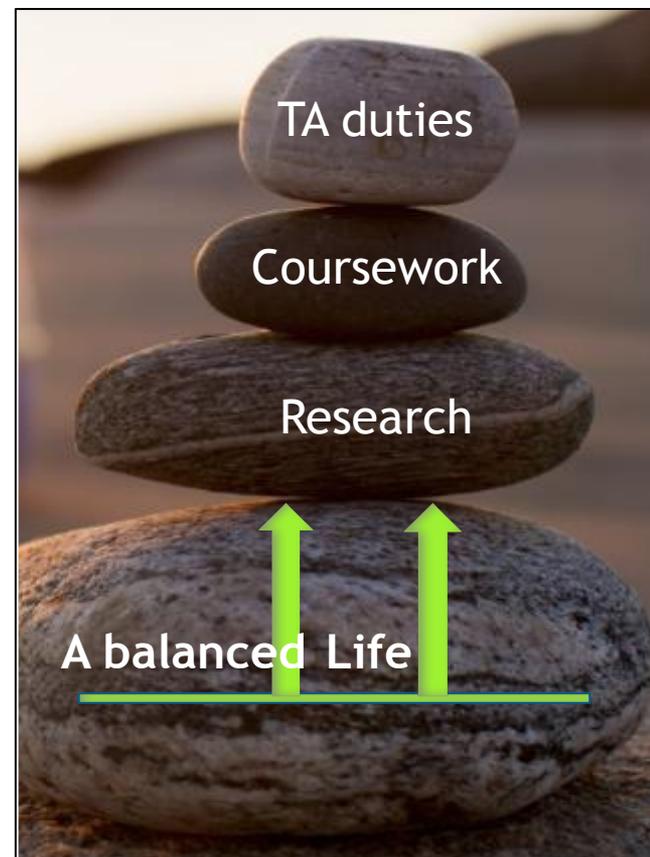
How do you spend your time?

What’s important to you ‘at the end of the day’?

- **Reflect:** to what degree do you set your own schedule?

Do you have a flexible or rigid structure to your days?

What can you change, and what has to stay the same?



Time management and balance: let's discuss “real life”

- **Think** about your use of time in ‘real life.’

How do you spend your time?

What’s important to you ‘at the end of the day’?

- **Reflect:** to what degree do you set your own schedule?

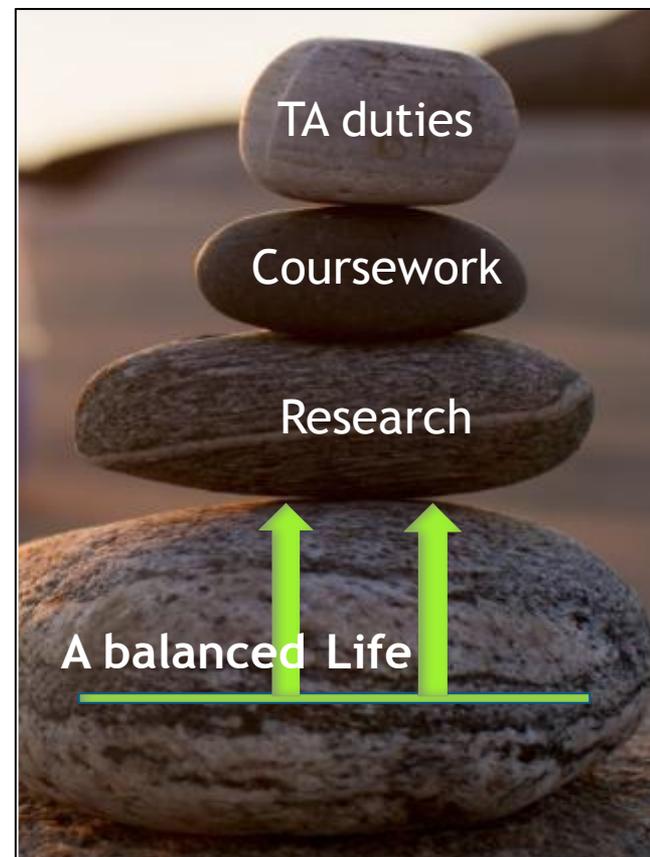
Do you have a flexible or rigid structure to your days?

What can you change, and what has to stay the same?

- **Consider:** how important is time management to you?

Do you feel better and more effective with a plan in mind?

Why or why not?



Time management and balance: let's discuss “real life”

- **Think** about your use of time in ‘real life.’

How do you spend your time?

What’s important to you ‘at the end of the day’?

- **Reflect:** to what degree do you set your own schedule?

Do you have a flexible or rigid structure to your days?

What can you change, and what has to stay the same?

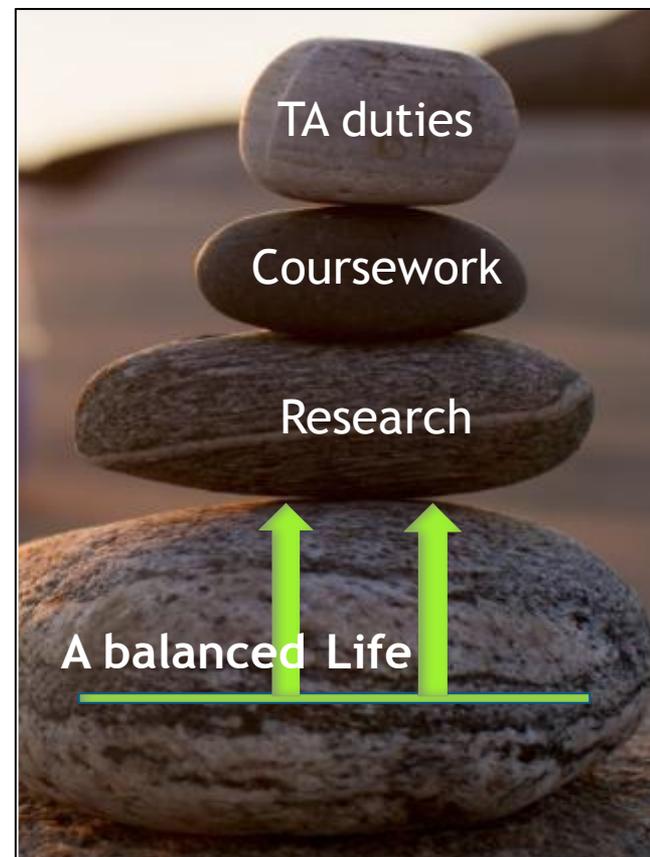
- **Consider:** how important is time management to you?

Do you feel better and more effective with a plan in mind?

