
BALANCING TEACHING, RESEARCH, AND LIFE BEYOND

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SESSION OUTLINE

- Introduction
 - Common Challenges (& Possible Solutions)
 - Managing Stress
 - Finding Community
 - Recap & Questions
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INTRODUCTION: WHO ARE WE?



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Master's student, Communication and Rhetorical
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Teaching Assistant for CRS225: Public Advocacy



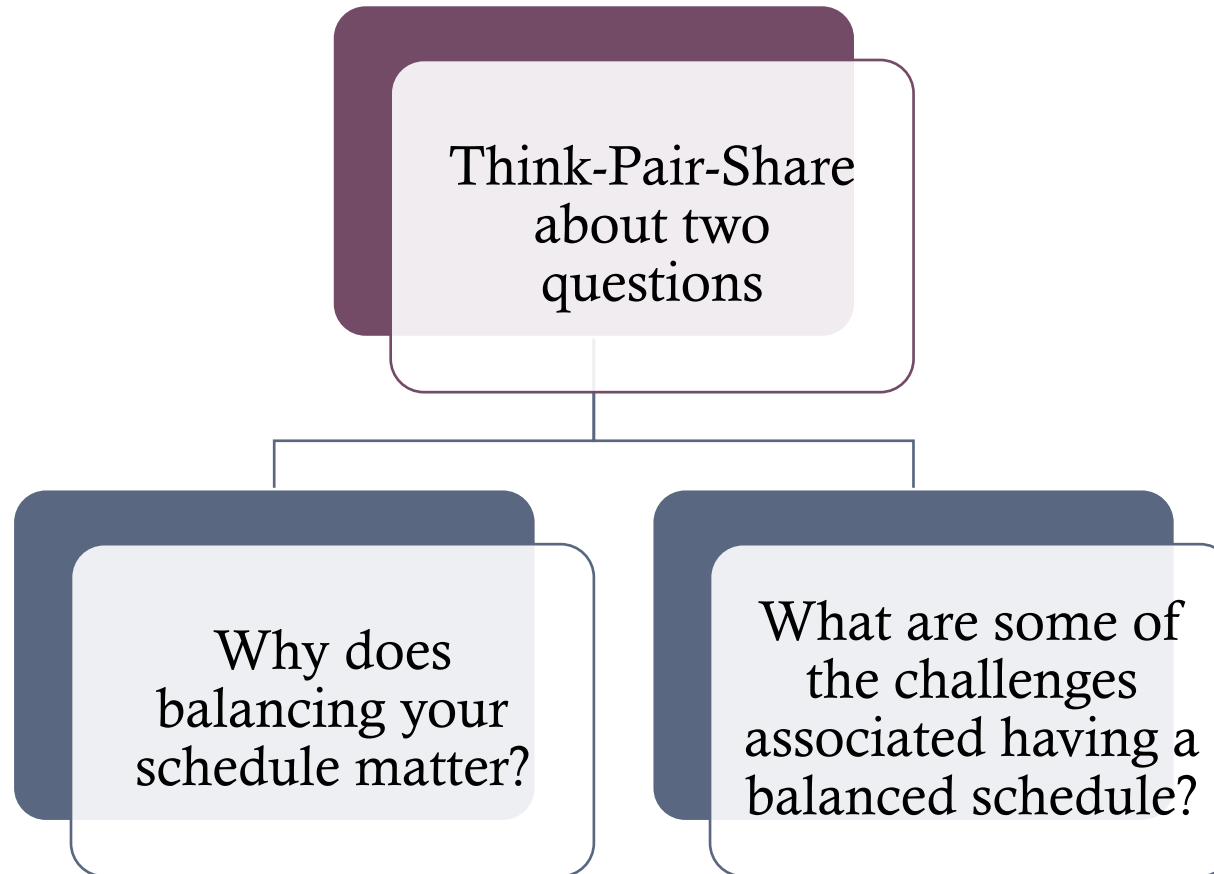
Dominic Wilkins (he/him)
PhD Candidate, Geography & the Environment
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Teaching Assistant for GEO 215 (F '23)

INTRODUCTION: WHAT ARE WE DOING?



