

Covid Impact Project Submission

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Since Fall 2017, the third semester of my master's program, I've been tracking my work hours each week. My original purpose was to see how each semester broke down in terms of research, teaching, and service. I would compare each semester's balance to my relative happiness and stress for that semester in order to get a sense for what kinds of jobs I might be interested in pursuing after my PhD. I will be submitting charts with contextualizing information on how the pandemic affected my work, based on my records.

Background on my Tracking System

What has counted as "research," "teaching," and "service" has varied over the years.

Category	What It Has Included in the Past	What It Includes Now
Research	Time spent attending class, time spent on homework and course readings	Time spent attending writing workshop, giving feedback to workshop-mates, reading for my comps, reading and writing toward independent research projects
Teaching	Working in my campus writing center, time spent on TA duties	Teaching my classes, office hours, grading, preparing course materials
Service	My role as co-chair of the English Graduate Students Organization during my master's, my role as co-social media coordinator for a professional organization	Serving on various internal department and student organization committees, all union-related activities, attending department events, all work for my part time staff job at another CUNY school

From the beginning, I had a very small "Other" category that morphed into "Professional Development/Jobs." The professional development/jobs category is used to log hours spent attending workshops/trainings that are related to my career but not directly related to one of the other categories and hours spent applying to opportunities such as internships and grants.

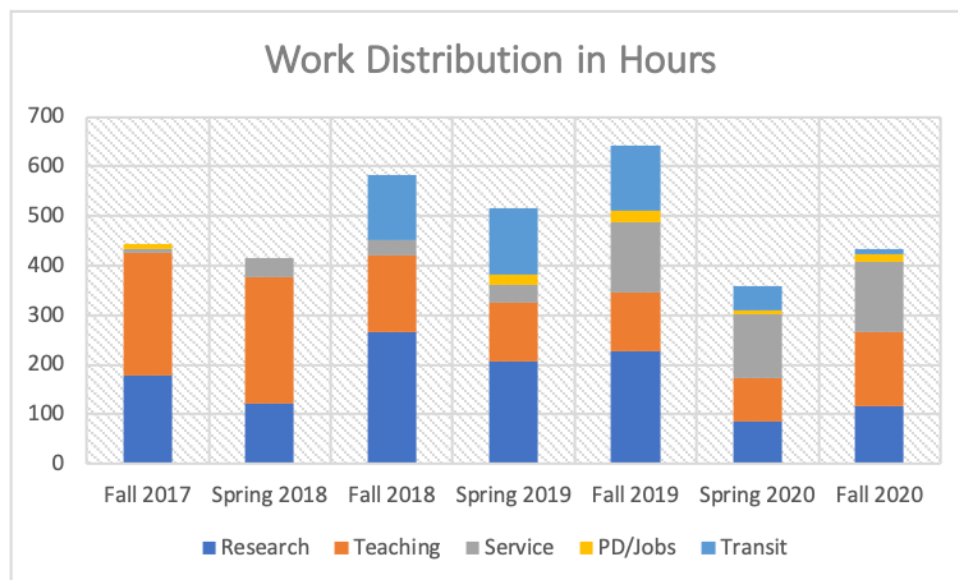
In Spring 2019, my second semester at the Graduate Center, I added a new category: transit. During my MA, my commute to campus was 10 minutes on foot. Now, it's an hour by train. The significant change in commute time, which was not captured in my Fall 2018 records, made me

decide to add this as a significant component of my “time spent doing work things.” The transit category only includes time spent going to/from work activities.

In Fall 2020, I added a new category to account for my time spent volunteering with a political organization I am a part of, a magazine called Left Voice. I have been working with them since Spring 2019. While this is not related to my academic career, I decided that not including it in my work log created a false impression of the amount of leisure/rest time I have. While I could quit this volunteering at any time, it is still “work” in that I have regular responsibilities that I have committed to.

A final note: I don’t track my work in the summer or over winter break, so while I did spend time on research and course prep during those months, they are not accounted for here.

