

INTERRUPTED SILENCE

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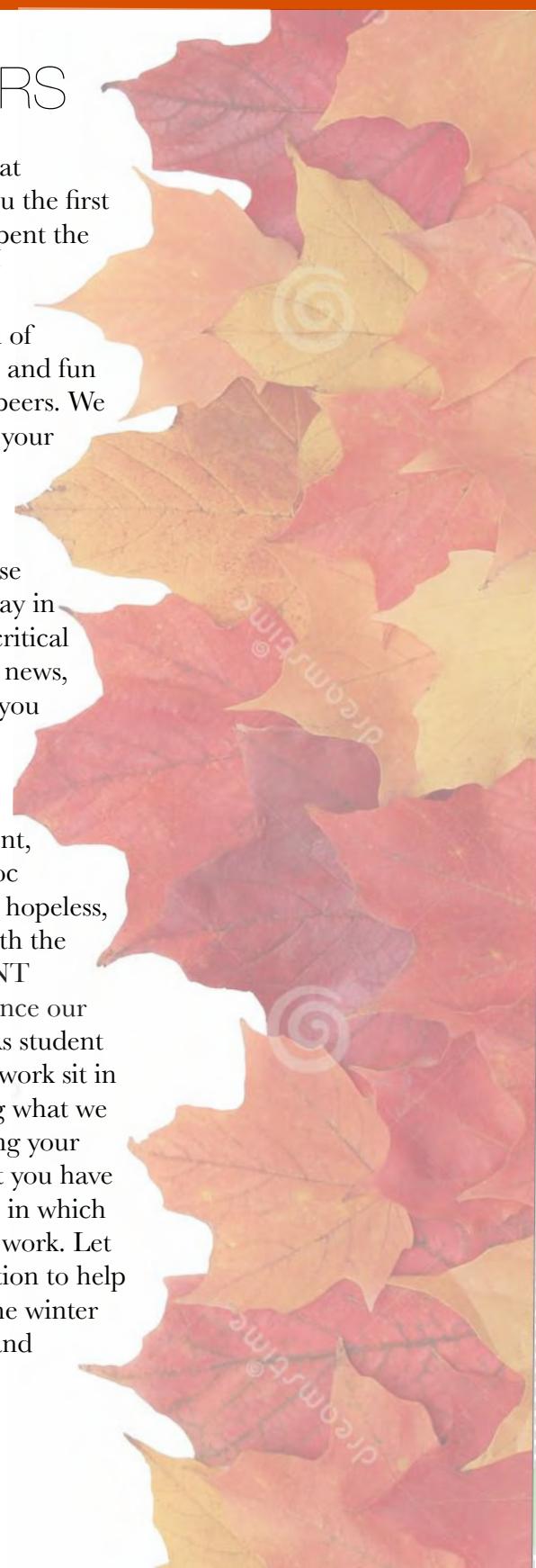
FROM YOUR EDITORS

A new academic year has begun, and we at *Interrupted Silence* are excited to bring to you the first issue of our third volume. Whether you spent the past ten weeks worrying about Bavaria or planning out your final senior capstone paper, we hope your quarter has been full of engaging discussions, rewarding learning, and fun late night study sessions with fellow INT peers. We wish you the best of luck as you finish up your quarter!

This issue features stories from Syria to Libya to Turkey and back to the US. These articles remind us that, as we make our way in the world, we should never let go of our critical approach. Question what you hear in the news, what you are taught, and what you think you know. Remember, there is always more than one angle to an issue.

Disheartening conflicts, disenfranchisement, human suffering, and environmental havoc dominate our news feeds. It is easy to feel hopeless, angry, and frustrated when confronted with the current state of the world. However, as INT students we know all too well how to balance our critiques with change provoking action. As student activists, we are unique in not letting our work sit in the books, but instead constantly applying what we learn to the real world. As you relax during your hard-earned month off, reflect on all that you have learned this quarter and brainstorm ways in which to apply it to your communities and your work. Let this reflection time be a source of motivation to help recharge your energies to come back in the winter ready to take on a new set of challenges and serve as agents of change.

Cheers.



The Orange Revolution: What Really Happened

By: Yuliya Ralko

First off, it is important to explain what The Orange Revolution is because not many people actually know about it. The Orange Revolution was a series of protests in Ukraine in 2004 and 2005. The Orange Revolution started in reaction to the alleged rigging of the 2004 presidential elections. This election was important for Ukraine because the previous president, Leonid Kuchma, was ending his last term as president of Ukraine. There was hope that a change in leadership would change the political and economic situation in Ukraine. Kuchma was accused of overusing his powers as president, and his government was known for its corruption.

In the 2004 elections, Victor Yanukovich (Kuchma's prime minister and successor) ran against Victor Yushchenko (a leader of one of Ukraine's main political parties). In the first tour of elections, Yushchenko won by plurality. When Yanukovich won by very slim margins in the second tour of the elections, Yushchenko and his supporters felt that the elections had been rigged. Many Ukrainian citizens agreed with this point of view because of the wide spread corruption inside of Kuchma's government, a part of which Yanukovich had played a large role. The Orange Revolution started in response to the unfair elections, and Yushchenko spurred it on with speeches that urged the people to rise up for change. The Orange Revolution grew quickly and gained support around the entire country. As result of the protests, the allegations over the rigged elections were brought to the Ukrainian Supreme Court. The courts ordered another round of elections which resulted in a victory for Yushchenko. Yushchenko's victory was not just an electoral victory, but also a victory of the people over corruption and an unfair political system.

In order to fully understand the importance of The Orange Revolution and its influence on Ukrainian people, it is essential to understand the political and social situation in

Ukraine after the fall of Soviet Union. The 1990s were a very difficult decade. Many people lost their jobs and were not able to find new ones. Crime rates were higher than ever before. Democracy was unstable, and everyone knew that politicians were using Ukraine's money for their own personal gain. When Yuschenko began to speak of change and a new Ukraine, people were eager to believe in him and in his promises of progress. Once during The Orange Revolution, I was waiting for the bus and an old lady came to me. She was wearing normal clothes, but had an orange pro-revolution ribbon pinned to her coat. She told me of how she believed that The Orange Revolution would finally make Ukraine into the country she had always hoped to live in, and how happy she was that she had lived to see this moment. This was a common sentiment at the time. Even those who were against the revolution and supported the old government, claimed later that they secretly hoped that Yuschenko would be successful in bringing change to the country.

Unfortunately, The Orange Revolution did not bring about the change it promised. It has only resulted in reversing the beliefs of most Ukrainians. Those who once believed in the power of mobilizations to create change, now do not believe that change is ever possible, with or without a revolution. When conversations arise regarding the future of Ukraine, no one has a positive outlook. This is particularly true for young people who feel that the only way for Ukrainians to get a better life is to leave Ukraine. Many young people who exit college believe that their diplomas are garbage and that there is no way of getting a job in Ukraine. This is problematic because these are the people that are most needed to build the country in the future. When The Orange Revolution ended and change did not come, people lost trust in their own power. This is the biggest problem facing Ukraine today.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Cortez Alexander

By: Gabriela Polo

Cortez's experience as a global youth ambassador for the organization *World Chicago* and his participation in the Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program helped him realize that he wants to dedicate his life to working with people from all over the world. His passion for international work motivated him to become an INT major. Cortez's concentration is Middle Eastern Studies and his minor is Arabic Studies. He speaks to us from Istanbul, Turkey, where he is currently studying, and shares valuable insights about his life experiences.

Q. What has been your favorite INT class and why?

A. Probably INT 203. This class challenged everything about the status quo and therefore challenged most things I knew. Even though Professor Gott may have thought I was daydreaming most of the time, I was often wondering what role I would play in challenging international perceptions and the role that activism would have in it. When I look around the world, social movements are now at the forefront of policy changes within different countries.

Q. What inspires you?

A. I would say it is a mix of the many family, friends, mentors and strangers that I meet. I am a person who firmly believes that you can find inspiration every day, you just have to look for it. I would say that I am inspired by my parents who work tirelessly to provide for me and my siblings and also by my close friends who work hard in their fields to make a name for themselves. Inspiration shows itself in many different forms. For example, when I was waiting in my dentist office, I started speaking to a random stranger. We spoke about life and what he sees as the future for inner-city Chicago youth. Before he left he told me "I don't know you that well, but I want to tell you to keep on doing what you are doing". Even now when I wake up in the morning to the Islamic call to prayer I realize that I am not at home. I am in Turkey, a place that I have worked hard to get to. Inspiration for me is a human experience.

Q. Tell us about your top 3 favorite experiences in Turkey.

A. Walking through Pamukkale: Pamukkale is a natural site located in the Denizli Province in southwestern Turkey. The area has many hot springs, travertines and traces of carbonate minerals left by the flowing water. Many people think that Pamukkale is a giant mountain with snow and hot springs. However, that is one of the greatest tricks of nature since it is not filled with snow at all. It is simply a mountain made of white rock that gets its color from the minerals. When I reached the summit, the view of Turkey was simply amazing!

Riding in a Hot Air Balloon: At 6 am while I was in Cappadocia, I took a ride in a hot air balloon. As I ascended into the air I was able to see the natural beauty of Turkey. Being high above in the sky, enjoying the warm rays of sun, made me appreciate being able to be here.

