

I had always been interested in technology as a child. When I first got a hand-me-down digital camera around age 6, I began making stop-motion videos using lego sets I had built. This curiosity with cameras lead me to take a photography class my freshman year of high school, where I fell further in love with cameras, but not photography itself. I had continuously made videos throughout this time, and naturally gravitated towards videography. While taking a bunch of prerequisites as a computer science major at the University of South Florida, I decided to register for digital video 101 type course. I began shooting video all the time, but realized I wasn't where I needed to be.

As I reflect on this chapter of my life, I realize how much I learned — especially outside the classroom. Understanding that I wasn't satisfied with my degree and choice of institution, I made the decision to transfer to the New Media department at the University of Tampa — which altered the course of my life. I felt incredibly off-balance during this time. I lost a year and entered as a sophomore, attempting to integrate to a new campus while feeling creatively lost.

FMX 210 with Allen Hampton was the first class which broke me out of my shell. From a creative standpoint, I was able to use tools that I was familiar with, like Photoshop, as well as others I had no experience with, such as html coding in Dreamweaver and Illustrator. The techniques I learned motivated me to use the wide array of software in Adobe's Creative Cloud and develop my own creative styles. This has aided with creating cover art for music, social media marketing, and visual effects creation. Through FMX 310 and 311 with Santiago Echeverry, CSC 101 and 102 with Dr. Lori Jacques, I have done more coding than ever before. Creative Coding was especially interesting because I had never used Javascript in web development with the purpose of creating interactive art. Anyone who knows Santiago has probably experience his brutal honesty. His no-holding-back critiques have helped me accept criticism and conceptualize my art at a deeper level, which has proved invaluable in my journey. His emphasis on shameless self promotion has encouraged me to always share my work without feeling anxious.

Experimental Filmmaking with Warren Cockerham was the class where the intersection of video and new media clicked for me. I experimented with manual data moshing using Avidemux — an outdated video editing software which allows users to exploit video corruption. I also became very familiar with After Effects in regards to Rotobrush 2.0 and pixelization of video footage. Warren's teaching style furthered my conceptual design when it comes to capturing and editing video. He showed us works by Hito Steyerl which have become personal favorites and sources of inspiration for future projects.

Spatial Computing and Virtual Production with Gregg Perkins opened the door to a new world of visual creation through the learning of Unreal Engine. These courses changed my perspective on how to use new media, and allowed me to experiment with new creative processes. Through these courses, Gregg has turned into a mentor who encourages me to find various ways of using new media which may seem abstract or unconventional. This has lead me to experiment with digital creations using Unreal Engine, After Effects, Photoshop, Illustrator, and Premiere.

Throughout this time, I've maintained contact with Travis House — a friend, collaborator, and mentor for me in the audio production and engineering world. His guidance has lead me to open Logic Pro every day and produce, engineer, write, or record music. This encouragement gave me the drive to independently learn digital and physical music creation techniques. After interacting with Dr. Blackburn from the music department, I decided to create the UT Music Producers, an on-campus organization with the purpose of giving music producers at the University a place to learn and collaborate. Through the connections I've made as president of the UT Music Producers, I've built a local network of producers and artists who are encouraged to collaborate and get songs ready for release together. Through this collaboration, I've been able to focus on everything I've learned throughout my journey in music, rather than everything I have yet to learn. This has improved my confidence significantly when it comes to music creation.

Just a few days before I sat down to write this, my girlfriend told me something which reminded me I'm on the right path. "When you transferred to UT, the passion for everything you do increased so much." I've always lacked self confidence, no matter how hard I try to hide it. Making music or sharing my portfolio used to exacerbate this feeling for me. If there's one thing that this department has given to me, it's the feeling of loving your work to the point that other opinions don't matter. I wake up every morning and do what I love to do, whether it's university related or a personal project. My work when I first arrived at UT and my work I've been producing these last few semesters are light-years apart in quality, concept, and confidence. I've taken more creative risks and as a result have seen the most creative development in my life. I'm excited to see how my work continues to evolve once my time at UT is complete.