### **UDiscuss User Guide**

Official Manual of the University of Utah's Discussion Board Website

December 2, 2022

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#### Introduction

#### What is UDiscuss?

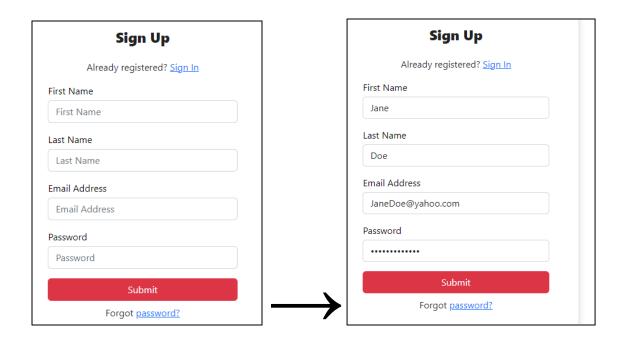
UDiscuss is an online classroom forum application that's purpose is to meet the discussional needs of students and their instructors in a straightforward manner. UDiscuss' main functionalities are similar to those already found in other forum applications, such as Piazza. It allows students and instructors to create questions and notes, while also letting them write questions and comments on existing posts. Students can post anonymously, send private messages to instructors, and edit posts using a rich text editor. To better understand UDiscuss, please navigate through this guide. You can click any of the questions in the table of contents to more quickly reach it in the user guide.

#### How do I sign up?

On the welcome page, click the button that says "Sign Up" in the bottom right corner.



The following page will be brought up, in which all fields are required. Fill them out, then click "Submit'.



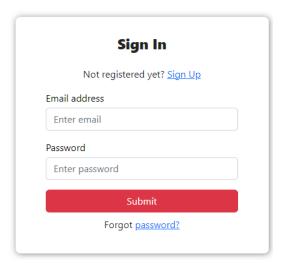
You will then be prompted to login, which is described in the next section.

#### How do I login?

You will automatically be directed to the UDiscuss welcome page if you are not logged in.



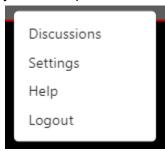
From here, click the login button in the bottom left. From there, you will be presented with this screen:



Now, put in your login details (keeping in mind you need to sign up before doing this step). Once you have done so, click submit and you will be logged in.

#### How do I log out?

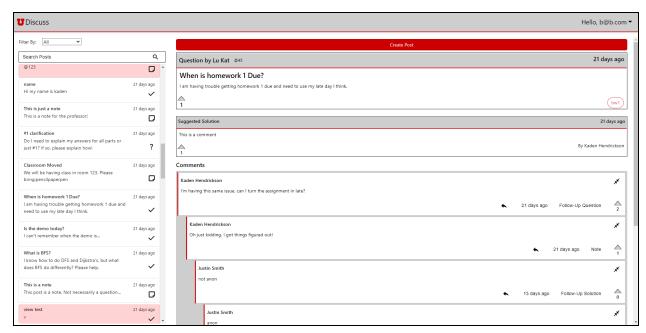
You can log out by clicking your first name in the top where it says "Hello, <Your Name>" and you will be presented with this dropdown:



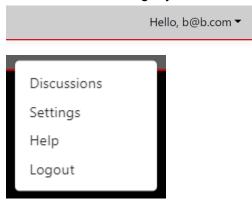
Then you select the "logout" option to log out of your account.

#### How do I navigate through the application?

When logged in, you will be directed to the main page called "Discussions":



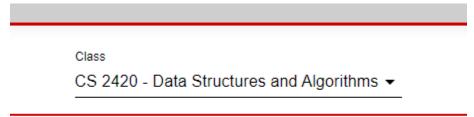
To participate in class discussions, all information you will need is here. However, if you'd like to change your settings, go to the help page, or logout, the dropdown at the top right that says "Hello, <name>" can get you there:



Note that <u>professors</u> and <u>administrators</u> will have extra dropdown options for managing courses and user roles.