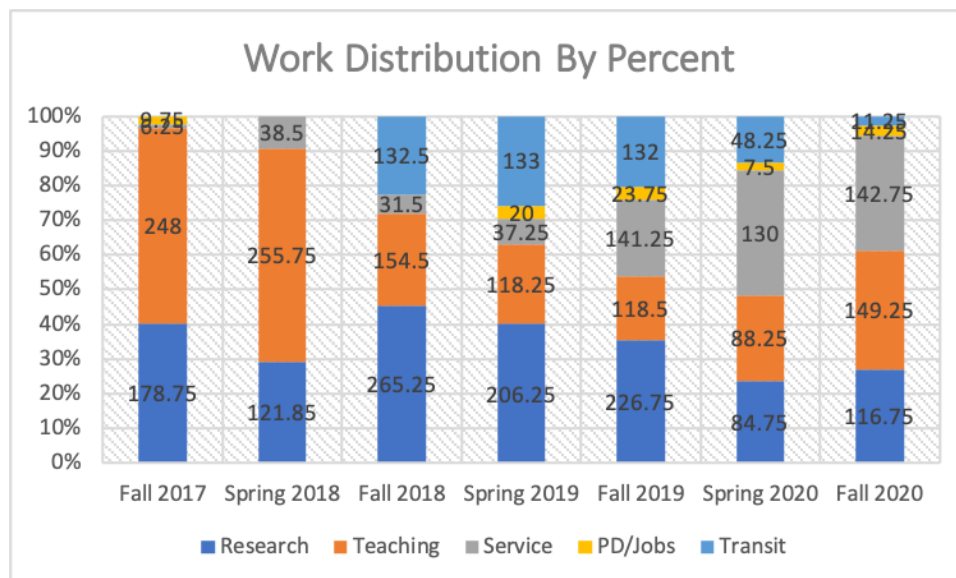
Overall Comparisons



In this chart, the “Transit” block for Fall 2018 is estimated based on the almost identical numbers for Spring 2019 (132 hours) and Fall 2019 (133 hours). Although I was working with Left Voice from Spring 2019 onward, I was only tracking that time for Fall 2020, so I have not included the hours for that category, since to only include it in one semester would be misleading.

As the chart shows, my total hours spent on work in Spring 2020 (when the pandemic hit New York) was only 56% of my total hours spent on work in the previous semester. For a reason I have not identified, spring semesters always seem to be less busy than fall semesters for me, but last year’s difference was much more pronounced. In Fall 2020, my workload sprung back up to being higher than several pre-pandemic semesters (Spring 2019 and Spring 2018) and in the neighborhood of the other pre-pandemic semesters, aside from Fall 2019, during which I was taking 16 credit hours of classes. Another factor affecting the change from Spring 2020 to

Fall 2020 is the fact that my partner and I moved over the summer, so we now have multiple rooms instead of both of us trying to work from a very small studio apartment.



How my work was distributed percentage-wise was also influenced by the pandemic. Beginning in Fall 2019, “Service” was already becoming a significantly larger category, due to my starting a part time staff position that I put under this category. However, while the total number of hours contracted from Fall 2019 to Spring 2020, “Service” began taking up a much larger percentage of my total work time during the pandemic. This happened for a couple of reasons:

