

Reflection Paper: Kobe V Vance

In my time here at UNA, I can't even begin to describe all of the moments that have molded and shaped me into the person I am today. I'll try to hit some of the major points, influences, and persons who made the largest impacts on my life.

Going back to Freshman year, I came to UNA as a film major. I had taken courses in high school that taught me how to think critically, edit video and photography, and write narrative stories.

These are all skills that I would say come to me naturally, however taking these courses really pushed me to think creatively for what major I wanted to be. Film seemed like it was the perfect avenue to pursue this. That mentality held up until I took my first film class and realized just how focused film was around group work. I am awful at group work. I have my own ideas and like to attack projects in a very specific way that others may not share the same vision. It's hard for me to get what is in my head out there for others to see until the project is finished.

Additionally, I learned through other film majors that standard shifts on set would go for around 12 hours, which directly competed with the 9-5 life I would like to live post graduation.

Inevitably, I began talking to others about what other majors there were. Considering I had already done an internship in television, I chose to switch to RTI. This would change everything for me.

My first class in RTI would be Com 241, Intro Radio Production. At the time, there were certainly no television courses available to try, so I dipped my toes into the waters of radio. I

didn't think much about it going in, however, after that first semester, I had realized how great it was to produce audio. I fell in love with the ideas of radio and what it meant back years ago. Dr. Sanders always pushed me to try new things, and I really enjoyed just how creative the class would allow us to be. I met several very influential people to my life through this course as well. Like-minded students such as Spencer Brooks, Jacob Barnett, Kiana Ray, and Hannah Bridgemon were just a few of my new peers, and as we went through the class we all banked ideas off of each other. Each of us had our own strengths and weaknesses. Some people were really into ghost stories while all I really wanted to do was edit and make it worth listening to. Scripts I still have in my collection to this day came from this intro class, and I am currently re-writing them to better fit my current abilities as a producer.

Similar ideas can be said about the Advanced Radio Production course. This time around the stakes were higher and the content was so much more focused on quality rather than quantity. I had gained inspiration from the first class, but this course gave me the direction I would go in. I also began taking courses such as Com Theory and Media Crit this semester, so ideologically, I was at a point where I could explore deeply what radio really meant and how it could impact a community. I thought long and hard about what content I enjoyed to create. In some ways, I became very cynical about radio and it's current state. I grew to really despise corporate radio business models and how they would buy out community-based, family-owned radio stations and flip them into a corporate shell of a broadcast antenna.

Fueling my creative side, I had taken on a minor in photography, which allowed me to step back from audio now and then and tackle communication with another voice. I had been doing photography for several years by this point, and being able to really connect with that art style and get a grasp on my artistic ability allowed me to have an avenue to display things on a screen or print. I began to connect my art with my skills in radio and suddenly I had this new way of presenting myself. The two seem very exclusive of one another, however, I can see myself filling a niche market if I ever did go into any type of reporting or documentation. My ability to not only tell a story through dialogue but also through print could transcend mediums and bring my work to a different level than those of my peers. I had a skill that really set me apart. I can use it for so many things and I am excited to see where that can take me in my career.

Probably one of the largest influences on my pathway here at UNA would be Viktoria Piepke. Her guidance and friendship were crucial for me to take courses that not only did I need, but also would help me grow as a person. The best example of this would be our class in Media Management and Diversity. This course was exactly what I was looking for from my degree, and I really wish there were more like it to prepare me for the workforce. What point is there really in having a degree in radio broadcast? It's most certainly so that when you do get into a position of promotion, you can have the skills needed to lead a station. Dr. Sanders gave us all the ability to approach our future careers as managers would. We discussed workplace policy in a way none of my other classes laid a finger on.

Where I believe UNA really missed the mark is with Com Law. Yes, understanding and interpreting the first amendment is so important, however, I would find it so much more useful if we were taught the rules of our specific jobs we were going into. I have only the most basic of understandings about FCC regulations, and I am expected to go into the workforce in a couple months. This is ridiculous! We touched on PROs for a clip of a section of a power point presentation. I took a course through the entertainment industry and learned more about licensing than we ever touched on in all my broadcast classes. If it weren't for those professors in IE explaining basic laws around copyright and PROs, I would not have had a grasp on how to actually pay for song usage. This is the stuff we need to be sat down and taught here in the communications department. With broadcast, there are so many tedious rules, I understand if we can't learn them all, however, being left in the dust on so many topics is rough.

My internship with Big River Broadcasting was not on par with how I should have allowed myself to intern. This most recent summer, I did a brief two-week internship at Mississippi Public Broadcasting to get more experience in the workplace, and I learned more in just a week there, than I did from my entire internship at BRB. Fletch was a great guy, however, any time I went in, I would effectively have to dig to find something worthwhile. I was only on air once for a weekend night, and that was voice tracked. I had no experience sitting behind the board. At MPB, I was able to be live on air for several hours, produce a commercial from scratch, edit down full hour-long broadcast episodes into 1-3 minute packages and grew my network by a dozen people that I know I can rely on. Had I spent my summer living back home and done my internship there, I would have been so much better off and gained exponentially more

experience. At the end of the day, I can not blame Big River for hindering my internship, as I did actually learn about the business through discussions. I gained an understanding of why things were done the way they are. The intellectual side of me came out of that internship glowing. I just wish I had been given more of an opportunity to produce, as my career benchmark is going to be as production manager for a station.