#### How do I view posts from a different class?

To view a class' posts, <u>navigate</u> to the discussions page. There will already be a class selected by default, but you can change to another class using the "Class" dropdown at the top center of the page.



#### **Posts**

#### What is a post?

Posts are written by students and instructors in order to ask questions or make something known to the rest of the class.



A post can be of two types:

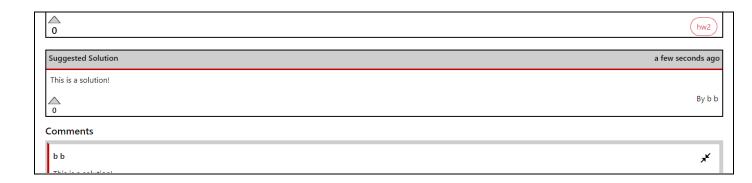
- A note is a post that other users may find useful to view and does not require a solution reply be written. However, it does allow for follow-up questions and notes in the comment section.
- A question is something that a user is looking for an answer to and requires the course staff or a member of the class to post a solution reply for it. Question posts allow for comments to be solutions, follow-up questions, follow-up solutions, and notes.

#### How do I view the solution to a question post?

If a post is of type question, then a solution box will be used for its best answer. If no answer is given, a post will be shown like this:

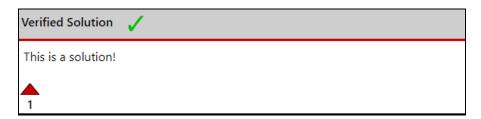


As you can see, it says no solution exists at this time. If a user is to <u>make a solution comment</u>, then a solution box will appear.



This solution is a "Suggested Solution", since it has not been <u>verified by an instructor</u> yet. When there are multiple solution comments, it will take the comment with the most upvotes and place it into this box.

After a professor verifies a solution, it will be brought up into the solution box if it wasn't there already. The "Suggested Solution" will now be known as the "Verified Solution".



#### How do I create a post?

A post can be created by clicking the "Create Post" button at the top of the discussions page.



When creating a post, you will be greeted with a myriad of options:



A post can have a number of options selected. The post has a post type that can either be a question or a note, as described in the previous section:

Post Type: O Question Note

Users have the ability to post anonymously if they wish to not reveal their identity to other classmates and the instructors when making their post. They can do so by simply clicking the "Yes" option for "Post Anonymously".

Post Anonymously: • Yes • No

Posts also have the "Share With" field that has a dropdown menu with 3 different options to choose from. This controls who will be able to see their post. The options are: everyone, which will be shared with everyone in the class; instructor only, and professor only.

Share With: Everyone  $\vee$ 

Next is the tag section, which allows the user to decide which class category (or tag) this post belongs in (refer to this section to learn more about tags). These categories are created by the instructor and usually consist of homework assignments, quizzes, and tests.

Select a Tag: hw1 ×

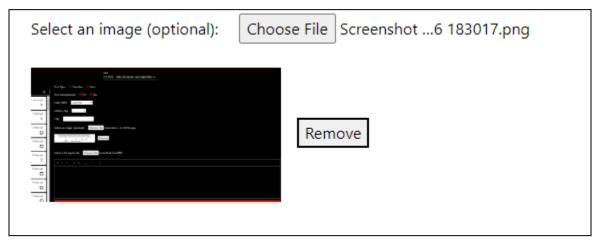
There is a textbox for the title which will be the title of the post that appears when a user is viewing the post on the post list or when the post is selected.

Title: This is the User Guide

The next section is for an image and is optional.

Select an image (optional): Choose File No file chosen

Clicking the button will let you browse your files and upload an image as shown:



You can click the remove button to remove the image as you please. Following is the file section, which is also optional.

Select a file (optional): Choose File No file chosen

As with pictures, you can browse through your files to select one and remove them as desired.