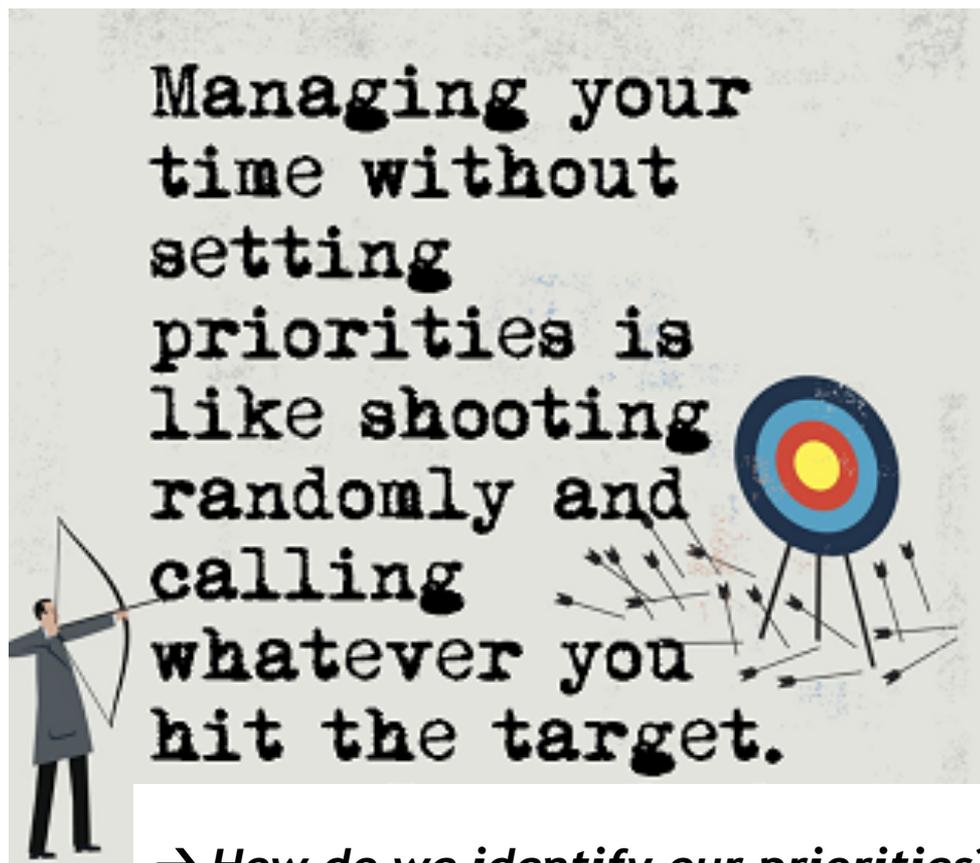
Why or why not?

- **Identify:** how do you manage your ‘real life’ time?

Do you use the same approach as you did in, say, high school? Why or why not?



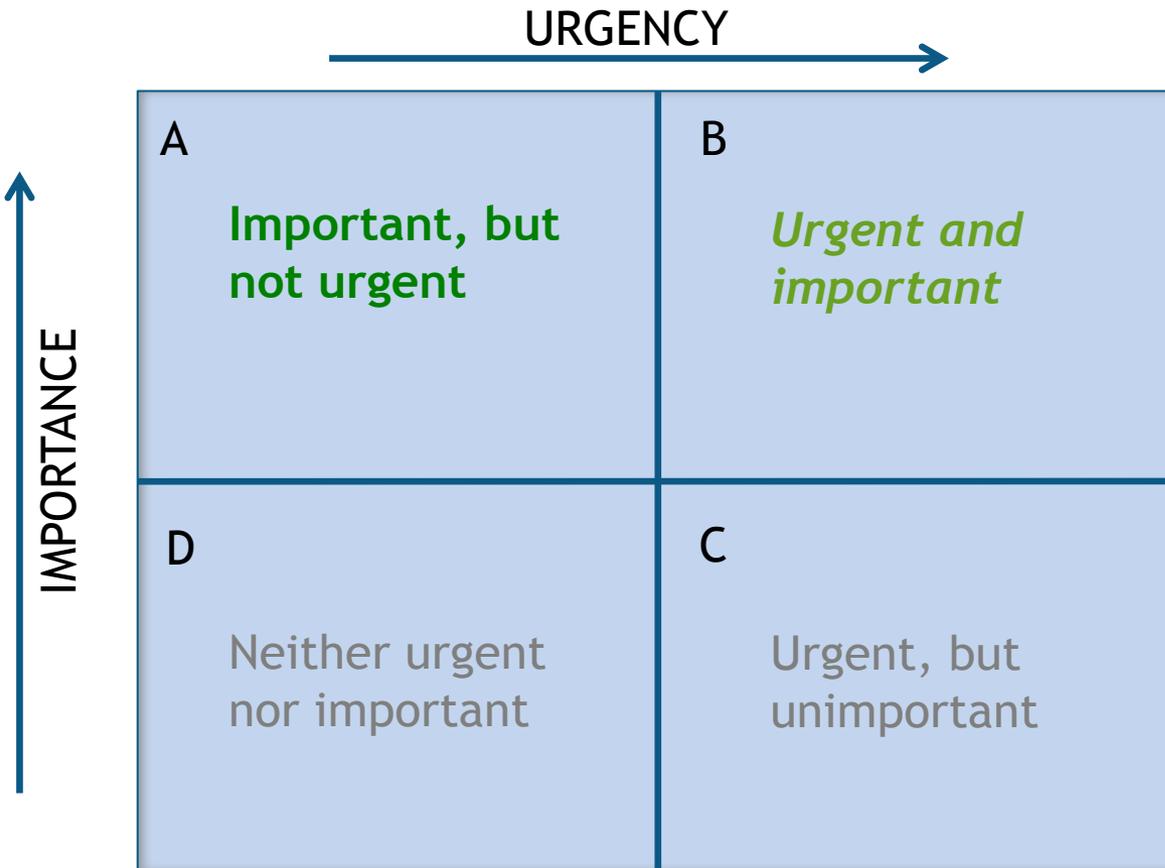
Time management and balance: let's discuss "real life"



→ How do we identify our priorities?