INTRODUCTION: WHY DOES THIS MATTER?



COMMON
CHALLENGES:

TOO MUCH TO DO,
TOO LITTLE TIME





POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

CLOCKING HOURS

TEACHING IS YOUR JOB. YOU ARE PAID A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF MONEY TO DO A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF WORK. YOU COULD ALWAYS DO MORE—BUT VALUE YOUR TIME!

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS: PRIORITIZING TASKS

Image taken from Michael Solem, Kenneth Foote, and Janice Monk, *Aspiring Academics: A Resource Book for Graduate Students and Early Career Faculty*, (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2009), 7.

FIGURE 1.1 A view of academic work derived from Stephen Covey's Important–Unimportant and Urgent–Not urgent matrix of work priorities.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	<p>Meeting responsibilities of current term—class schedules, grading, committee work.</p> <p>Responding to deadline-driven projects such as submission of abstracts, grants, and manuscripts.</p> <p>Responding to pressing problems of students and colleagues.</p>	<p>Networking.</p> <p>Many writing and research projects.</p> <p>Seeking funding for teaching and research projects.</p> <p>Reflecting and improving upon teaching and curriculum.</p> <p>Mentoring and helping others.</p>
Non Important	<p>Interruptions.</p> <p>Some calls.</p> <p>Some mail and e-mail.</p> <p>Some reports.</p> <p>Some meetings.</p>	<p>Some calls.</p> <p>Some mail and e-mail.</p> <p>Some reports.</p> <p>Some meetings—both intramural and extramural.</p>

Source: Adapted from Covey 1989, 151.



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

MAKING LISTS FOR:

- Your Program
- Your Year
- Your Semester
- Your Month
- Your Week
- Your Day

MAKING LISTS REQUIRES SETTING GOALS

Minute paper:

What are some goals you have as an incoming TA? As a grad student? As a human being?





WAYS OF MAKING LISTS:

- Task Batching (1-2 pm is for all emails & texts)
- Maximize Efficiency (when are you most productive)
- Time Chunking (Monday for research, Tuesday for teaching, etc.)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

SAYING NO TO EXTRA
WORK
(IF & WHEN YOU CAN)





POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS: LIFTING TOGETHER MAKES LIGHT WORK

Share ideas, materials,
sources, etc.

Check in on folks

Ask for advice

Seek mentors, whether
research overlaps or not

COMMON
CHALLENGES:

PROCRASTINATION



**THINK-PAIR-SHARE
(WITH A NEW
PARTNER):**

**WHY DO PEOPLE, OR
YOU, PROCRASTINATE?**

**ARE THERE BENEFITS
TO
PROCRASTINATING?**



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

Clutter the Blank Page (aka just get started)