Getting Lost in Istanbul: I frequently travel to Taksim by myself just to get lost in the city. Each time that I have done so, I have found something new. In some cases, it may be a different path to get to the Sultan Ahmet Mosque or, in other cases, a nice tea shop on a small narrow street. The city's sights, sounds, and architecture captures me at every turn. The wide variety of smells and tastes of Turkish food seem to send my brain into sensory overload. Even the time of reflection that occurs when I am by myself is one that I value. I love getting lost in the city because there is always something new to experience in Istanbul.

Q. Any words of advice for INTers?

A. On the days when the papers seem to be stacked to the ceiling and motivation feels like it has disappeared, remember the reason why you chose to become an INT Major. I can remember the long study nights of INT 201 and always having doubts because it just seemed like too much. When my final was submitted, I was definitely a happy camper. Afterwards, I took the time to remind myself of why I chose this major.



Cortez advises INT students to never forget to pursue our dreams passionately.

Orientalism and the Portrayal of Libya in Western Media

By: Sofyan Amry

Nearly every Libyan household today possesses a loaded firearm. Qaddafi's war machine collapsed during the Libyan Revolution of 2011, leaving abandoned bunkers to be pillaged by the masses. During the revolution, opposition forces organized themselves into *katiba*'s, roughly translated as "militias". Many of these *katibas* were assembled by defectors of Qaddafi's military. Others, however, were a patchwork of students, engineers, and white and blue collar laborers. These citizens-turned-revolutionaries were hailed as local heroes for their NATO-assisted victory in toppling the 42-year old regime of Muammer Gaddafi. In the aftermath of the revolution, the Libyan State has struggled with interdependent crises: disarming the *katibas* or assimilating them into a cohesive national force, controlling the oil-based economy, providing security, and establishing legitimacy. The current Libyan government operates inconspicuously, reduced to its auxiliary functions. A skeletal police force barely manages traffic and there is virtually no army to speak of.

The above paragraph explores only some of complexities of the Libyan situation that Western media overlooks by continuing to generate headlines dominated by themes of doom and never-ending conflict. My objection is not to relentless journalistic pessimism per say, but to their Orientalist nature, as defined by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978). Said argues that knowledge is not generated in a vacuum of objectivity, but rather linked to structures of power. In particular, knowledge of the Middle East is based on a "subtle and persistent prejudice against Arab-Islamic people and their culture." Orientalism is a "mode of discourse supported by institutions" with its own reproduced imagery and vocabulary. The result in regards to the Middle East has been an enduring essentialism that imposes a static mode of existence on 'the Arab'. Orientalism limits the imagination of the Arab subject, which then looks for predictable patterns of behavior to be extrapolated to every way we engage the Middle East.

Western media outlets reduce the complexity of conflicts within Libya to neat, comprehensive language, composed of the choicest vocabulary from the Orientalist handbook. These misrepresentations distort the reality of post-war Libya, and enforce pre-existing notions of a faceless, culturally backwards, warmongering community. They also undermine the authenticity of the Libyan Revolution and others

across the Arab Spring. They reduce the nuanced reality of disenfranchised Arabic-speaking communities fighting the uphill battle of self-realization (be they young, old, secular, or 'Islamist') to "looks like they're fighting each other again." Western media stories on Libya are dominated by themes of civil war, tribal conflict, the threat of political Islam, and the image of the passive, helpless Arab. Western reporting deems primordial loyalties and the Arab's inherent aggression as their permanent obstacle to self-governance and pluralism.

European colonization of North Africa, followed by the economic policies of post-colonial Arab leaders, permanently disrupted tribal life across the region. Urbanization of the Mediterranean coast advanced as people abandoned nomadic and agrarian modes of production. The industrial economies of the modern nation state degraded tribal identity to a shadow of its former self. This is not to say that tribal life does not exist in Libya, but it is generally isolated in the sparsely populated southern half of the country. Nonetheless, journalists continue to articulate fault-lines of conflict along tribal loyalties. However, these conflicts can almost always be more effectively explained by the consequences of the inequalities of Qaddafi favoritism rather than by ethnic divisions. During Qaddafi's reign, patronage in the form of housing, cars, cash, and weapons, was distributed to carefully chosen sub-communities. The communities that benefitted from Qaddafi's favor often demonstrated their loyalty to the regime at the expense of other Libyans. The Qaddafi regime successfully utilized a divide and conquer strategy through resource distribution. After the fall of the regime, Qaddafi loyalists were targeted for their complicity in violence against Libyan society before, during, and after the revolution. Western portrayals completely disregard these complexities and reduce them to tribal conflicts.