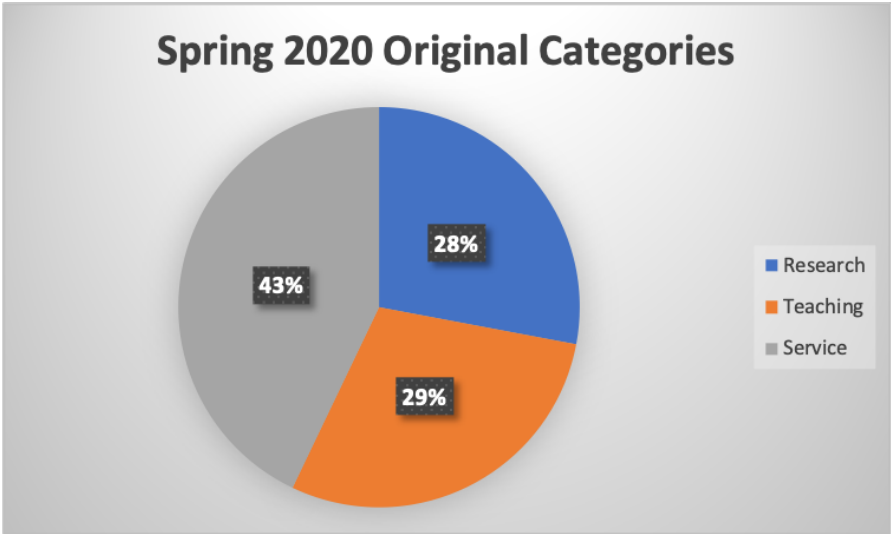
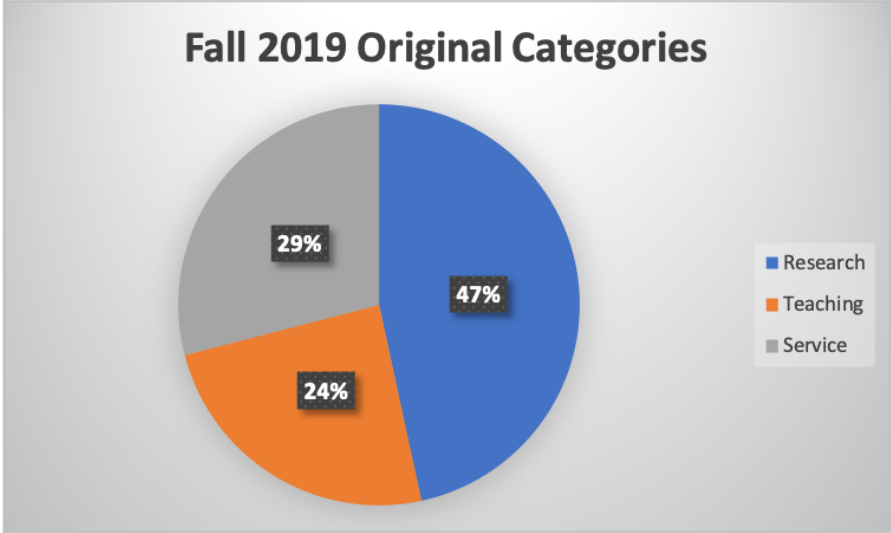
1. Transit was necessarily a smaller portion, since I was only commuting for a month and a half of the semester before we went into lockdown
2. Spring 2020 was also my first semester out of coursework, and that combined with the pandemic meant I did not transition well into making time for independent research (reading for my orals).
3. I had already been teaching using the CUNY Academic Commons since Fall 2019, so my transition to fully-remote teaching was easier in Spring 2020 than for many people, since I already had a class site that my students already knew how to use. So, I did not experience the increase in teaching workload that many people did during this transition.
4. My staff job at CUNY is providing technological and pedagogical support to the OpenLab at CityTech, which is similar to the Commons, so my workload did increase there as we helped faculty and students transition to online learning.

Before-Pandemic, Beginning of Pandemic, Middle of Pandemic

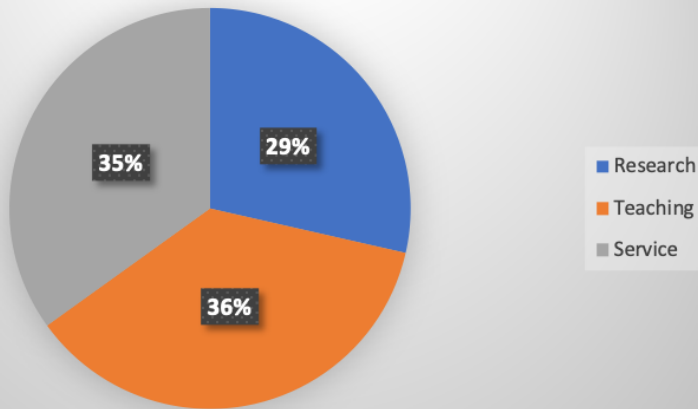
During each of these semesters, I had the same teaching load and same part time job. The primary difference, besides the pandemic, was that Fall 2019 was my last semester of coursework. Since then, I have been preparing for my oral exams. Additionally, in Fall 2020 I

taught a new class with a new curriculum that I hadn't taught before, explaining the additional portion of time dedicated to teaching.