Select a file (optional): Choose File dark mode.png Remove

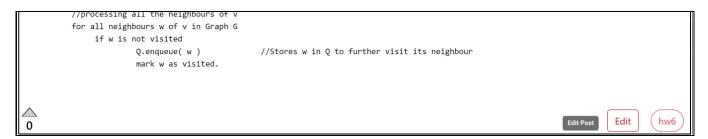
Lastly, there is the post description. This is a rich text editor and is where the description of the post goes. The post description will appear when a post is selected in its unabridged form and it will appear in a preview form on the post list on the sidebar. The description allows for rich text editing with the options shown below:



Once your post is fully written, click the "Post" button in the bottom left. Upon successfully getting uploaded, a "Success" message will appear and you will be redirected to the Discussions screen.

#### How do I edit or delete my posts and comments?

You will notice that there are edit buttons on the bottom of posts you have created.:



Similarly, comments have edit buttons as well.



Clicking either of these buttons will cause <u>post creation</u> or <u>comment creation</u> to appear as before. However, each will have a "Delete" option now.

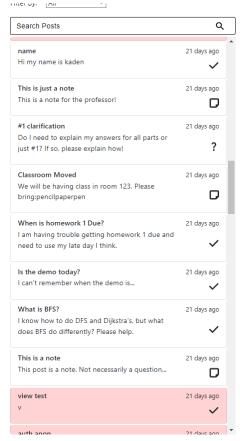


After updating a post, you can view the updated comment or post as before. If you are to delete a post, it will disappear and you will not be able to see it again. However, comments that are deleted will continue to show up, as well as the replies to them. There will be a deleted message in these comments as shown:



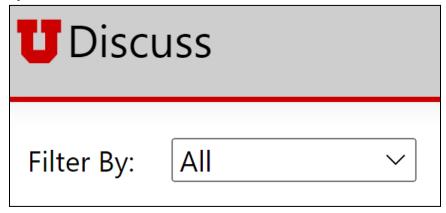
#### How do I view a different post?

You can view a different post by clicking any post in the post list, as shown below:



#### How do I filter through posts?

You can filter through posts by selecting the drop down in the upper right corner that says "Filter By":



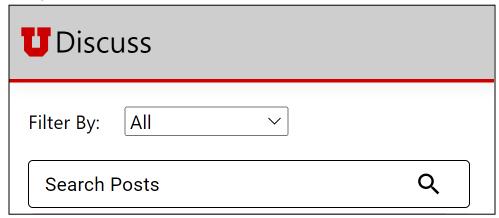
There are six different options to filter by:

"All" will display all of the posts in that class that you can view.

- "Unread" will only show posts that you have not yet viewed.
- "Unanswered" will display all of the question posts that have not been answered yet.
- "Answered" will display all question posts that have at least one answer comment to them.
- "Notes" will show all note posts.
- "Instructor Posts" will display all of the posts that were made by instructors.

#### How do I search posts for keywords?

To search posts for keywords you can use the "Search Posts" search bar that is located in the top right:



You can then type in the keywords that you want to search for in posts inside of this textbox. To run the search, you can click the magnifying glass or press the enter key. The search will display a post if each keyword is in the post's title, body, or somewhere in the comment section. To remove a search, simply press the X that appears after a search is underway.



#### How do I narrow down posts by using class tags?

At the top of the Discussions page, there are class tags (or categories) that each post must be a part of.



Clicking on a tag will narrow down the post list to have posts only in that category and will color the button red.