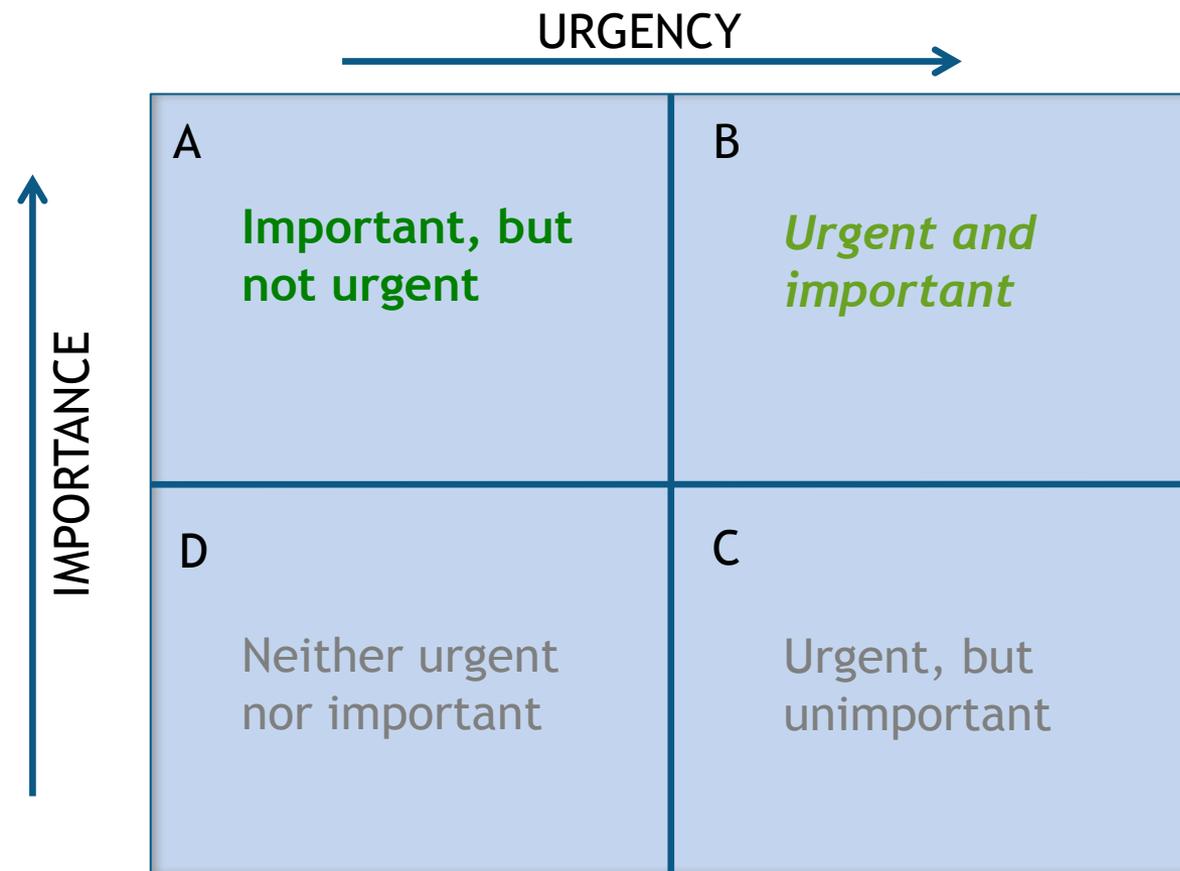
Time management and balance: let's discuss "real life"



→ How do we identify our priorities?



Time management and balance: let's discuss "real life"



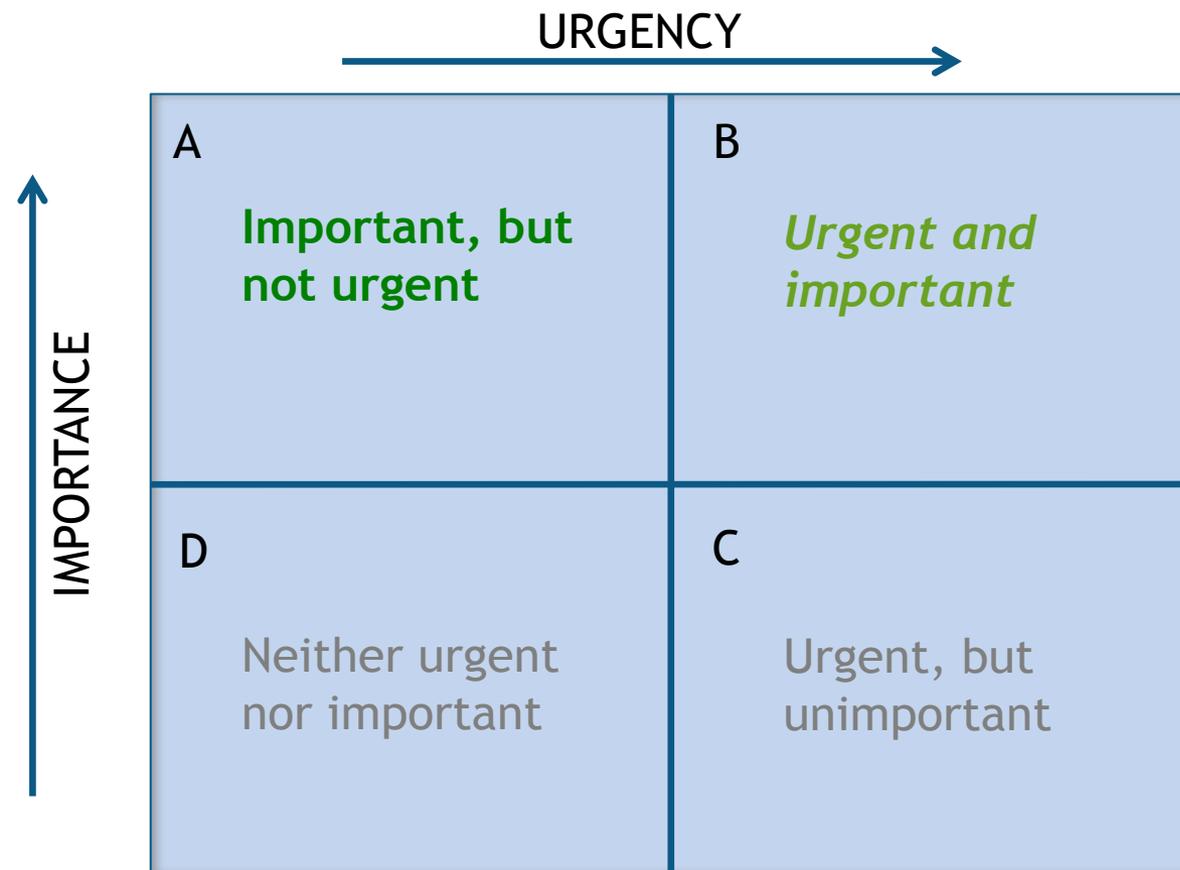
Where do the following fall for you?

Posting class items to D2L
Spending time with family/friends
Enjoying healthy recreation
Preparing for a committee meeting
Getting ready to meet your advisor
Developing new teaching
Grading exams
Writing your thesis
Posting on social media
Game of Thrones

What's not on this list?

→ How do we identify our priorities?

