I feel like this last week has been especially busy, what with midterms and papers and Halloween. And now it's November - class registration is starting, final assignments are being discussed, and Thanksgiving break is just off in the distance. How did this semester fly by so quickly?

And of course, on top of classwork and social engagements, I still have a lot of work to do for my thesis. Juggling research on top of a busy semester is definitely doable, but it's not really something you can put down or work on occasionally. It requires regular attention - something that is hard to do when so many other assignments or activities are happening at the same time.

Part of the contract for the first semester of your thesis asks you how much time will be spent between meetings with your advisor. If you go by the standard 1 credit = 3 hours, you're looking at 8-10 hours of thesis-related work. In reality, that seems to fluctuate with my schedule - some weeks I read a book or I send some emails to relevant historians; other weeks, I'm in the library for hours and writing abstracts and summaries for my literature review.

What's important, though, is that I try to do something productive each week. With everything else going on, it can be hard to find that time to sit down and actually do something. But you have to find some way to fit it into your weekly routine - whether you break it down into smaller goals (like reading a chapter a day) or setting aside at least one afternoon a week (like I do with my Fridays.) This way, even the smallest step is progress! And in the long run, that's significant to getting to next semester.

Blog Column: