

Personal Statement

Name

Film & Television MA

My motivation for applying for the Film and Television programme at the University of Bristol rests on my innate curiosity about exploring and sharing various social issues, coupled with an equal amount of scepticism towards them. Living in a world that is awash with conflict, prejudice, and misleading information, I have developed this proclivity to get to the bottom of an issue, find out what lies beneath the surface, and share that to achieve a beneficial impact. While this process may come across as something far-fetched to many, in my case, it mainly comes down to interviewing other people, listening to their stories, and publishing them through certain media outlets, all of which gives me huge satisfaction as well as a deeper understanding of social issues and humanity.

Throughout my undergraduate years at the University of Queensland, I have been constantly striving to acquire as many experiences and skills as time would allow me to. I did several journalistic reports documenting the real-life experiences of the oppressed, one of them being an interview with two Ukrainian asylum seekers in Australia. At the onset of the Russia-Ukraine War, many Ukrainians fled from Ukraine to Australia to seek asylum, and I had the fortune to interview two of them. Iryna, my first interviewee, was forced out of employment when Russia invaded Ukraine. Prior to that, she hosted and co-produced many renowned television programmes in Ukraine, but her career and life came to a halt when the war pervaded, forcing her to come to Australia with her daughter in search of a better future where she no longer had the same socioeconomic status and had to work in a warehouse and restaurant. "It is what it is at the end of the day; you just have to suck it up and be strong," Iryna said as she reflected on her downhill journey. My second interviewee, Dasha, left Ukraine because she had to give birth to her child, something that could not be safely done in Ukraine given the circumstances. Endeavouring to learn to speak English and pursue a career as a pharmacist in Australia, Dasha expressed that she will never disappoint her family. Conducting and documenting these two interviews not only gave me satisfaction because of their societal significance but also taught me a valuable lesson through the lens of the oppressed: embracing tenacity under the relentlessness that life presents. Being able to do things a journalist is supposed to do is one thing; seeing the world through another person's view is another, the latter of which, in my view, is of great importance to people working in the media industry, even more so than the fundamental skillset of a journalist.

While the humanitarian crisis is one of the topics I have covered, social stability is yet another fascinating topic that I have addressed. In September of 2023, I was assigned a project in which I was required to write a report on a crime case, explaining why the crime rate is increasing in Australia, so I went to a local court near my campus and eventually decided to write on a young male charged with 23 accounts of larceny and vandalism. During the proceedings, it turned out that the perpetrator comes from a violent, drug-infused household, which might have contributed to his wrongdoings, according to his attorney. Unsure of how to rationalise such an association and the increasing crime

rate in Australia, I interviewed two experts from the China University of Political Science and Law, who revealed to me that neglectful parenting and domestic violence go hand in hand with delinquency in adolescents and young adults; moreover, higher crime rates are oftentimes ascribed to higher poverty rates, lower literacy rates, and social schism. Through completing this assignment, my overall competency as a journalism student improved in terms of writing skills, editing skills, reporting skills, and news sensitivity. It also dawned on me that it is essential to be unbiased and obtain the whole picture when it comes to reporting factual events because there can be so much more behind the facade. The quintessential, deficit model-leaning narratives reinforcing and perpetuating the marginalisation and underrepresentation of criminals are hindrances to rehabilitation, let alone of any use, something that I found to be invaluable to media professionals.

As my college years went by, it became rather obvious to me that the theoretical underpinning of my area of study was and continues to be an indispensable part of my journey to become a media professional. Taking courses such as Media Design, Social Justice Storytelling, Journalistic Narratives, and Data Journalism, I gained an affluent repertoire of journalistic knowledge, including communication laws, ethics, the ability to discern credible sources from misinformation and disinformation, ethnographic approaches to journalism, both content and thematic analysis, and editing, just to name a few.

Beyond the ivory tower, I obtained invaluable experiences and skills as well. It was not until I did an internship at Nanchong Radio & Television Station From October 2021 to January 2022 that I realised what truly constitutes a well-versed media professional. My main responsibilities as an intern editor consist of selecting news content, engaging with audiences, and drafting headlines. Although I was able to apply some of what I learned in school on the job, challenges remained. For instance, I had to go back and forth between my colleagues and supervisors on the selection of news content, which was not as easy as it seemed considering there are so many appealing topics out there and we could only choose a limited amount of them to report on. My team underwent a rigorous planning process where we analysed the correlation between the ratings of our channel and the content we reported on in the past, adjusted our strategies according to the pattern we found and the nature of our organisation, and ultimately succeeded in securing higher ratings and critical acclaim. This internship experience endowed me with tremendous refinements in my teamwork capability, flexibility, and leadership, enabling me to bring the theories learned into real-world practices and see what works and what does not.

I seek to establish reciprocity between the University of Bristol and myself, contributing to the ever-evolving tapestry of campus utilising my cultural competence, experiences, and skills while benefiting from the school's prominent programme and resources. I believe that the abundant course options complementary to my prior field of study will take my current understanding of the intricacies of media to a whole other level.