Time management and balance: let's discuss "real life"



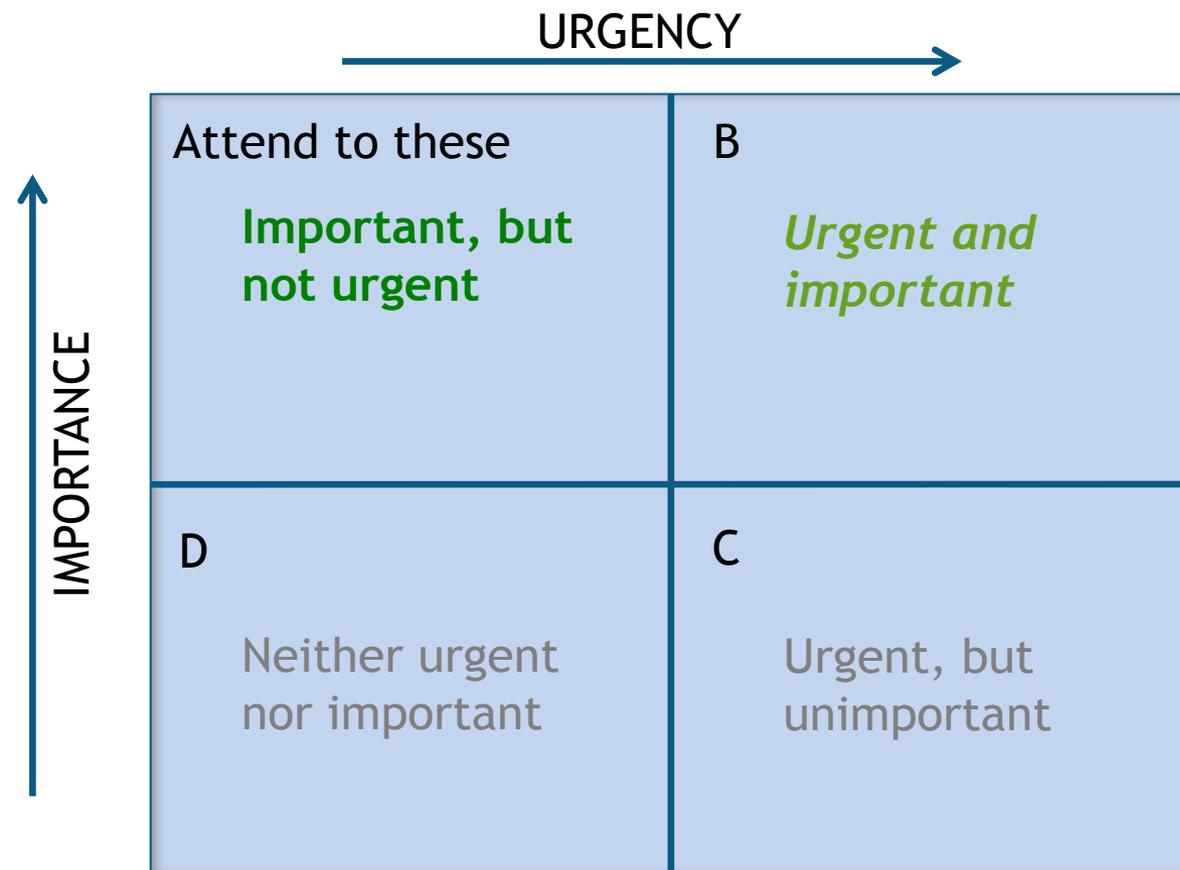
Where do the following fall for you?

Posting class items to D2L
Spending time with family/friends
Enjoying healthy recreation
Preparing for a committee meeting
Getting ready to meet your advisor
Developing new teaching
Grading exams
Writing your thesis
Posting on social media
Game of Thrones

What's not on this list?

→ How do we identify our priorities?... And how do we reach our goals?

Time management and balance: let's discuss "real life"



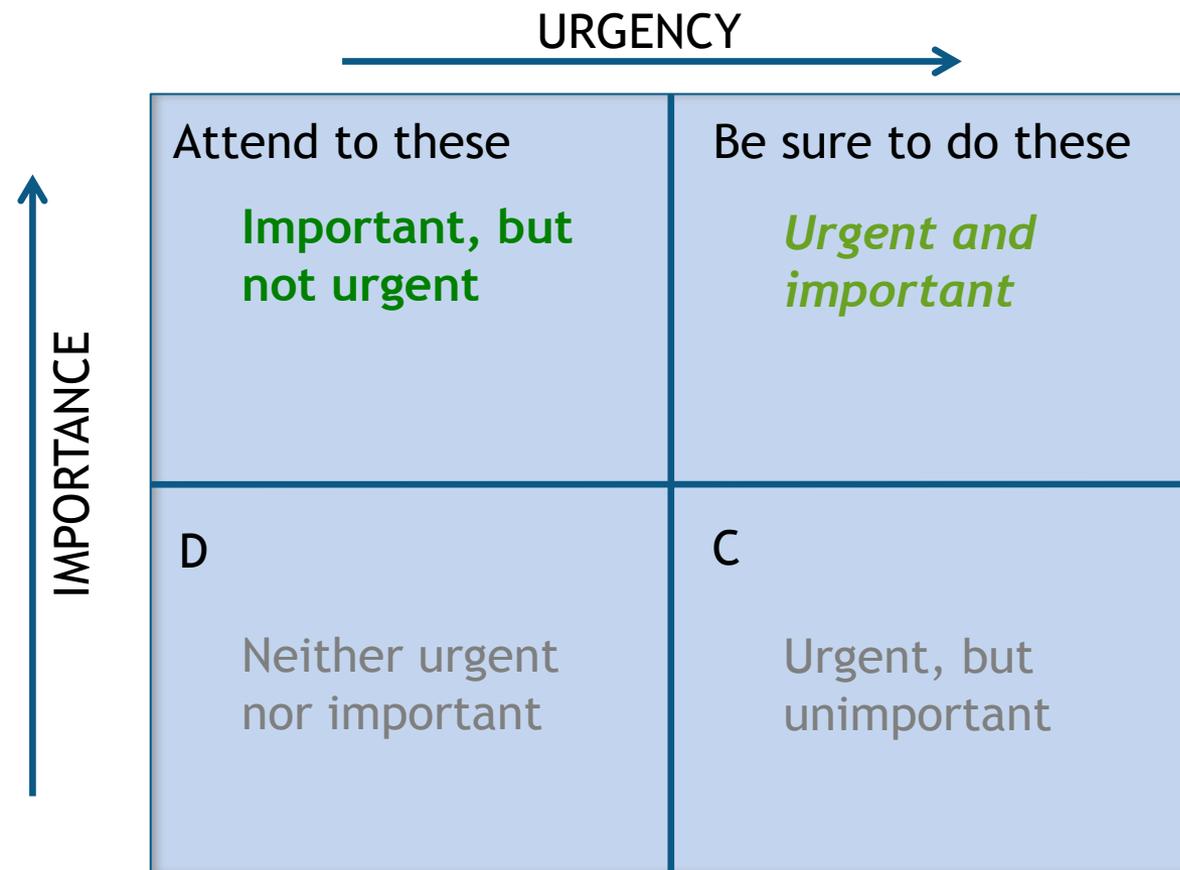
Where do the following fall for you?

