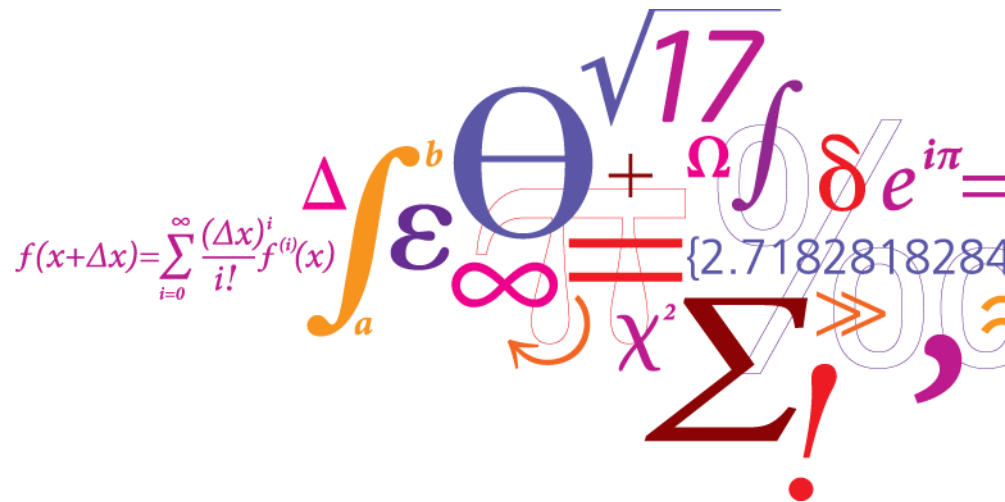


# Being a PhD Student

**Laura Rieger** (lauri@dtu.dk)

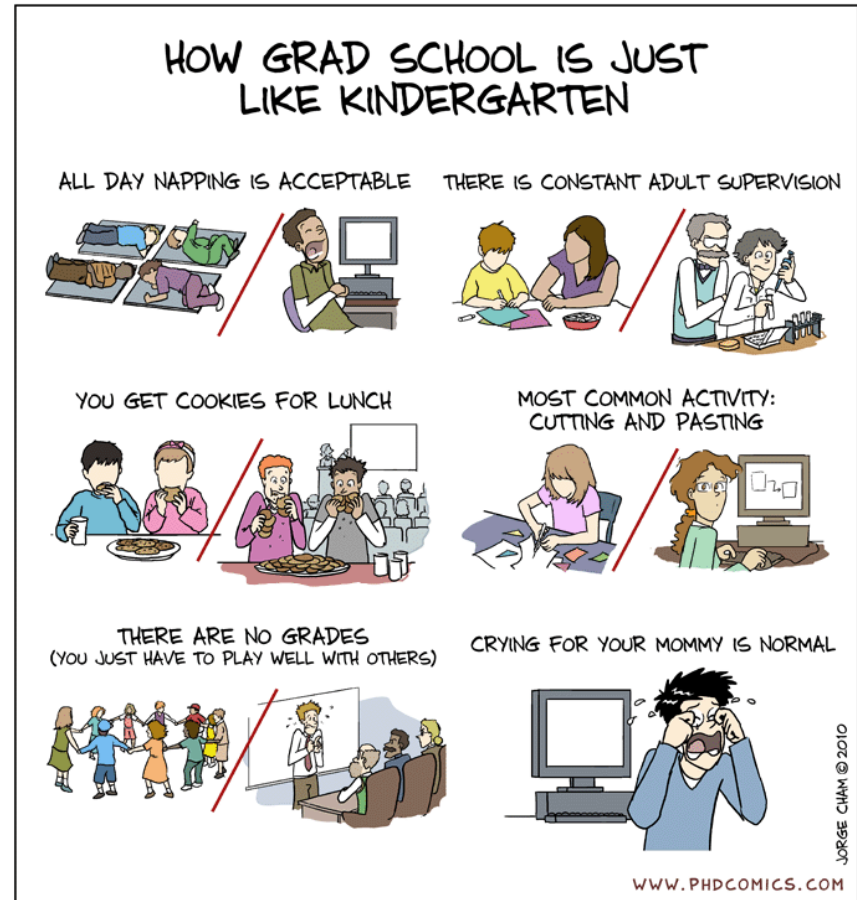


**DTU Compute**

Department of Applied Mathematics and Computer Science

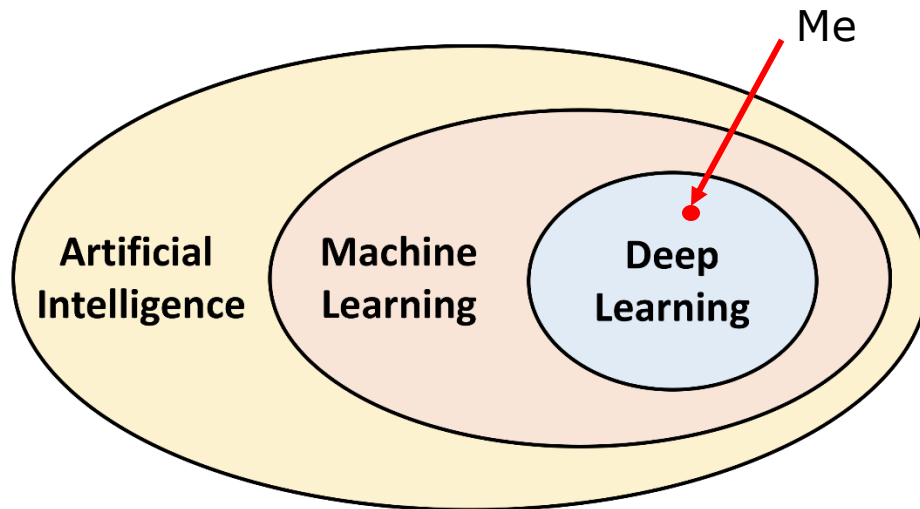
# Agenda

- My experience
- Big lessons
- Small lessons
- Common challenges



# My project

- Computer science
  - Machine Learning
    - Neural networks
      - Explainability of neural networks
        - » “Explainability of uncertainty for neural networks”
- 2 years into my PhD



# My experience – the 1<sup>st</sup> year

- Figuring out DTU
- Figuring out research
- So many requirements ...
  - Study plan
  - TA
  - Dissemination
- Reading a lot of papers

Danmarks  
Tekniske  
Universitet



## My experience – the 2<sup>nd</sup> year

- Less requirements
- More research
- I started having strong opinions on things
- Stay abroad

Berkeley  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



# What can you learn?

# The big things - network

- Talk to your colleagues
- Use social media
- The important stuff at conferences are not (only) the talks

# The big things - communication

- Take advantage of DTU's system
- Learn how to talk about your research
- Put your research out there (posters, Github, PhD Bazaar)



# The big things - organization

- Organization is important
- Nobody has a perfect system
- Try to file the things you've done and read

# The big things – non-linearity

- Research happens in weird jumps (so do PhDs)
- You're not the only one
- Slow start is very common

