

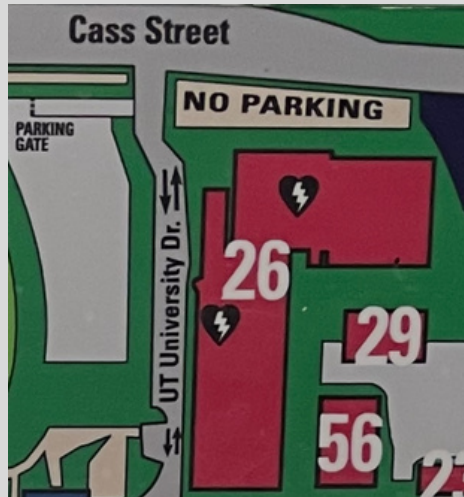
FILM MAJORING 101

INTRO:

UT: A SCHOOL FOR THE CREATIVE

In 2008, The University of Tampa would finish construction on the Cass Building, and it would prove to be one of its biggest expansions to the Communication department yet. The building is 50,000 square feet and functions as a place of learning and study for a few key parts of UT's offered curriculum. One of which is the extensive film program. Within the 20,000 square feet of the Communication wing, houses screening rooms, an equipment cage, theaters, and studios for writing, producing, and editing film. The Film and Media Arts Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Fine Arts programs are a significant part of UT, with certain strengths and weaknesses that come with the choice of study.

The Cass Communication building (26) as depicted on the campus map, at the corner of Cass Street and University Drive.



STRENGTHS:

ENABLING THE VISION

One of the best parts of the film program is how it enables its students to learn, analyze, and create. The "COM classes in particular" Ethan says "really dive into film theory" and "really gets your brain thinking about the theory behind the story it wants to tell", as well as things like what a film says about the society of its time. "Like for example, *The Grapes of Wrath*, which is another one of my favorite movies from the 40s, it really shows you what it was like living in the great depression. It's important to have those types of movies because they're time capsules." To elaborate, Ethan says that the film program "helps me look behind the history of what made these filmmakers write these films and work on them, and the cultural significance". He also cites the extensive amount of filming equipment that UT has, that "helps bring that vision to life." for lack of better phrasing. "We have, literally, \$50,000 cameras that they shoot movies with... like the RED Camera that they shot [*Transformers*] *Age of Extinction* with. We have that camera." Ethan says. Another example he cites is Maya, a 3D rendering software from Autodesk that costs a hefty \$5,000 a year, available completely free to students. He also enjoys the networking opportunities that it brings, mentioning a "tightly knit film community" here on campus, and the connections he has made, as well as being involved in film related ventures off campus, such as the Screen Door Microcinema in Ybor.

THE STAR:

MEET: ETHAN

Ethan Tamasar is a junior, Florida native, and Film and Media Arts major here at the University of Tampa. As one should expect he has great knowledge and passion for cinema. One of his most favorite filmmakers, and also one of his greatest influences, is an Iranian director named Abbas Kiarostami, who directed one of Ethan's favorites, a 1997 drama called *The Taste of Cherry*. The film deals with extremely dark and philosophical themes like suicide, and what it means to be alive, which are the kinds of films that Ethan has great appreciation for. "I really like those kinds of movies. The ones that have that philosophical edge without being too preachy or on-the-nose... and telling you life-lessons through its dialogue." Ethan also appreciates other directors like Michael Haneke, Akira Kurosawa, as well as Japanese and Korean horror movies and thrillers.

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WEAKNESSES:

SHARED ENTHUSIASM

“One of the most challenging things, in terms of frustration, is the people you are surrounded by,” says Ethan. “Actually, most of the time you are surrounded by people who are not passionate about film. They’re just there for a grade... They’re not there to really be invested in filmmaking, which is unfortunate, because film is an artform.” Ethan’s professors he has talked to share similar frustrations with the students who dismiss film as anything meaningful, and would rather spend their class time on their phones or laptops. Ethan also finds frustration in how some of the curriculum feels sanitized, to appeal to the majority of students with a more mainstream, blockbuster taste in movies. “A lot of times, he [the professor] will dumb down the class,

for lack of a better term, to appeal to students who are not really interested in cinema studies.

For example, instead of giving examples of movies that are groundbreaking to cinema and recommending those kids to watch it, a lot of times the professors will mention the newest thing that’s out that everyone’s seen. Like he’ll be talking about *Black Panther*,” rather than “scaring the class” with something like *Citizen Kane*. Ethan thinks that masterful directors like Akira Kurosawa, Orson Welles, and Alfred Hitchcock who “really built the foundation of what we have today” are being sidelined in favor of the current, “spectacle” based movies. “It can be really detrimental to people who can’t really learn new things because of it.”

OUTRO:

A KEY TAKEAWAY

If there’s one thing that can be gathered from all this, it’s that the film program of UT is worth your attention. There may be weaknesses among the strengths, but despite all of this, there still remains passionate young minds like Ethan (and he surely is not the only one) who dedicate themselves to the art of cinema, and are not deterred by any negativity that surrounds them. These minds are heavily supported by the vast amount of physical and digital equipment that UT arms them with, and no matter what the obstacle is, art always finds a way.