Posting class items to D2L
Spending time with family/friends
Enjoying healthy recreation
Preparing for a committee meeting
Getting ready to meet your advisor
Developing new teaching
Grading exams
Writing your thesis
Posting on social media
Game of Thrones

What's not on this list?

→ How do we identify our priorities?... And how do we reach our goals?

Time management and balance: let's discuss "real life"



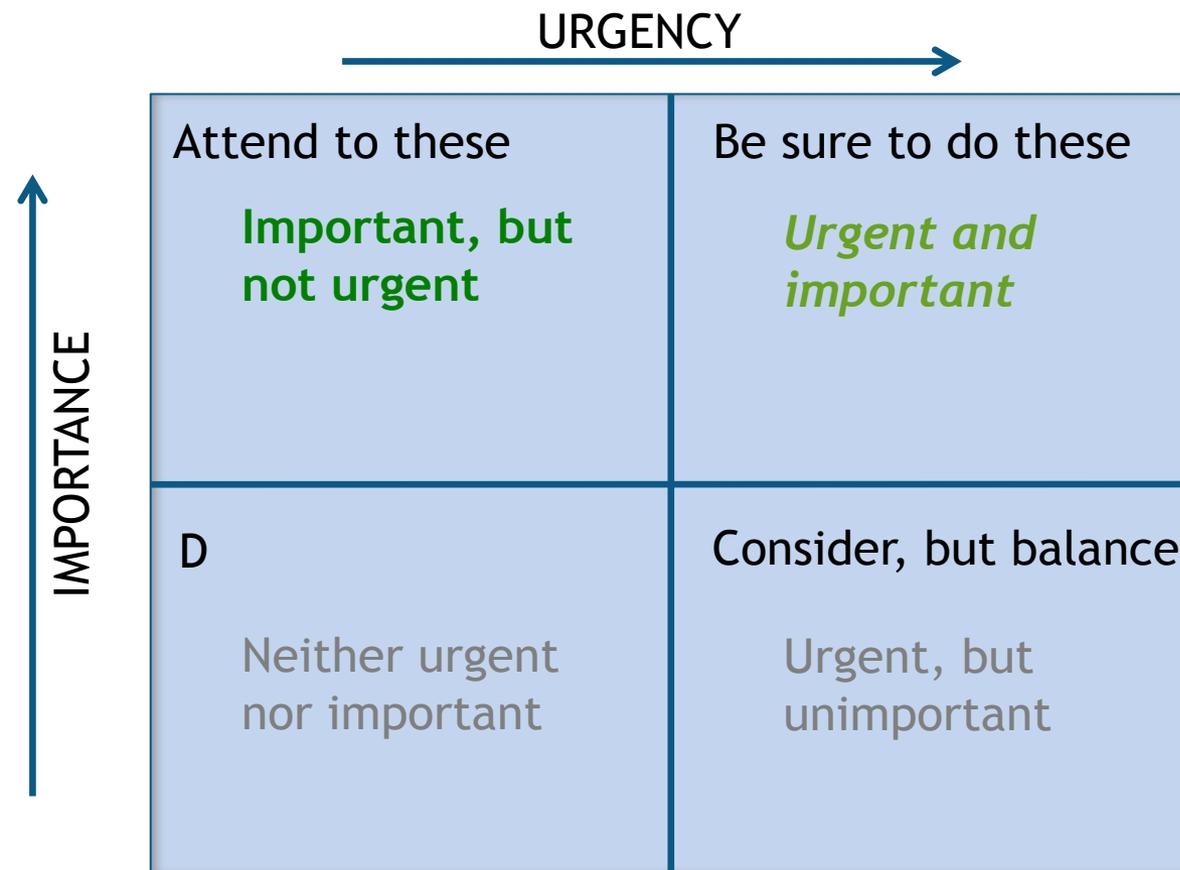
Where do the following fall for you?

Posting class items to D2L
Spending time with family/friends
Enjoying healthy recreation
Preparing for a committee meeting
Getting ready to meet your advisor
Developing new teaching
Grading exams
Writing your thesis
Posting on social media
Game of Thrones

What's not on this list?

→ How do we identify our priorities?... And how do we reach our goals?

Time management and balance: let's discuss "real life"



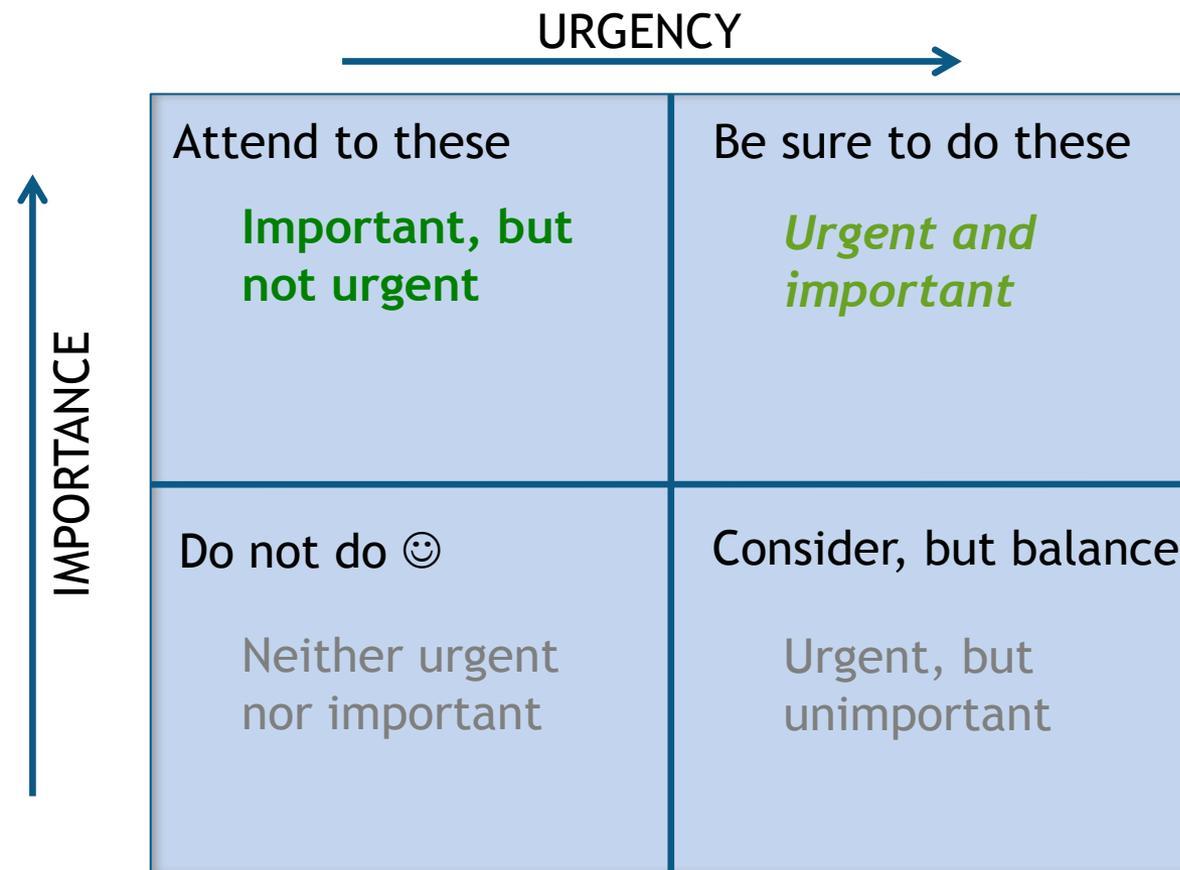
Where do the following fall for you?