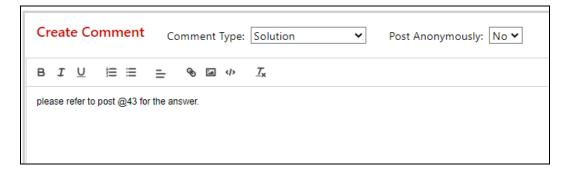


### How do I create a reference to another post in my post or comment?

Each post has a reference number that starts with an '@' and has digits following it. It is displayed in the header bar of a post and can be clicked to copy it to your computer. For instance, the post below has reference number @43:



Now, when creating a post or comment, you can simply paste in this reference. Alternatively, you can type out the reference:



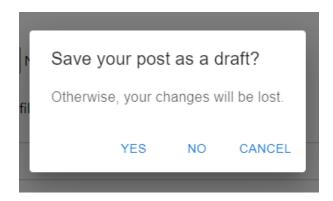
Upon creating a new post or comment, the reference number will now be a link:



Clicking this will redirect you to the referenced post (post @43) as desired.

#### How do I save a post as a draft?

Once you start creating a post,UDiscuss will recognize that a draft is being created. If you are to hit the "Save Draft" button, it will save your draft immediately. If you hit the cancel button, a pop-up will appear:



By selecting "YES", your post will now be saved!

#### How do I view and edit my drafts?

Along the topbar of the discussions page, there is a "Drafts" button beside the Categories:



Upon clicking the button, the posts in the post list will be removed and replaced with your draft posts for your class. You will notice that the button is now colored red.



Upon clicking any of your posts in the draft list, you can edit a post as before.

#### What do the symbols on posts mean?

There are three different symbols that appear in the post list items on the far right, like the checkmark shown:



The checkmark means that this is a post of type question and has at least one answer. A question post that is unanswered will have a question symbol as shown:

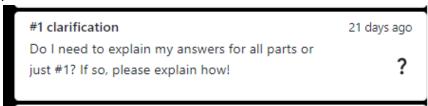


The last symbol is a notepad, which means that the post is a note.



#### What does the color of the post in the post list mean?

The posts in the post list can be white or red. White means that the user has already viewed the post.

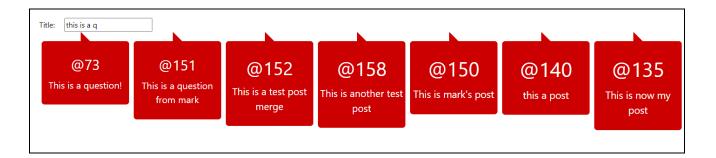


Red means that the post has not been read (or clicked) by the user yet.



## What do the growing and shrinking speech bubbles mean when I create a post?

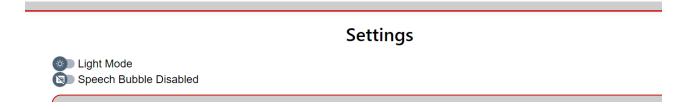
You may notice that there are speech bubbles that grow and shrink below your post title as you create it:



These bubbles contain posts that we believe may be similar to yours based on the keywords in each. If you think this is the case, click on one of the bubbles to view that post. It will ask you if you'd like to save your post as a draft and then will show you the similar post.

#### How do I turn the speech bubbles on or off when creating a post?

By default, the speech bubble feature for detecting similar posts is enabled. To turn them on or off, <u>Navigate</u> to the Settings and toggle the Speech Bubbles toggle.



#### Comments

#### What is a comment?

A comment is just that - a way to reply to other users.



You can reply to a post or to another comment There are four comment types:

- Solutions meant to directly answer posts marked as questions. They are only available
  on question posts and as top-level comments (a solution cannot be a reply to another
  comment).
- Follow-up Questions a way to ask another question related to the original post. They can be written in response to any type of post or as a reply to any other comment.
- Follow-up Solutions used as answers to follow-up questions. This type only appears when replying to a comment of type follow-up question.

• Notes - used to provide users with useful information. They are generally used for any type of comment that doesn't fall under the above 3 types.

