

UTA Program Final Reflection

This fall was my sixth semester as a part of the UTA program. This time I worked with Math 415B, which is the second course in the undergraduate abstract algebra sequence. Having worked with 415A in the fall, most of the students in this class were the same as last semester.

As with last semester, grading was split up between me and a graduate student who was also working with 415B. This setup was helpful to me because it allowed me to devote more time to grading each individual's submission. As such, I feel like I was able to provide more meaningful comments than I could have done if I was the only grader.

One unique aspect of working with a two semester sequence of classes is that I had a bigger picture of the way each student had progressed since they started in August. Some trends that I noticed in 415A were still present in their homework submissions. For example, many students seem to feel obligated to put some minimum number of words on the page for their answers, which often leads to their arguments being much less clean than they could be. While overall I would say this had improved a bit since the fall, it was still consistently an issue. With that being said, the students seem to have a better understanding of how to write proofs than they did last semester.

I also had office hours once a week and held review sessions before each exam. I had several students show up to my office hours and good attendance at the review sessions. Most students in the class continued to seem genuinely engaged with the material.

As I had hoped, I had the opportunity to teach a lecture in 415B. I covered a handful of miscellaneous theorems about field extensions, including the primitive element theorem. Attendance was a bit lower than the lecture I gave last semester, but I still had a great time preparing for the class and presenting to the students. There were some good questions and I feel like I was able to communicate the material clearly.

It was nice to be able to wrap up my experience as a UTA by working with one of my favorite undergraduate classes. I am grateful to the math department for continuing to support this program. I know that the skills that I was able to practice over the last six semesters will be very helpful when I start assisting with and teaching courses as a graduate student next year. I would like to thank Dr. Peca-Medlin and Dr. Upadhyay for running the program and Dr. Addabbo for being a fantastic instructor to work with over the last three semesters.