

UTA Program Final Reflection

This semester was my first time participating in the UTA program. I was a teaching assistant for MATH 511B (Algebra II) with Dr. Doug Haessig. My main responsibilities for this class were grading homework sets and holding weekly office hours.

Since this is a core course meant to prepare students for the algebra qualifying exam, there was a lot of assigned homework. Fortunately, this course also had a graduate TA who split grading responsibilities with me, so the burden of getting feedback to students was not entirely on me. I did not have much direct interaction with students in this class as most of them attended office hours by Doug and the graduate TA instead of mine.

When I took the 511 sequence, we used Aluffi's textbook, which develops the core concepts of algebra using basic category theory. Doug also used Aluffi for 511A but switched over to a more traditional book for 511B. This ended up working out well for me as I ended up learning more advanced Galois theory, which we skipped in favor of homological algebra when I was a student.

While this was my first time participating in the UTA program, I had been a TA twice before this semester (MATH 413 and 511A). I found the UTA program to be similar to my previous TA experiences for the most part. The calculus tutoring requirement is two hours a week on paper, but I rarely had anyone show up to my tutoring sessions. UTA participants are required to participate in the UTA seminar every week, but that does not count toward the seven-hour weekly limit for working, so it still allows plenty of time to complete TA responsibilities.

I would recommend the UTA program to all math majors, regardless of their career goals. Learning how to effectively communicate a technical subject like mathematics is a very useful skill for many professions and being a TA is a great way to develop it. I would like to thank Dr. Peca-Medlin and Dr. Upadhyay for running the program. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Doug Haessig for giving me the chance to TA for his class and being a great mentor.