#### Where do I view a post's comments?

In order to view a post's comments, you must first select a post. Once you have selected the post, you will see the information about the post such as its title, description, and other useful information about the post. To view the comments, scroll down to the section labeled "Comments" and you will see the comments as pictured:



#### How do I create a comment?

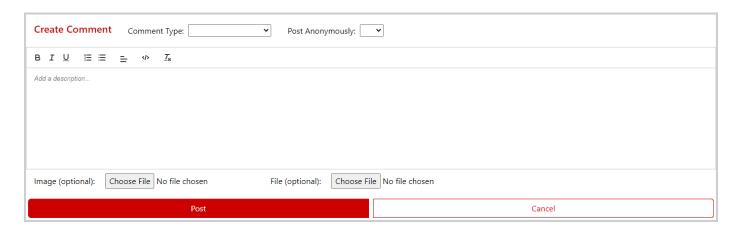
Create a comment by going to the comment section and selecting the "Add Comment" button at the bottom.



Alternatively, you can create a comment by replying to a different comment.



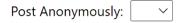
After clicking the button, you will be greeted with the comment creation text editor:



Each comment requires you to select its type in the top-left dropdown.

Comment Type:	~

To the right of the "Comment Type" dropdown is a "Post Anonymously" dropdown. You must select between two options - "Yes" and "No". By selecting "Yes", you will post this comment without your identity being shown.



You can now fill out the comment body, which has the same rich text editor that is present when creating a post. This allows for text to be formatted into different and more readable or fancy formats.



After you have added a description to your comment, you can optionally upload an image and/or file. This is identical to the process followed in <u>creating a post</u>.



Lastly, click the "Post" button to post the comment.

#### How do I collapse comments?

Comment threads can get very long. Sometimes it is easier to read through them by collapsing ones that a user has already read. Consider this example of a comment thread:



By clicking the two arrows pointing to each other on a comment,



The comment thread can be collapsed like this:



You can see that this comment thread has collapsed. The arrows now are indicating that if we were to click on them, the comment thread will expand again:



Comment threads can also be collapsed on any level. Given the original long comment thread example above, if you were to collapse one of the nested conversations it would look like this:



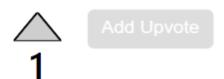
You can now see that this sub-conversation is out of the way, so you can easily view other parts of the conversation.

#### How do I vote or remove a vote on a post or comment?

If you would like to vote on a post or comment, you will see a gray arrow button in the corner of it:



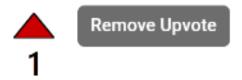
Hovering over this button will make it clear that clicking will cause you to make an upvote:



Upon clicking, the button will turn red and the total votes will increment!



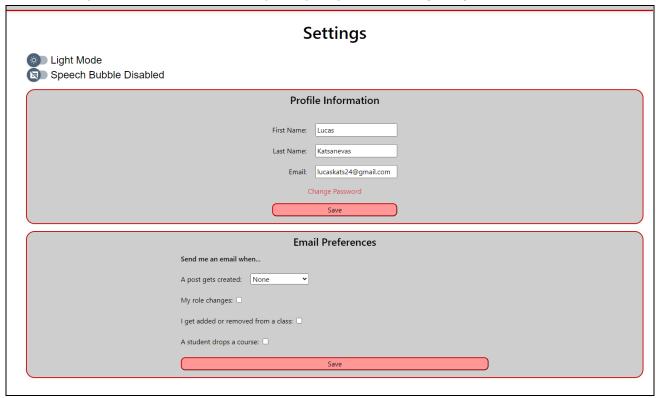
If you would like to remove a vote, you can click on the arrow again. Similar to adding a vote, hovering over the button confirms that clicking will remove the vote:



#### Settings

#### How do I edit my personal information?

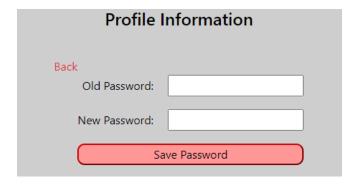
You can edit your personal information by <u>navigating</u> to the Settings page.



