

## Joseph Padilla

**Sponsor:** Christopher Bergevin

**Course:** Math 250A

My semester as a UTA was a great experience. I learned a lot about the teaching side of classes. I also gained a greater appreciation for the effort needed to organize and teach a course from the weekly duties assigned to me.

Every week I was tasked with drafting a quiz and its solutions, leading a recitation session, holding office hours, and some grading. In order to write the quizzes, I needed to get my feet wet with LaTeX. Initially, I was nervous about the task, but I have come appreciate the abilities of such an environment to create math related documents. I also came to find that writing solutions can be difficult when you consider how to best explain the different avenues possible to arrive at the correct answer. However, this also helped my ability to clearly explain concepts to students in both email correspondence and in person.

I found both grading and my recitation session particularly interesting due to the variety of strategies and responses from the students. These variations required that I knew the material well, and the preparation necessary to grade and answer students' questions firmed up my foundations in calculus, differential equations, and MATLAB coding.

My office hours eventually drew a couple of regulars during the weeks. We often discussed strategies for the weekly homework problems, and I occasionally fielded questions about the material discussed in class. Unfortunately, most of my office hours drew no one. I used these instances to prepare for my recitation and grade problems.

The weekly UTA meetings also gave me and my fellow UTAs tools to use while grading and interacting with students. We often discussed potential situations and how to manage them. It was also interesting to listen to various professors give talks about different areas in mathematics.

I am very appreciative of the opportunity to be a UTA. My knowledge and experiences gained during the semester will continue to help me in the future.