**Academic Advice**

1. It's really important to stay on top of your assignments and start them as soon as they're assigned.
2. The best way to study for exams is to do as many old practice problems from that professor's previous exams as possible. I wouldn't spend as much time focused on notes. Try to learn their style of questions.
3. You might not get straight A's and that's okay. And even if you are a straight A student, you might get a 30 on an exam and that's fine. Some exams will have scores that if taken out of context will make you feel bad about yourself, but you need to remember the context of the program.
4. You can't dwell on things. Learn from mistakes and learn what areas to focus on before the prelim, but you need to keep moving forward.
5. Study ahead of time so you can go to office hours with specific questions/problems to review.
6. Everyone comes from different backgrounds, so others might understand concepts and ideas coming into the program. That's okay. The point of the first year is to level the playing field.
7. Find a study group of people that you work well with - similar thinking, similar pace, comfortable asking questions, people you want to hang out with
8. If you know exactly what you want to do for research, don't be afraid to reach out to professors early. They want to talk to you about their work!

**Personal Advice**

1. Madison is a much nicer place if you spend time trying to enjoy it, and you can make that time for yourself during the first year.
2. Plan trips, you need to get away sometimes. Go visit Chicago or the Dells, whatever break you need is within a 3 hour drive.