In the profile information box, you can change your name and email simply by filling out the text fields:



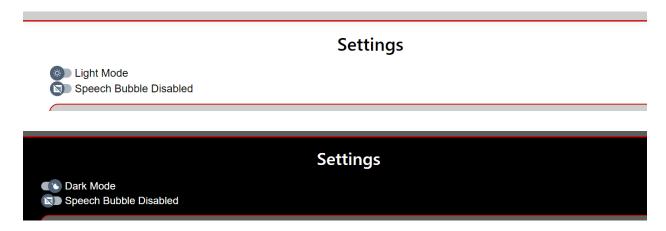
If you would like to change your password, click the red words. Two new textboxes will appear - one that says "new password" and another that says "confirm new password". Type your password into both these boxes:



Lastly, press the save button to save this information.

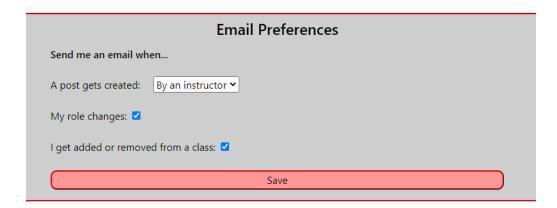
#### How do I toggle between light and dark mode?

<u>Navigate</u> to the Settings. Then, click the toggle button as shown below to toggle between the two:



#### How do I set my email notifications?

First, <u>navigate</u> to the settings page. On the settings page, there will be an email notifications box as shown:



The first field is for notifying the user when a post is created. This can be:

- None the user is never notified for posts being created.
- By Everyone the user is notified when a post is created by any type of user.
- By Instructors the user is notified when a professor or TA creates a post.



The next field is for role changes within a course. If you would like to get notified when your role is changed, you can check this field.



You can also choose to get emails for being added and removed from courses.



When you have finished setting your preferences, click the "Save" button to finish!



#### **Professors**

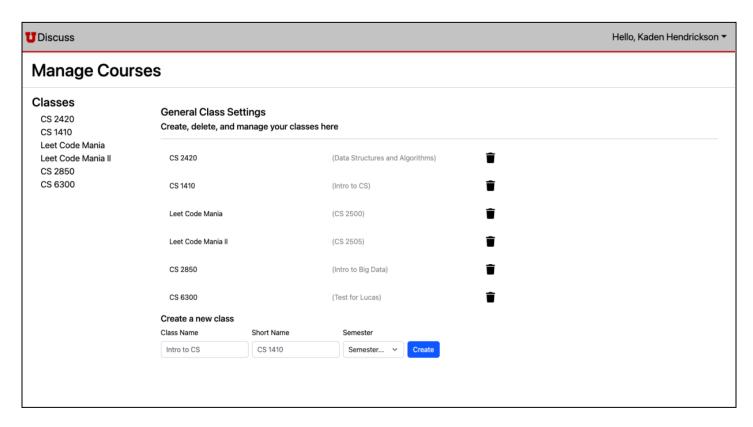
#### How do I become a professor in UDiscuss?

Sign up as any other user would. You will initially be in the system as a student, but will have to contact a UDiscuss administrator to have them change your role to a professor. If you do not know an administrator, please email <a href="mailto:temporary@utah.edu">temporary@utah.edu</a> to inquire about your role status.

#### How do I manage courses?

All course management can be completed on the "Manage Courses" page. To navigate there, click the dropdown in the corner that will now have the additional "Manage Courses" option:





#### How do I create a course?

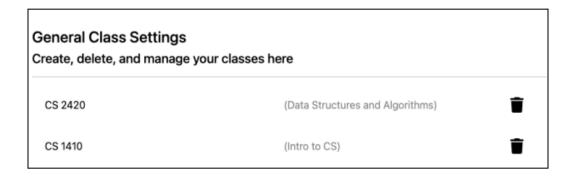
A course can be created by first <u>navigating</u> to the classes page. In the bottom textfield write the name of the class, write the short name, pick the semester, and then click "Create".



Your course has now been created!

#### How do I remove a course?

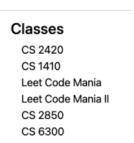
First, <u>navigate</u> to the class management page. For each of your courses, you will notice a garbage icon next to it.