Posting class items to D2L
Spending time with family/friends
Enjoying healthy recreation
Preparing for a committee meeting
Getting ready to meet your advisor
Developing new teaching
Grading exams
Writing your thesis
Posting on social media
Game of Thrones

What's not on this list?

→ How do we identify our priorities?... And how do we reach our goals?

Time management and balance: let's discuss "real life"



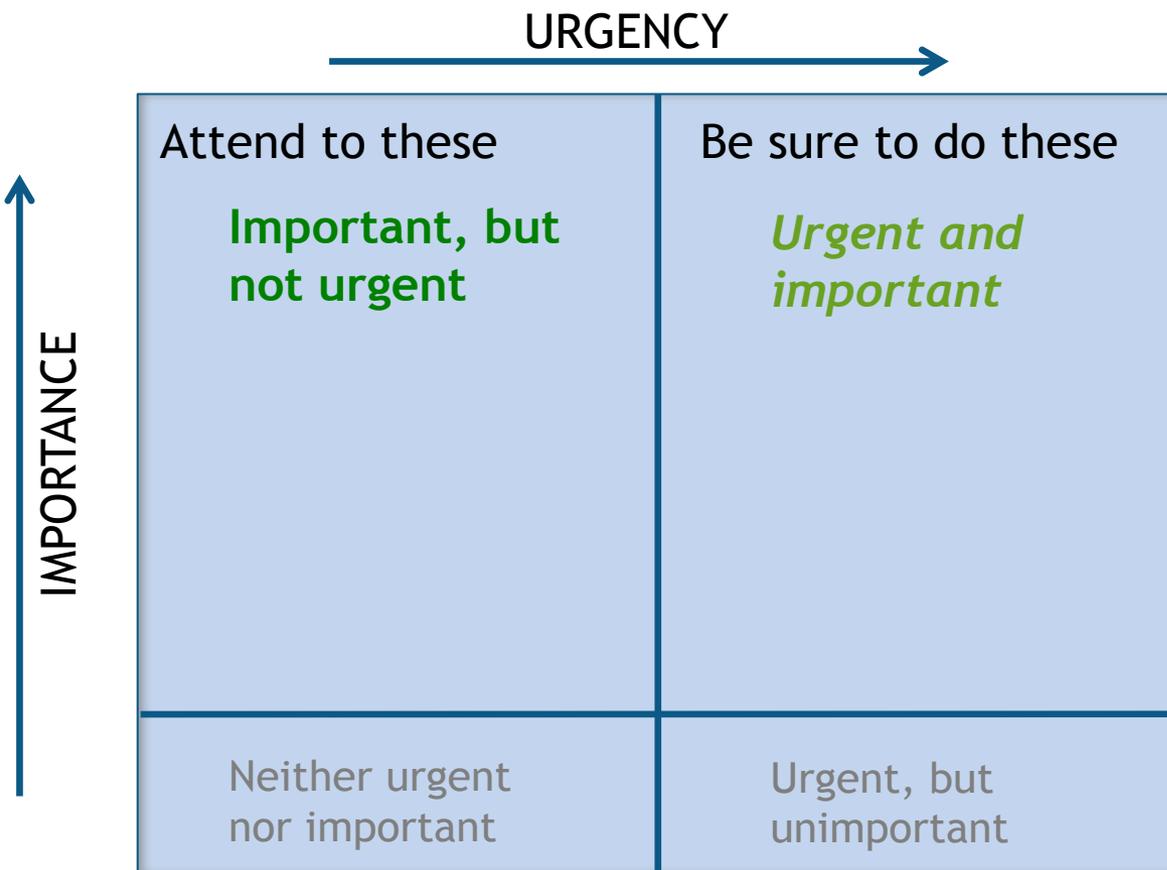
Where do the following fall for you?

Posting class items to D2L
Spending time with family/friends
Enjoying healthy recreation
Preparing for a committee meeting
Getting ready to meet your advisor
Developing new teaching
Grading exams
Writing your thesis
Posting on social media
Game of Thrones

What's not on this list?

→ How do we identify our priorities?... And how do we reach our goals?

Time management and balance: let's discuss "real life"



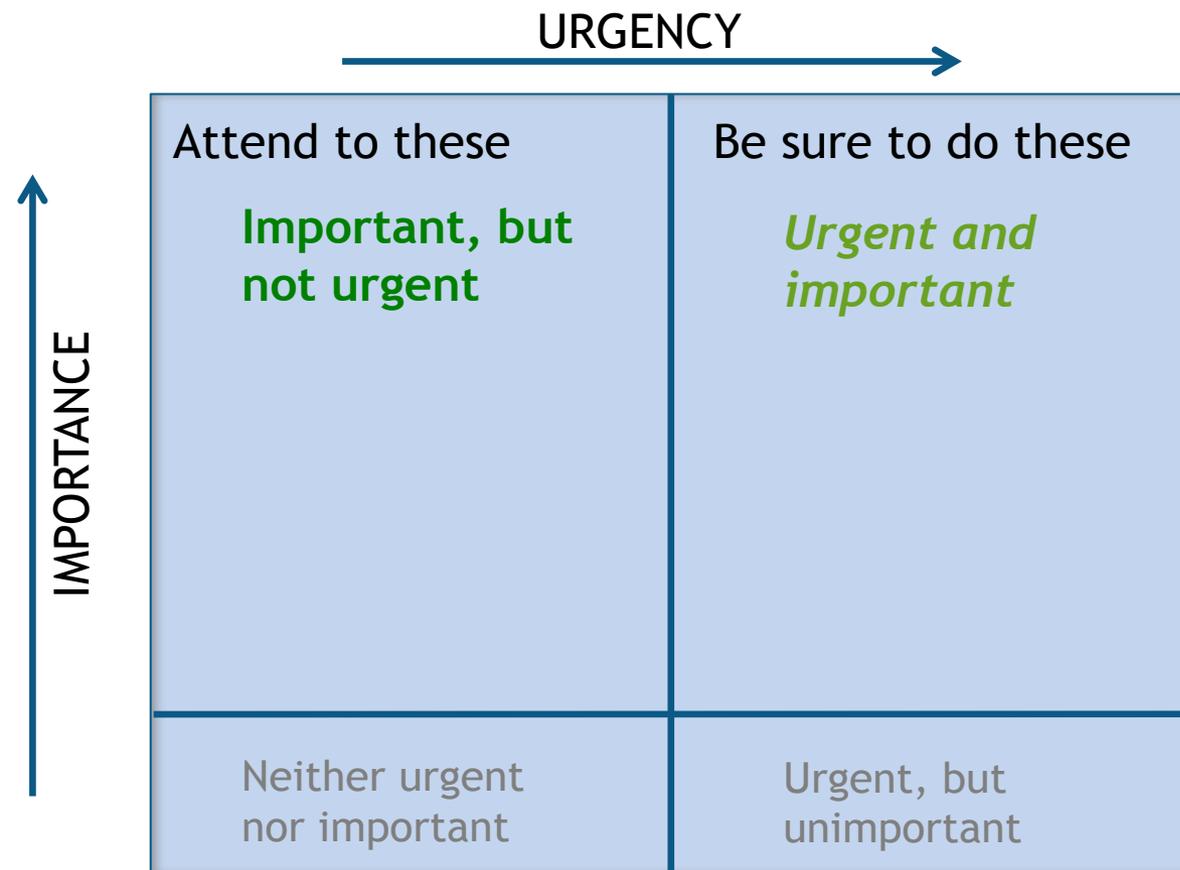
Where do the following fall for you?