Accountability/Writing Groups





POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

**SCHEDULE IT IN (AKA THE
POMODORO METHOD)**

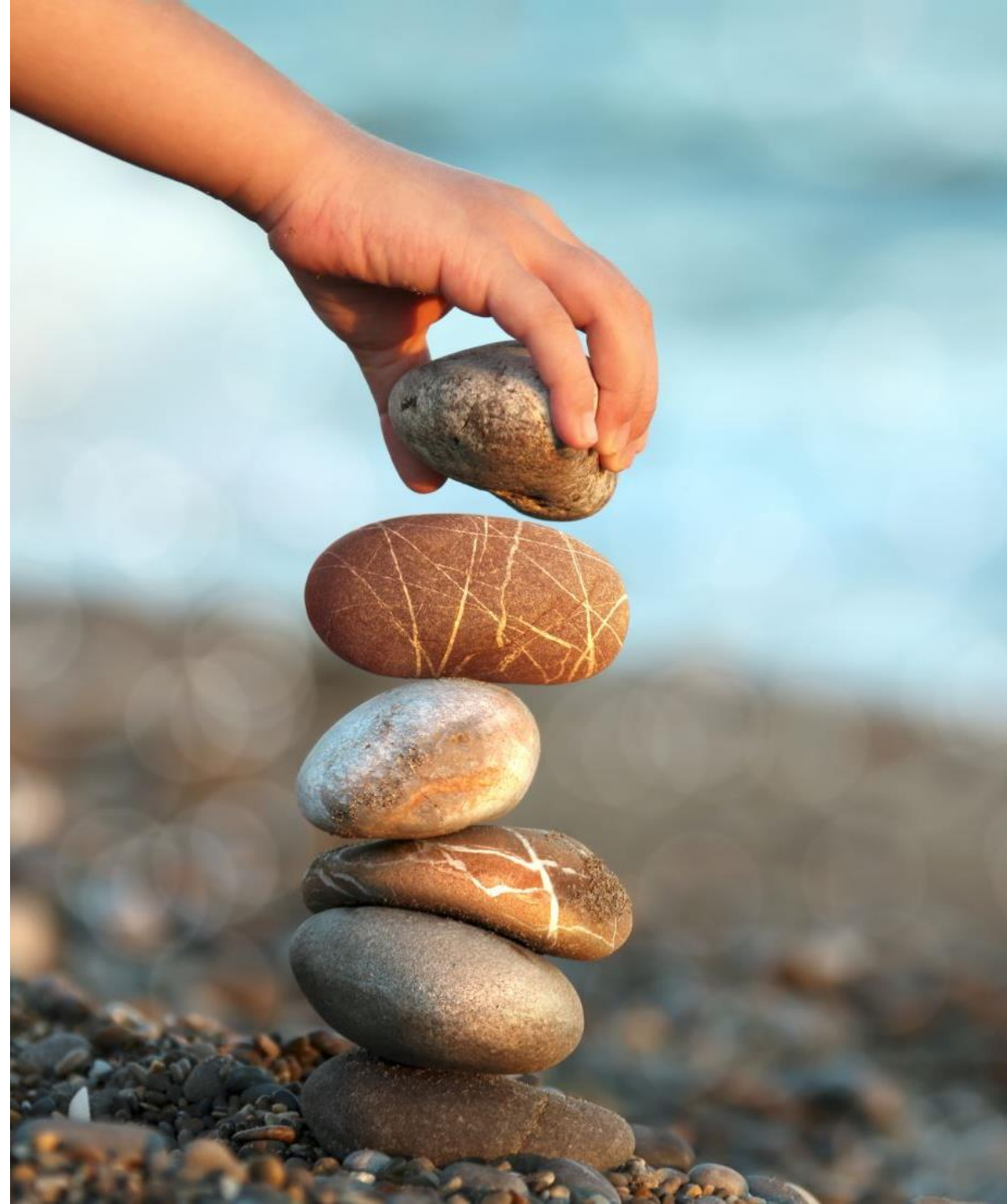
25 minutes on, 5 minutes off

After four cycles take 15-30 minute break

Repeat

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

**BREAK UP LARGE
TASKS ON THE LIST**



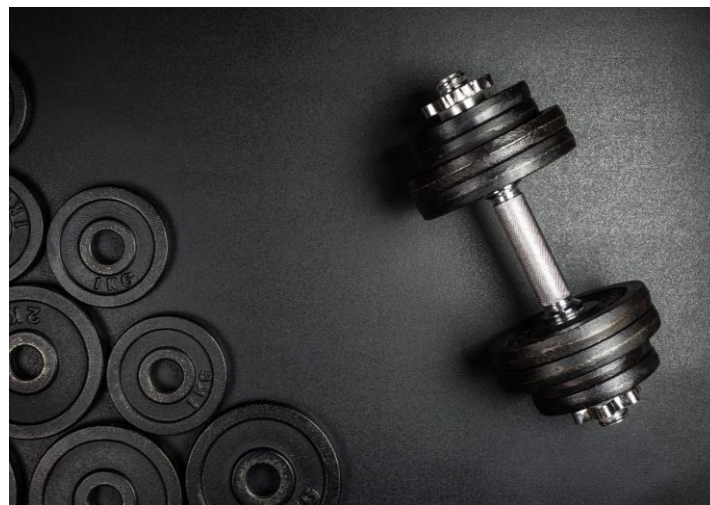
POSSIBLE
SOLUTIONS:

LIKE, DELETE
SOCIAL MEDIA?
AT LEAST FROM
YOUR PHONE?