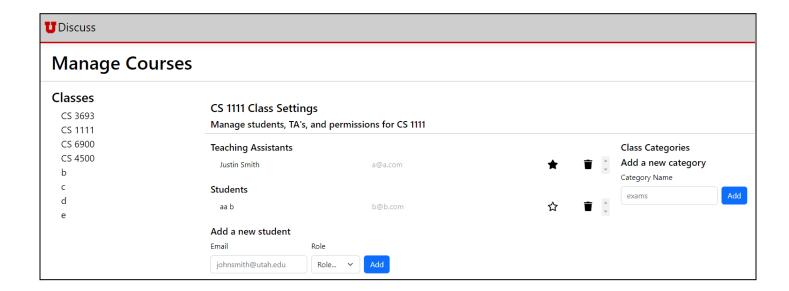
Clicking a garbage can will successfully delete the corresponding class.

#### How do I add and remove users from a course?

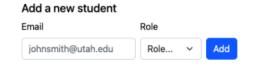
<u>Navigate</u> to the courses page. Start by selecting the course from the list of courses in the sidebar:



Then, you arrive at the page with all of the things related to the course.



Add the user's email to the "Add a new Student" section and select whether they are a student or TA using the role dropdown. Then, click "Add":



If you would like to remove a student, simply click the garbage icon by their name.

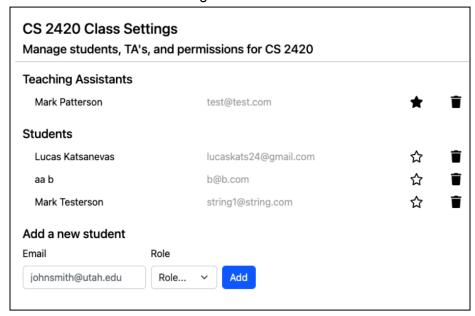


#### How do I promote a user to a teaching assistant?

<u>Navigate</u> to the courses page. Start by selecting the course from the list of courses in the sidebar:

# Classes CS 2420 CS 1410 Leet Code Mania Leet Code Mania II CS 2850 CS 6300

You will see lists of all teaching assistants and students in the center of the page.



To promote someone to a TA, go to the Students section and click the empty star.



As a result, the student's name will be brought to the Teaching Assistants section and the star will be filled in. Similarly, to demote a TA to a student, go to the Teaching Assistants section and click the black star.



This will cause the start to become empty again and the student's name will appear in the Students section.

#### How do I add or remove class categories for my class?

<u>Navigate</u> to the courses page. Start by selecting the course from the list of courses in the sidebar:

# Classes CS 2420 CS 1410 Leet Code Mania Leet Code Mania II CS 2850 CS 6300

On this page, you will notice the category tag section:



If you want to add a new class category, type it out in the text field and click the "Add" button.

# Add a new category Category Name exams Add

If you would ever like to remove a tag, simply hover over the tag and click the "X".



Note that removing a course category tag will cause current posts in it to no longer be associated with that category.

