How many times have you heard a student, or anyone, for that matter ask why they need math? That's what high-tech calculators and computers are for! But what happens when what you're trying to solve is not a sequence of numbers but rather a number theory? That's why students take Dr. Whittlesey's classes. He makes abstract concepts tangible and shares the many ways in which math is applied to our daily lives.

For example, he showed students how spherical geometry can be used to find the flight distance between two cities, determine sunrise and sunset, navigate using stars, and study x-rays. One of his students said, "The night sky will never be the same to me again. Every time I look at it, I am reminded of all the angular spherical trigonometry found within it."

It is this type of appreciation for math that Dr. Whittlesey tries to instill in every student that takes his upper division classes. To assist with learning and retaining complex theories, he incorporates interdisciplinary applications and asks students to deliver oral presentations. To generate and decipher proofs, he employs a "discovery process." This process helps addresses his concern that students can understand a proof in a textbook but have no idea how it was constructed or even how to construct one themselves. Through his method, Dr. Whittlesey shows students how the proof was discovered and illustrates the thinking required to write proofs.

With every lecture and discussion, Dr. Whittlesey strives to make mathematics accessible and to impart his passion for the subject. His students describe him as "very down to Earth" and cite his ability to provide "tremendous insight" into the practicalities of math.