Essay 1:

Even as a young child, I felt drawn to color and music. My whole life I’ve been an audio-visual synesthetic, getting the experience of color from certain music and the experience of music and sound from certain visual things. It took me until High School to realize that everybody didn’t experience life the same way, and at that moment I was overtaken with wonder at the subjectivity of existence. I’ve also always been very interested in minimalism, the power of a simple color on white, or of a single note singing out-- BB King was always one of my favorite musicians for this reason. When I was younger I kept my visual artwork restrained to photography and graphic design, daunted by the pen and paper. That was the frame of mind I came to Purchase with.

Before I came to college I had taken a philosophy course that taught me about some of the range of philosophical ideas as well as the basics of a formal argument. My own philosophical ideas were furthered in my freshman College Writing on Rebels & Revolutions, which really helped me understand a lot of the intricacies of our American Capitalist Corporate system, as well as other modes of existence. In my Philosophy of the Environment class the following semester I was introduced to varying conceptions of time, space, and being, which not only deepened my philosophical pleasure in thinking about the subjective/objective experience, but got me thinking more deeply about the nature of time and space.

When I picked up the guitar in the eighth grade, I was instantly deeply drawn to it, and the expressive possibilities it presented me. For a long time I learned only
solo guitar with a teacher, and then on my own time. Towards the end of High School I procured and began learning how to play the sitar, an experience that immediately had a noticeable effect on my guitar playing and my understanding of music in general. In my second semester at Purchase, I decided I wanted to delve into Classical Guitar Performance, and hopefully, eventually, break into flamenco. I took Private Study and Intro to Sound Design at the same time, which really gave me a lot of time to focus on my music. In the same semester I took Design 1 with Carol Bankerd, a life-changing class. Carol's style of teaching with a focus on abstraction and the interconnectedness of the processes of thinking, writing, and making opened my eyes to a joy I had never really found before then, the sketchbook. I started with a little sketchbook and some pastels, and later moved into pens and pencils as well. At no point was I able to accurately represent reality with the visual arts, but Carol helped free my mind to explore abstract art. It was in this semester that I started to uncover the deeper connections between art and music that now drive me forward, the common ground of creative expression that is simultaneously pervasive and elusive; the more I dig, the more I find, and the less I understand. It was in this semester as well that I started to try using my synesthesia to inform my work, namely with my series, “The Characterization of Color”.

That same semester I took Directing the Scene II, where I realized that maybe diegetic filmmaking wasn’t the direction I was most interested in after all. The following semester I took Video Art I, which I enjoyed much more. I felt the freedom that Video Art provided, on both a material and conceptual level, and it appealed to me very much. I started a club that routinely goes on hikes, which I was able to take
advantage of in the filming of “Desire”, which was deeply informed by my widening understanding of complex philosophical ideas.

In the winter session my sophomore year, I took a study abroad to Roatán Honduras to study Coral Reef Biology and Ecology with Jan Factor. That study abroad taught me so much about underwater life and ecosystems, and only further deepened my interest in subjective experiences, especially observing the seemingly complex power dynamics at play on the reef. The same trip also made me acutely aware of the cost that our lifestyle has on the rest of the world, of the poverty that we’ve thrown other parts of the world into for the sake of tourism. These, and other problems, are things I hope to address with my work as time goes on.

I’m currently enrolled in Sound & Interactive Media and Crossover, among other classes. These classes are really helping me delve further into the world of abstraction, helping me find my footing and move confidently forward on my own path. Now I’m entering a period of convergence. Every day it feels that art and music move closer and closer together, or maybe I move closer and closer to the common ground between the two. The path is paved with simplicity and truth of expression, and every step I take brings me closer to an unknown goal.
Essay 2:

As I think about how I want to continue my student career here at SUNY Purchase, a bunch of things come to my mind. I've already declared a Biology minor that I plan on completing with Evolution, Scanning Electron Microscopy, or Animal Behavior. Having looked through the classes offered at this school I realized that I needed to get more involved in the Visual Arts department for my own edification, but I'm not yet sure how I will be approaching that. I may just declare a minor in the Visual Arts, but I was looking into the possibilities of an interdisciplinary degree, which I'll have to figure out moving forward. Regardless, if I can get into the VA, I hope to take some combination of Installation Art, Crossover II, a painting class, a metal shop class, and a wood class if I can manage it.

In the New Media department I’d be interested in taking advanced video classes, Digital Printmaking, advanced sound art and music composition classes, animation classes and Information Aesthetics, among others. I feel less drawn to specific classes in New Media because I’m so interested in a wide range of things offered, so I figure the classes that I take will end up being based on whatever is offered that particular semester. My main interest lies in music, science and the visual arts, all of which are addressed in different aspects of New Media. Growing off of that, I would love to get an internship with Discovery Channel or National Geographic, or some sort of nature themed media center. I could also approach an internship in a studio setting working on recording, mixing and mastering.
I’ve had a lot of ideas floating around for a senior project, my biggest problem is limiting my idea to something that would actually be possible given the constraints of time and finances. I definitely want to do work related to synesthesia, the degree of my implementation is what’s left to figure out. My goal is to recreate my own subjective synesthetic experience by creating works for multiple mediums that are all informed and interconnected by my synesthesia and presented in a unified manner. A major question to be answered with this project is “Can people find any truth in a recreation of a subjective synesthetic experience?” I would probably like to work within a space, I could make the space a single installation, or maybe some smaller interconnected installations within that space. In order to achieve my goal, I need to control all aspects of the space. I’ll have sound playing within the room, a larger sound piece creating ambiance while smaller sound pieces work with the larger sound piece to create separate yet connected experiences throughout the room. Working alongside the audio would have to be visual works that abstractly connect to the audio, on a micro and macro level. I could use any combination of paintings, videos, found or constructed objects, whatever. I would do extensive research into ideas surrounding synesthesia for the paper I’d have to write, and then try to use as many of those researched ideas as possible in the space itself. Once the space was created, I would make another set of works, probably a video and a webpage/site that go along with the installation. I accept that any success I have in capturing the synesthetic experience in the space would be lost in any video I would make of the space itself, but the concept itself could be translated across that boundary.
As I continue through my years here, I’m honing in on the information I need to take to further my own ideas. I’ve got everything I need at a basic level, these next couple years for me are a time to gain a deep understanding of the areas I’m focusing in on, and hopefully present a unified idea at the end of my career here.