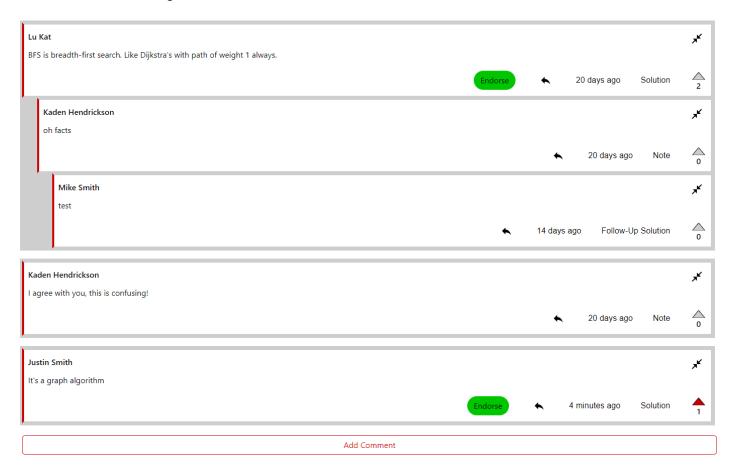
#### Class Instructors

#### How do I verify a solution for a question post?

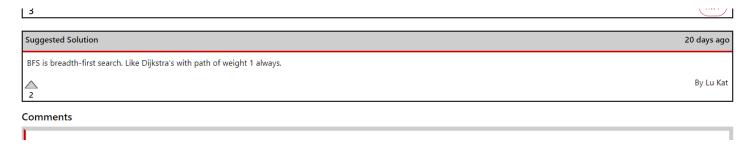
First, navigate to the desired post and scroll to the comment section. You can either:

- Write your own solution comment and verify it (see how to create a comment <a href="here">here</a>).
- Verify an already existing comment.

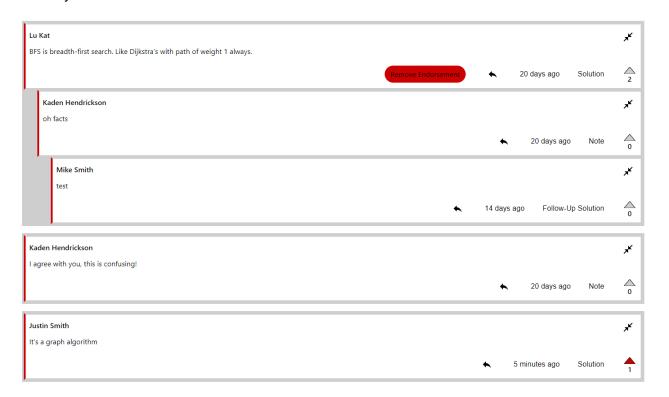
A comment can be verified only if its type is marked as a solution. You will notice that only top-level comments can be tagged as solutions - replies to other comments cannot be (see <u>solution</u> section for more information). Consider the post shown, where each top-level solution comment has a green "Endorse" button on it:



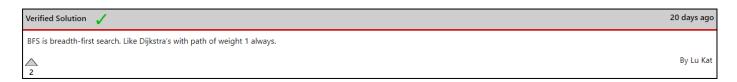
Also notice that below the post and above the comment section, the solution box currently has a proposed solution since none have been verified yet. This proposed solution is the top-voted one at the moment.



To verify a solution, click "Endorse". As a result, the verify button will go away on all comments and only a "Remove Endorsement" button will be shown on the comment that was verified.



You can ensure the new solution has been verified by taking a look at the solution box. It now has our verified solution in it and is marked as such.

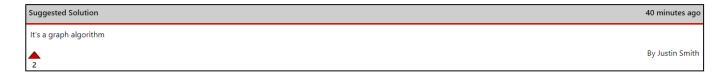


#### How do I remove a solution's verification?

Navigate to the desired post and scroll down to its comment section. Find the comment of the verified solution. It should have a red "Remove Endorsement" button on it as shown:



Click the "Remove Endorsement" button to complete this task. Notice that the solution box will now contain a proposed solution now and all of the green "Endorse" buttons will reappear on comments marked as solutions.





#### **Administrators**

#### How do I change the roles of users?

Click the dropdown button in the top right corner of the screen. Since you are an administrator, there will be an extra option called "Manage Roles". Click that option:



You will be redirected to a new page where all users of the system are displayed on one line each, as shown below:



If you would like to navigate to a specific user, you can scroll through the list.

To get to a user quicker, you can use the search bar to search for them by name or email. Do this simply by typing in and it will filter as you go.



To change the role of a user, click the radio button in the column of the role you'd like to place them in. The role the user had been in before will now be replaced by the new one.



Note that removing yourself from the admin role isn't possbile (the radio buttons will not appear).