Original Categories Only

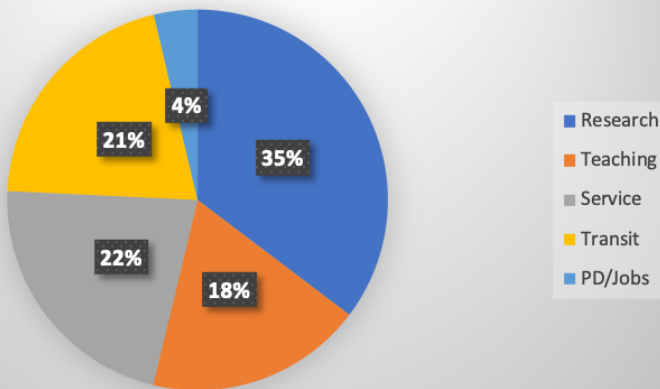


Fall 2020 Original Categories

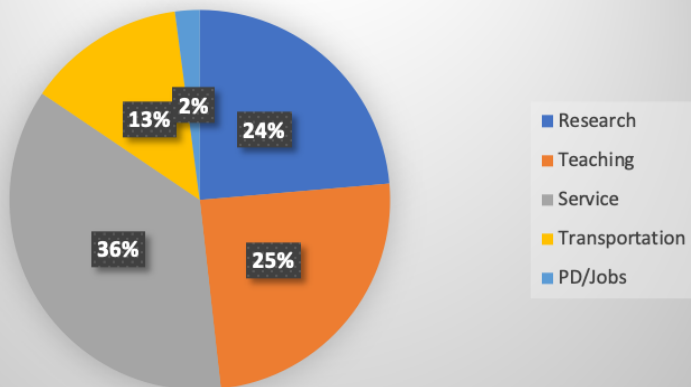


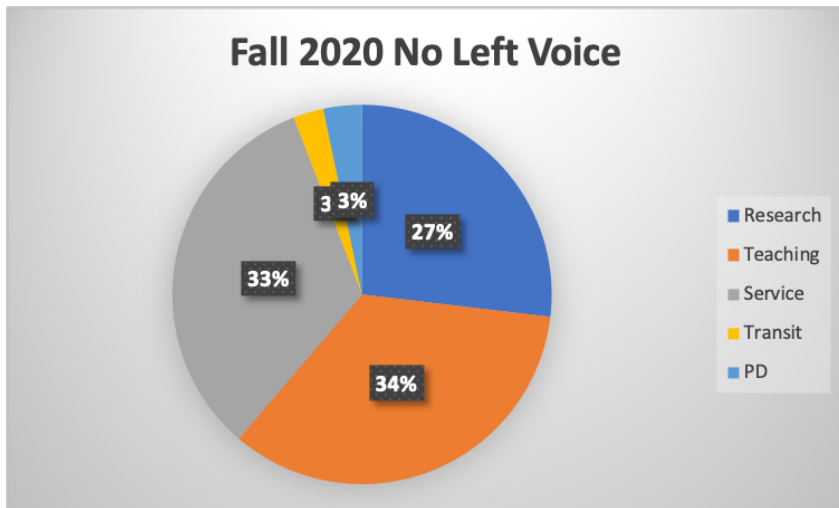
New Categories

Fall 2019

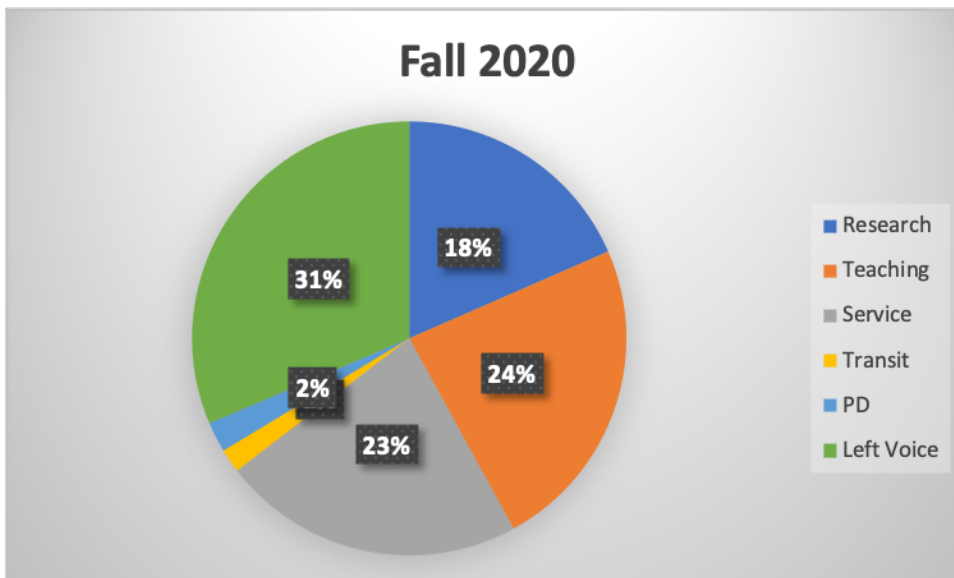


Spring 2020





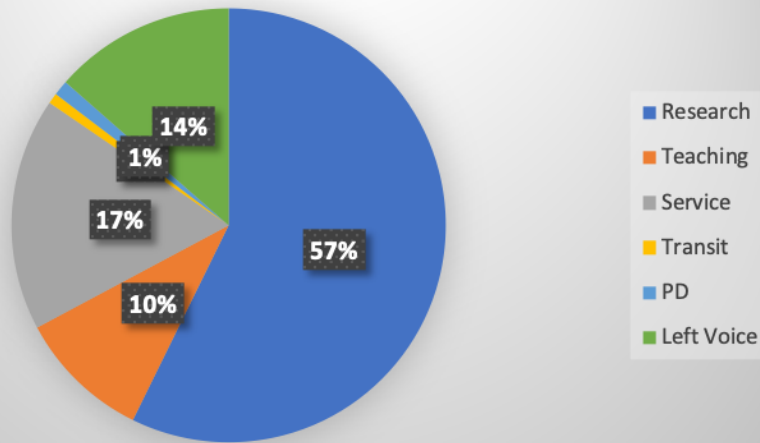
With Politics



The balance for Fall 2020 changes significantly when I add my political work to the mix. During the pandemic and economic crisis, politics has frequently felt more important than school and work. I write and edit for the Left Voice website, and during this semester, I was also co-facilitating a study group and meeting weekly with a separate internal discussion group. Had I been tracking my time spent on political work in Spring 2020, I think the portions would have been similar.

Spring 2021 So Far

Spring 2021 Through March 1



As you can see, the distribution of my work has changed significantly this semester. During the first year of the pandemic, I spent very little time on reading for my oral exams, largely due to stress and devoting time to politics and union work instead. I missed my intended deadline of taking my exams before Thanksgiving, and so I set a new deadline for before spring break. Reading for my exams has taken priority this semester, and I cut back on my political work significantly.

Additionally, we are currently less than halfway through the semester, and I have already worked 70% as many hours this semester as I did during all of Spring 2020. This is partially due to the time pressure of working under a deadline, partially due to how I've adjusted to pandemic living, and partially due to the fact that the virus is better understood and better controlled now—the hospitals are no longer overflowing.