# **Weekly Goal-Setting Sheet (a.k.a. Life Map)**

The second page of this document is a chart that you can use to map out your daily/weekly responsibilities. Completing the chart will help you set realistic writing goals by showing you the time you actually have available to work on writing. Note: Since a dissertation will likely take more than a single semester to complete, you will likely have to revisit this chart as your schedule changes from semester to semester (or more often, if you have family obligations that tend to change).

1. On the chart, block off all times that you are occupied with things that are **non-negotiable**.
   1. Sleep
   2. Classes you are attending
   3. Classes you are teaching
   4. Lab work or other research you are required to do for your assistantship
   5. Required meetings
   6. Outside job, if you have one
   7. Family obligations
   8. . . .
2. Take a few minutes to do some dissertation math.

*# of pages = minimum # of pages per day*

*# of days*

* 1. Divide the number of pages you expect your dissertation to include by the number of days you have available (see your process chart for some idea of your time frame). This gives you the minimum number of pages you’d need to write per day in order to finish writing on time. Note that this formula does **NOT** include reading, collecting data, revising, getting feedback, etc.
  2. Consider reading through a few dissertations in your field and your specific program to gauge how they are structured. You might also want to read dissertations by your advisor’s former students to get a better sense of the average number of pages, number of chapters, and number of pages per chapter.

1. Take a few minutes to think about yourself as a writer. How long does it take you to write a page? How many pages can you write per hour?
2. Using the information gained from steps 2 & 3, look at the open time blocks on your weekly chart. What is the maximum amount of time you can spend writing each week? How does that compare to the minimum number of pages you’d need to write in order to complete the document in the timeframe you have?
   1. Start by considering how much of that time might be spent on non-writing aspects of the dissertation such as research, reading, data-collection, etc.
   2. If you have too little time remaining in a week, consider what “non-negotiables” are really negotiable. Are there responsibilities you could drop or re-negotiate with relevant parties? Alternately, consider whether you can adjust your production schedule to allow more weeks to work on the document.
   3. If you have more time remaining than you need in a week, celebrate. Don’t add in more responsibilities because you may need that extra time when unforeseen events arise (like your advisor leaving for an international conference right when you were hoping to get feedback).

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