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

MOVE AROUND; EXERCISE; HAVE A SNACK; DO SOMETHING ELSE



Choose your work location...

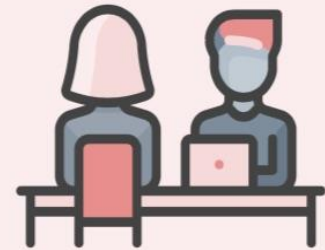
Home

+2 COMFORT
-2 MOTIVATION
+QUIET(?)



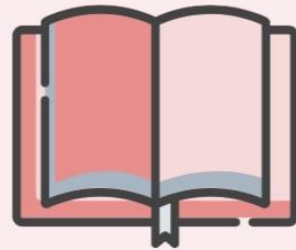
Office

-2 COMFORT
+2 MOTIVATION
+ACCESS TO COWORKERS



Library

-1 COMFORT
+1 MOTIVATION
+QUIET



Café

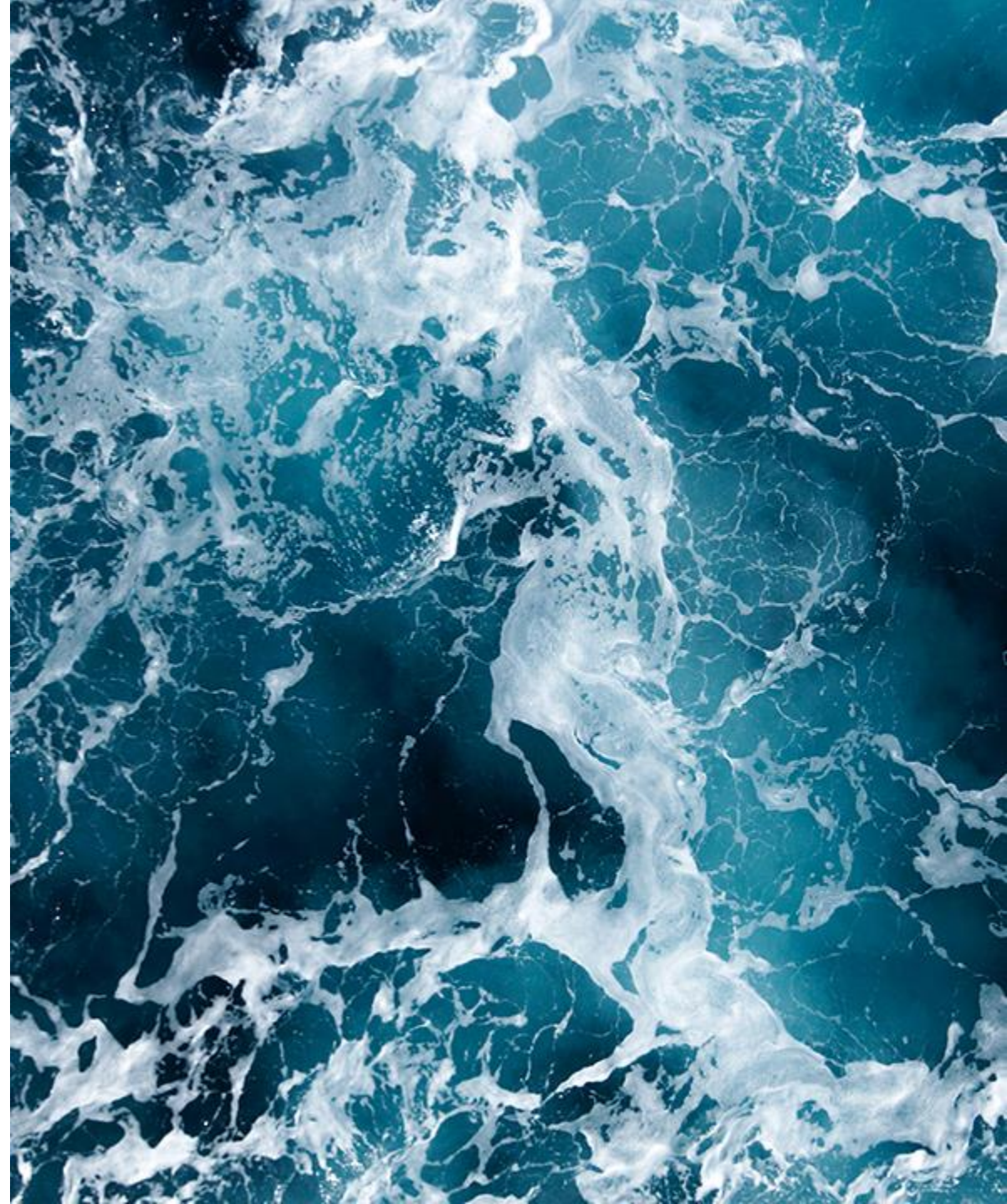
+1 COMFORT
-1 MOTIVATION
+DELICIOUS DRINKS