Posting class items to D2L
Spending time with family/friends
Enjoying healthy recreation
Preparing for a committee meeting
Getting ready to meet your advisor
Developing new teaching
Grading exams
Writing your thesis
Posting on social media
Game of Thrones

What's not on this list?

→ How do we identify our priorities?... And how do we reach our goals?

Time management and balance: being a TA is part of “real life”



Where do the following fall for you?

Posting class items to D2L
Spending time with family/friends
Enjoying healthy recreation
Preparing for a committee meeting
Getting ready to meet your advisor
Developing new teaching
Grading exams
Writing your thesis
Posting on social media
Game of Thrones

What's not on this list?

→ How do we identify our priorities?... And how do we reach our goals?

Time management and balance: being a TA is part of “real life”

Experienced TAs:

what has worked for you?
what would you do differently?
what *will* you do differently this time?

New TAs:

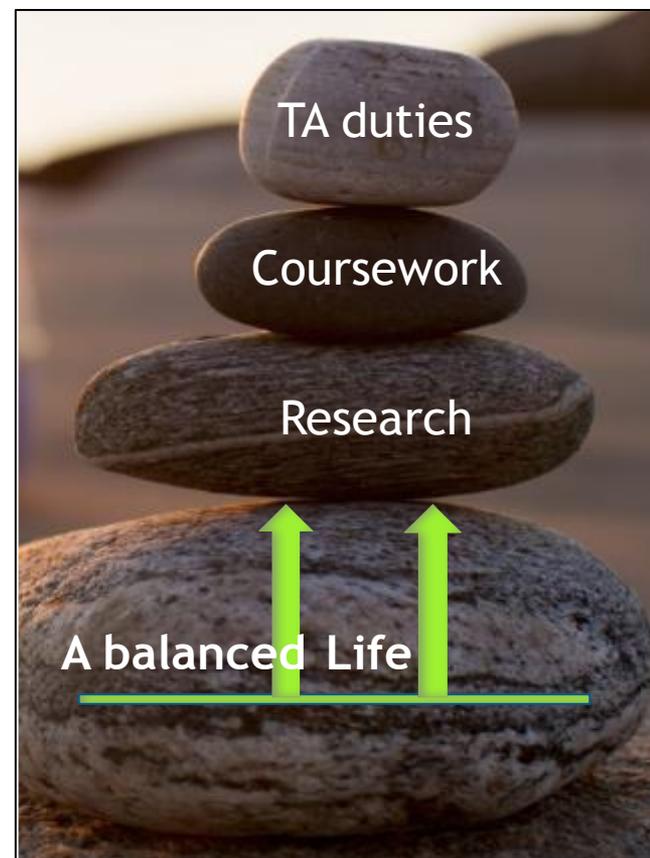
what are your concerns?
what are your experiences so far?
how is your balance working?
what can you change to succeed?



Time management and balance: being a TA is part of “real life”

A strategic and thoughtful process...

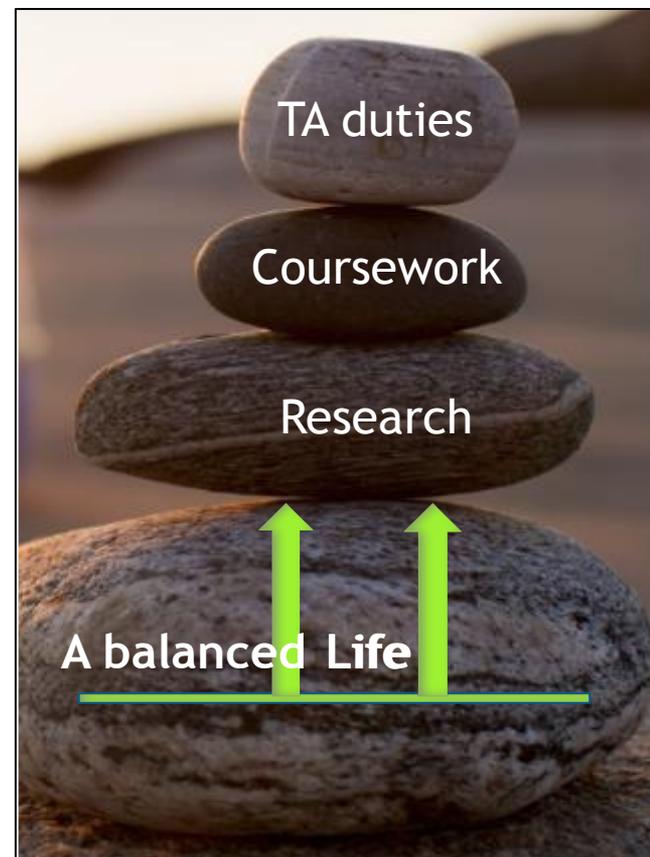
- *Aim* for structure, balance, and clarity
- *Set realistic goals* for each day and week, and meet them
- *Recognize* this shift in your training / commitments
- *Communicate* with faculty (course) and mentor (advisor)
- Understand your TA commitment (time)
- Clarify your role and expectations (effort, style)
- Approach faculty early to avoid panic/limit stress
- Make ‘work time’ = work time; have ‘guilt-free time’
- Take care of yourself (personally, professionally)
- Ask for help when you need it (peers, mentor, friends)
- Work on your ‘personal schedule’ when you can
- Explore ‘opportunity’ vs. ‘chore’ mentality



