

## **Emily Hwang**

### **AURA Award Fall 2020 | Plum Media**

This fall semester, I participated in an internship with Plum Media, an organization run by two Rice alumni, Dolly Li and Joey Yang. Dolly is a video journalist that has worked domestically and abroad with the South China Morning Post and Al Jazeera and Joey is a digital technologist/designer who has experience with radio. Plum Media runs Plum Radio, a podcast that is focused on Asian-American politics, news and culture. The podcast features a diverse range of prominent Asian-Americans in several fields such as comedian Jimmy O Yang (*Silicon Valley*, *Space Force*), author Wendy Liu (*Abolish Silicon Valley*) and history professor Dr. Ellen Wu (*The Color of Success*) who I used as a reference in one of my ASIA 295 papers. Additionally, Plum Media is working on a documentary series called CHOY, which focuses on stories of Asian vegetables and farmers and how globalization has affected food production.

This internship has been an invaluable experience for learning about conversations in the Asian-American community, the process of producing a podcast, and careers in media. My main responsibilities throughout the internship included transcription of the podcast episodes and doing research for CHOY. After the audio recordings of the episodes were uploaded to an AI audio transcription service, I would take highlighted portions of the transcript, edit, timestamp, and compile them into a document that will later be published on the Plum Radio website for people to view. I completed transcripts for CHOY, the topics I researched include wormwood, soy, ginseng and rice. My goals were to understand the landscape of farming and the conversation happening around these crops, especially with respect to legislation such as NAFTA and how it has affected global farming. Additionally, I was responsible for finding potential sources and contacts. The most difficult part of

this research was finding relevant stories and people that could potentially be interesting to people in a documentary series. Hopefully, elements of my research will be used for future episodes of CHOY.

Due to COVID-19, the bulk of my internship was done remotely. I met with Joey and Dolly once a week to check in with my progress and the rest of my work would be done remotely and individually. Even over Zoom, I found it extremely valuable to be able to regularly meet with Dolly and Joey and directly learn about their working process and careers. One of my favorite experiences of the internship was working as a production assistant on the set of a DoorDash commercial at SouthernQ BBQ, a restaurant in North Houston (see photos below). Dolly was the director of the shoot and there was also a videographer and photographer. I have previously only had internships in software engineering, so working as a production assistant felt novel and enriching. Basically, as a production assistant I was there to assist with anything random that came up during the shoot, like charging batteries, approaching people to sign release forms, and moving things around. I'm extremely grateful to the Chao Center and Mr. and Mrs. Harry Gee for making this internship possible as I have learned many skills and information that would not be possible in the realm of my regular coursework.

Photos of the interview set-up at SouthernQ BBQ in Houston, TX:

