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Course: **8.398 - Selected Topics Grad Physics**

1. What strategies do you plan to use to help identify a research supervisor and/or research field this semester?

Answer: I work in AOM physics, and at the moment I have already chosen a research advisor. I started working in an AMO lab in undergrad and really liked it, so I decided to continue further studies in this field at MIT. As for my advisor, I became interested in his research projects during my graduate school search. Having worked in his lab since June, I can say with certainty that I do not regret coming to MIT and choosing him as my advisor.

I technically have done one rotation, but it was between two experiments in the same lab. I'm currently very happy with the experiment I am in now: while we're only in the debugging stage and not working on new science, I find myself learning much more here than in the previous lab which was fully functioning. I like the various challenges of bringing the lab back to producing new data. They teach me how everything works (and doesn't work) and also give me a sense of pride whenever I get something to work again. It's really awesome.

So I'd say that I don't really have a strategy for finding a research field/advisor. I like AMO, and I did some research on my advisor and decided to join his group. I suppose following what you want to do/what you find interesting counts as a strategy. I'd say that picking something to do and see if they are interesting is a reasonable strategy.

2. What other goals (physics or otherwise) do you have this semester?

Answer: Physics-wise I want to restore and upgrade the experimental setup I am currently debugging and hopefully begin taking data by the end of December. There is already a very interesting research project lined up for the machine once it is back to running, so I really look forward to that.

Otherwise, I hope to manage my time better. I believe there exists an optimal time-management strategy in which I could accomplish what I want to do in the lab, pass all my classes (3 of them), and exercise/sleep regularly. My goal is to successfully manage all three. I would also love to dedicate some time to make friends around MIT, but I think that could be a next-semester thing where I have fewer academic obligations.

3. What do you anticipate being potential roadblocks to accomplishing your goals?

Answer: Primarily time-management. I find myself working *all the time* – which is a lot of fun, but could be tiring sometimes. I would love some time outside of lab work and classes to learn about my research field from the books and papers which I have collected but have not had the chance to read.

I remember someone on the grad student panel suggest that I should never take three classes. I can totally see why it is not the optimal strategy in the long run, but I think it is worth the extra effort to fill in my knowledge gaps as quickly as possible before digging deeper in my research.