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Journalism and Media Studies M.A. Program: Reflecting on my First Year as a Graduate Student

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Here I am manning the front desk in the Journalism and Media Studies department

As I near the end of my first year of graduate school at the [University of South Florida St. Petersburg](#) in the [M.A. Journalism and Media Studies program](#), I'm taking the time (in between final projects and research papers of course) to reflect on a year of growth and education in the USFSP Journalism and Media Studies program.

Before I began my application process for grad school I asked myself a few questions:

- **What kind of program am I looking for?**
- **How many years do I want to spend pursuing a M.A.?**
- **Where do I desire to live during/post graduate school?**
- **How much money am I willing to invest in a Masters degree?**

These questions were completely different than the questions I asked myself as an eighteen year old high school senior preparing for my first year of college. The stakes are higher and the dreams are bigger, graduate school is the real deal and making sure that you know what you want in your personal and professional life is paramount.

After doing extensive research I was able to narrow down my choices to three schools and USFSP was a perfect match. I have enjoyed my experience at USFSP and the Journalism and Media Studies program has been everything I hoped it would be.

What are the specifics of the Journalism and Media Studies Program?

The M.A. in Journalism and Media Studies program provides career preparation in journalism while providing a foundation for those students who elect to continue their studies on the Ph.D. level, or plan to use the M.A. as a qualification to teach at the college level. Students are allowed to take classes part time or full time, the program also lets students sample the program by taking up to 12 hours of graduate credit as a non-degree-seeking student before being formally admitted. The full program is offered on the St. Petersburg campus, although students may choose electives at any USF campus with permission of their faculty adviser.

The Journalism and Media Studies Department offers two Master of Arts degrees: the traditional program in Journalism and Media Studies and the fully on-line Master of Arts in Digital Journalism and Design.

I'm enrolled in the traditional program which prepares students for careers in print, electronic and digital media or for college-level teaching. The traditional program has allowed me the flexibility to take online and face-to-face classes. The program normally takes two years to complete with a requirement of 36 hours. There are also several opportunities to work in the community, the Neighborhood News Bureau is a working newsroom that provides Journalism training for undergrad and graduate students.

Students also have the opportunity to study and work at the Poynter Institute. The Poynter Institute is a school for journalists, future journalists, and teachers of journalism dedicated to teaching and inspiring journalists and media leaders. It is across the street from the USF St. Petersburg's campus.

The Digital Journalism and Design program (DJD) is a fairly new addition. The program was launched in the Fall of 2012, and is a 30-credit program that is typically completed in a year and a half.



Working as a Graduate Assistant

Although a rewarding experience grad school is tough to say the least, the rigors of coursework, and trying to maintain a healthy social life can be a daunting task. Most graduate students work in addition to maintaining a half or full-time course-load, and depending on a graduate students course load and time constraints, the schedule can be grueling. I have had the pleasure of working for the Journalism department as a graduate/teaching assistant. As a graduate assistant I work 10 hours per week as an assistant to one of the faculty members in the department and as a friendly face for visitors and students who come into the office on a daily basis.

The experiences that I've had in this program thus far have been amazing and I can't wait to see what else is in store as I prepare to take on another year as a graduate student at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

About the blogger



Hi everyone! I'm Adrienne and I'm a second semester Journalism and Media Studies graduate student, class of 2014. I graduated from Clemson University in 2008 and I'm currently a Graduate Assistant within the Journalism and Media Studies program. I aspire to work as a broadcast journalist post graduation, concentrating in sports and investigative journalism.