**A LESS ADVISABLE
SOLUTION:**

BUILD UP AND BINGE

**(AKA DON'T TRY TO
GRADE 50 PAPERS IN
A DAY)**



MANAGING STRESS:

**TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF
(PHYSICAL & MENTAL
HEALTH)**

- Be kind to yourself.
 - It's okay to have challenging days.
-



MANAGING STRESS:

FIND YOUR SUPPORT:

- Get a hobby (ideally wholly unrelated to your work);
 - Spend time with family and friends;
 - Make new friends.
- ❖ More importantly, don't ever be afraid to seek professional help!!



MANAGING
STRESS, FINAL TIP:

TAKE WEEKENDS &
BREAKS!!!!

(Consider setting aside one day a
week where you don't do any work)



**FINDING
COMMUNITY
AND LIVING
YOUR LIFE**





YOU ARE IN MANY COMMUNITIES

Your Cohort and Department

SU Clubs and Organizations

Extracurricular hobbies, volunteering, and civic life

Exploring Syracuse & Central New York!

Friends elsewhere—keep in touch!

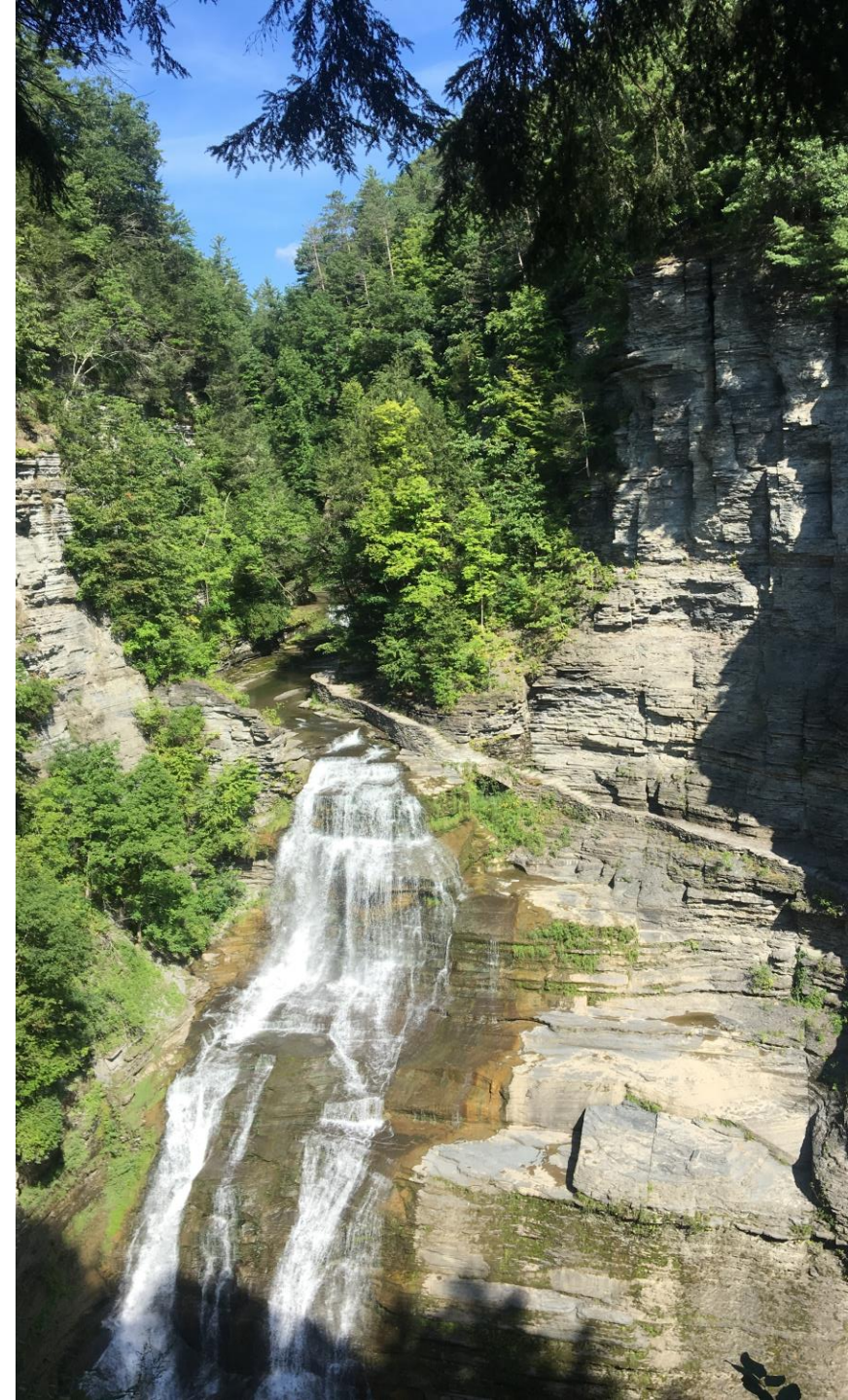
THINGS TO DO IN SYRACUSE (AN INCOMPLETE LIST):

- New York State Fair!
- Several Cultural Festivals every month
- Live Music (Amphitheater, Westcott Theater, concert series, local venues)
- Theaters (Syracuse Stage, Landmark Theater, Shakespeare in the Park)
- Museums (MOST, Everson Museum of Art, Skä•noñh Great Law of Peace Center)
- Sports (SU sports, Syracuse Mets, Syracuse Crunch)
- Shopping (CNY Regional Market, Destiny, pop-up festivals)
- Dining (Salt City Market and so many other spots tucked across the city—ask for suggestions!)
- Parks (Thornden, Barry, Oakwood all walking distance from here)
- Many nonprofits and other activist groups also call Syracuse home, if that's more your speed

THINGS TO DO IN CENTRAL NEW YORK (A VERY INCOMPLETE LIST):

- Everything from the previous slide, but, like, more of it
 - Concert venues, museums, festivals, scenic towns, breweries & wineries
 - Gorgeous state parks, many with waterfalls, campgrounds, and hikes of varying difficulty

 - If you do want to leave, we're 4-5 hours from Philadelphia, New York City, Buffalo, and Boston
 - If you're able to cross the Canadian border, Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto are short drives as well
-





RECAP

Lists are useful for managing workload

Procrastination is real, but doesn't have to win out

Grad school and teaching can be stressful!

- Community helps

As does exploring Central New York



THANK YOU!

What Questions Do You Have For Us?



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