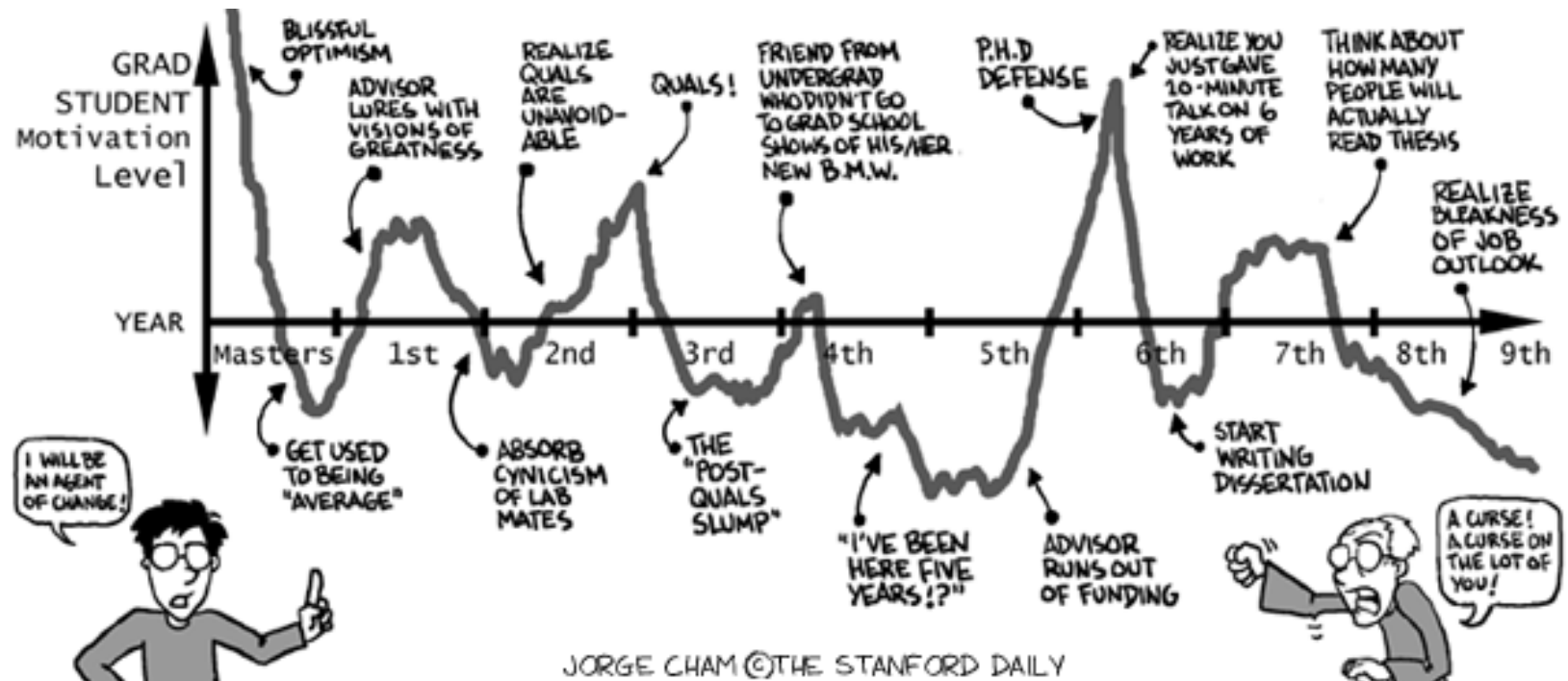
# Stuff I found useful

- Pavlov yourself – use triggers to make yourself do stuff
- Have concrete to-do lists
- Know where your time is going
- Stay calm



Streaming a show while outlining a paper, the grad student is neither entertained nor productive.

# Common challenges – the PhD life cycle



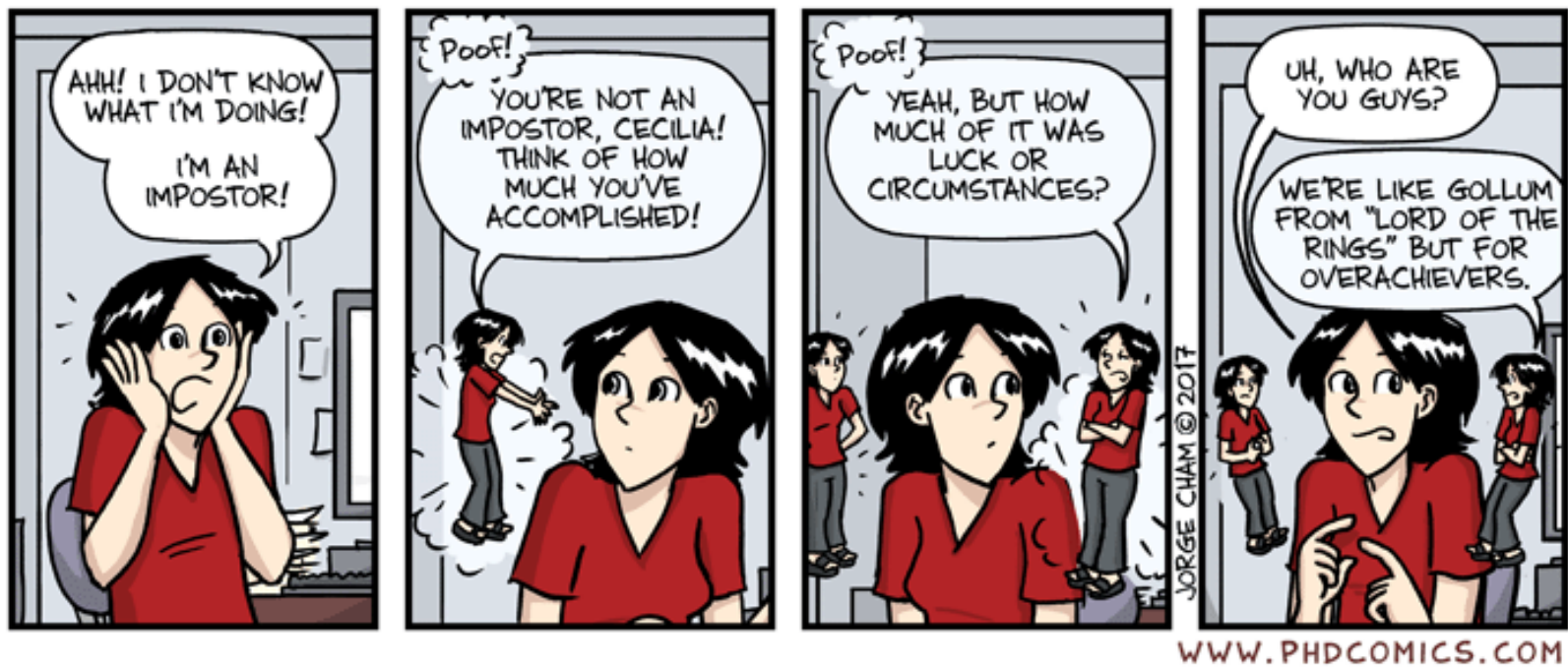
# Common challenges – time management

- Focus on the important stuff
- Learn to say no
  - but not too much
- Readjust process
- Accept that it will never be perfect – that's research

## WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU'RE OVERWHELMED WITH WORK



# Common challenges – impostor syndrome



# The positive note to end on

- Interesting work
- Freedom to design your own work process
- Build-a-PhD experience
- Be the world leading expert on <insert your PhD topic here>
- You're at a fantastic university 😊

# Useful links

- <https://thesiswhisperer.com/>
- <http://karpathy.github.io/2016/09/07/phd/>
- If someone asks you to give a talk about being a PhD student in two years
  - <http://phdcomics.com>
  - <https://legogradstudent.tumblr.com>