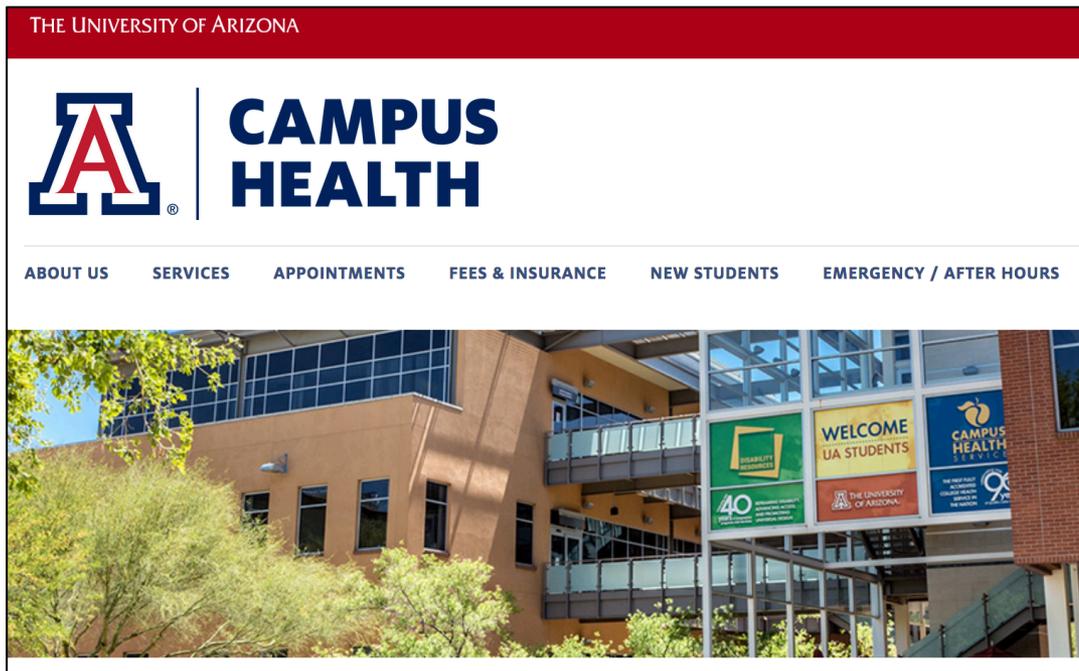
UA has great resources for work/life balance and support



<https://lifework.arizona.edu/>



UA has great resources for work/life balance and support



<https://www.health.arizona.edu/>



Nuts and Bolts

Communicating With Students

- In Person:
 - Our population is diverse and one size does not fit all.
 - Remember your FERPA training.
 - Keep your door open (if you have an office).
 - Document any agreements you make with students, cc the instructor.
 - Keep your tone even, remember you are their TA not their parent or friend.
 - It is ok to empathize, but do not apologize.

Communicating With Students

- Email:
 - Remember we are missing body and paralanguage.
 - Read emails from students thoroughly, don't miss a key question or hint at their mood.
 - Be professional in your emails.
 - It is ok to be short in emails, but students may take it as terse or rude.
 - Use their name and a closing statement.

Working/Talking With Faculty

- As with students, there is great variability in faculty.
 - Use the titles they prefer.
 - Remember, they are technically your supervisor, this is a professional relationship.
- Request a meeting with your faculty if you have not done so already.
 - Establish their expectations for your time commitment, grading and teaching duties, office hours etc.
 - Office hours should be a minimum of 2 hours per week in two different blocks (if possible).
- Ask about guest lecturing, it is good experience.
- If it is a good fit, ask if the course is offered summer session.
- Many majors have online offerings during the summer.
- FCSC/CALS 696E in the spring.

Grading

- Is there a rubric?
 - If yes, use it. Ask faculty for feedback on how they calculate deductions.
 - If no, ask the faculty how they grade the assignments.
- Establish interrater reliability.
 - Grade a few papers and then ask fellow TA's/faculty for feedback on the same papers.
 - If there are major differences establish an agreement on how to grade the areas of difference moving forward.
- If you find cheating or plagiarism go to your faculty.

D2L

- For the majority of the campus D2L (Desire to Learn) is the Learning Management System (LMS).
- If you would like a shallow or deep dive into using D2L please email me.

Questions:

- Experienced TA's, what have been some challenges you have faced in:
 - Communication with faculty?
 - Grading?
 - Using D2L?
 - Communicating with students?
- New students what were some things that caused you problems as an undergraduate with respect to:
 - Communication?
 - Grades?
 - Using a Learning Management System such as D2L?

Lunch

- The Games The Students Play

Professionalism and Ethics

GTA Workshop

Training for a profession

Take advantage of opportunities to practice for being a professional when done with graduate school.

- Effective speaking takes practice, if not in a TA position that you must lecture, ask your assigned instructor about opportunities to lecture.
- Mentoring takes practice. Learning how to encourage learning and critical thinking takes practice.
- The appropriate attitude
 - I can work on honing my skills to become a good communicator
- The wrong attitude
 - I'm not going into teaching anyways so I don't need to be a good communicator
 - I'm not a good public speaker

Classroom Environment

- Professional demeanor
 - Proper hygiene and attire
 - Arrive to classroom early enough to set up before class time
 - Awareness that your interactions with all students are respectful while maintaining class control
 - Avoid perception of favoritism
 - Promote inclusiveness
 - Setting boundaries
- Maintain an atmosphere of respect
 - Diversity of population should be embraced
- Use discretion while returning graded work
 - A student should not learn of another student's score via the TA.

How to handle situations

- Scenario 1
 - Football star asks for you to look the other way on a plagiarism issue
- Scenario 2
 - Student comes to class and vomits on floor
- Scenario 3
 - Student asks you on a date
- Scenario 4
 - You run into a group of your students at the bar and they ask you to do shots with them
- Scenario 5
 - A student breaks down crying in office hours because of family/friend issue
- Scenario 6
 - You see a student cheating on their exam
- Scenario 7
 - A student is confrontational to you during class

Communication

- Phone and Email
 - If providing your phone number for students to reach you, follow professional demeanor with your communication.
 - Use your official UA email account for communication.
 - Email provides a “paper trail”. Do not initiate or respond to a student with any demeaning or threatening language.
 - With a difficult situation or student:
 - Be very thorough in reading their email to ensure you are responding to the issue at hand.
 - Compose a draft of your response and revisit a bit later to double-check your response.
 - Strive for emails to sound informative and helpful.
 - If you cannot immediately answer, offer to look into request.

Wrap-up