

I was in Dr. Young's Math 413 class in the Spring of 2017, and she was my advisor for a research project during the 2018-2019 school year. She asked me to be her UTA at the end of the Fall of 2018 and I quickly agreed.

My primary responsibilities were to grade two questions per weekly problem set and host a problem solving session approximately every other week where students had the opportunity to see solutions to challenging problems and ask questions in preparation for their upcoming homeworks and exams. I also hosted one office hour per week.

I had presentation experience and some teaching experience before becoming a UTA but not much in the way of traditional lecturing skills. The weekly problem solving sessions were an excellent way to me to practice those skills, and Dr. Young was very supportive and constructive with her advice on how to improve. She attended through the first half of the semester and offered me regular advice and how I could improve from one week to the next. After about half way through the semester, she stopped attending and allowed me to explore being in charge of these sessions with more independence. I certainly have a better understanding of the preparation needed to give a successful lecture and learned several techniques for managing a lecture and a class of students.

I also learned several valuable grading techniques. Dr. Young and I talked at great length about ways to mitigate implicit bias while still grading in a time efficient manner. Throughout the semester, she gave me problems to grade that were increasingly difficult to grade, and offered me a great amount of support in doing so. I always had a rough rubrik to follow but was also given agency in making case-by-case decisions.

Dr. Neville and Dr. Mrad hosted excellent weekly meetings for the UTAs. Some were more beneficial to me personally than others, but they offered a wide enough variety of activities and topics that everyone heard something they needed to hear every week. They also offered great practical tools for mathematicians, such as opportunities to put together and deliver a formal presentation, with guidance and feedback.

Being a UTA was a good addition to my otherwise light semester. I would not have been able to participate if I had any other responsibilities because being a UTA is a rather large time commitment, but for those students who do have the time and would like to explore grading, teaching, or hosting office hours, possibly as a means to explore academia as a future career, I would highly recommend the UTA program.