Before you decide how many classes to take, let’s look at some of the different ways you spend your time—ways in which you may be unaware. Realizing HOW you spend your time and making choices about that can positively influence what your “class load” might need to be.

There are many ways to look at time. Here are two.

In The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People (Covey, S., 1989) there is a very helpful Time Management Matrix (p. 151). It helps you look at time in a larger and more general way, breaking it down into four quadrants: Urgent, Not Urgent, Important and Not Important.

**URGENT** means something requires immediate action—do it NOW! These types of activities can be enjoyable. They can be important to others… maybe even more important to others than they are to you. Yet, we treat them as urgent for US! We react to them when they happen. There is a common saying in offices, “Just because you have a crisis, that does not make it a priority for me!”

**NOT URGENT** means it does not really require immediate action. It is not a crisis. It can still be important, but it is not urgent.

**IMPORTANT** means that something matters to you. It has a high priority in your life. Sometimes things change in importance to you. What was important last year is not as important this year.

**NOT IMPORTANT** means the opposite. It can include interruptions, phone calls, text messages, some meetings, and distractions that are enjoyable, yet time-killers.

The challenge is to identify if you are spending time in URGENT/NOT IMPORTANT (Quadrant 3) and NOT URGENT/NOT IMPORTANT (Quadrant 4). This means becoming aware of HOW you spend your time so that you can make better choices about WHAT you spend your time on. This knowledge allows you to say “no” more often.
A second way to be more aware of your time is to calculate into a weekly schedule the time it actually takes for the activities and responsibilities you have in your life. This helps you balance those roles with college courses. It will be a eye-opener!

Download the calendar and fill it in. Don’t leave out the “small things” you spend time on—they all take up your time.