Furthermore, the 'Islamist' frequently plays the antagonist role in Western media. It is true that many if not most constituencies within Libya seek to establish a formal role for Islam within the legislative apparatus of the state. However, different political parties, even within party lines, have divergent ideas on what that particular role should be. This variance shows the problematic nature of the blanket term 'Islamist' as used by Western media. The framing of the 'Islamist threat' lacks substantive analysis of the See **Orientalism and Media** next page...

2014 Winter Quarter Class List

INT 150 Global Connections

| Antonio Morales-Pita | MW 11:20am-12:50pm

INT 365/490 Topics in War and Peace: Israel-Palestinian Conflict

| Daniel Kamin | TuTh 1:00-2:30pm

INT 364/403 Topics in International Political Economy: The Crisis in the EU

| Antonio Morales-Pita | W 6:00-9:15pm

INT 366/410 Topics in International Law: Human Rights Law

| Gil Gott | M6-9:15pm

INT 388/404 Special Topics in International Studies: Migration and Forced Migration

| Sharma Shailja | Tu 6:00-9:15pm

INT 388/406 Special Topics in International Studies: Global Empire

| Shiera Malik | Th 6:00-9:15pm

INT 360 Development/Anti-Development: Revolutions and Peasant Rebellions

| Jose Soltero | Tu 6:00-9:15pm

INT 368 Topics in Global Culture: Literature and Empire

| Carolyn Goffman | Tu 6:00-9:15pm

INT 371 International Environmental Politics: Political Ecology

| Cecil Brownlow | TuTh 1:00-2:30pm

INT 388 Special Topics in International Studies: Pan-Africanism

| Amor Kohli | MW 2:40-4:10pm

Orientalism and Media

continued from previous page

nuances of political Islam and of the socio-economic contexts in which these conflicts occur. It seems Western media outlets are only concerned with fomenting Islamophobic hysteria.

If the West wants to have a role in the reconstruction of Libya, it needs to avoid the pitfalls of Orientalism that dominate the language of our foreign policy and media outlets. Misrepresentation of Libyan and other Middle Eastern conflicts further obscures the complexities on the ground. These distortions have diplomatic consequences, and only widen the rift of understanding between Libya and the international community. Libya needs work. It will take time, resources, and the reconciliation of communities torn apart by Qaddafi's regime. The Libyan government has to accelerate the process of creating a unified national military. This will simultaneously take care of the "katiba problem", insecurity, and help establish legitimacy across the war-torn nation. However, if Western media continues misrepresent and oversimplify the causes of conflict, Westerners are unlikely to understand the solutions.

With the growth of International Studies at DePaul, it is important to establish more outlets for International Studies students to become more involved in the department and program. Through the hard work of a number of our colleagues, we now have the opportunity to participate in Sigma Iota Rho (SIR). This society is an honors society for students of international relations and related fields. SIR has more than 140 chapters across the nation. With the recent establishment of the DePaul chapter, INT students have a unique chance to connect and work with fellow students by taking advantage of the prospects offered to SIR members. Through SIR, members have the chance to submit their papers for publishing in the society's journal. People, besides our beloved professors, can now read and appreciate the work that INT students have put into their papers from core and concentration classes. Additionally, this year's SIR committee is working hard to plan events to further engage students through guest speakers, networking events with other Chicago chapters, and new opportunities to showcase student work. Members can also apply for SIR-specific research grants and scholarships. These are just a few of the great possibilities available to SIR members.

If interested in finding out more about applying to SIR, please email the SIR Coordinating Committee at int.sir.depaul@gmail.com. Look out for the next round of applications this Winter!

SIGMA
IOTA
RHO
INT

HONORS
SOCIETY

By: Amelia
Hussein

A Brief Encounter with the War in Syria

By: Nisan Kassam Cárdenas

I traveled to Turkey this past summer with the purpose of visiting refugees from the war in Syria. I stayed in Reyhanli, a town in the Hatay Province with a population of roughly 86,000 people for four weeks. According to a report issued by the UNHCR, there are 506,532 registered Syrian refugees in Turkey and 15,958 in the region of Hatay. That being said, the figures I heard from locals in the region numbered closer to 25,000 or 30,000 refugees.

Two weeks into my visit, I planned to travel to Syria. The border crossing point between Syria and Turkey is in Cilvegözü, which is situated three miles south east of Reyhanli. It would take approximately four hours to reach the village, near Idlib, where I would be staying. I traveled to the border between Turkey and Syria with a family of three and a member of the Free Syrian Army (FSA). By the time we crossed the border, other members of the FSA were waiting for us. Upon our arrival to the village, we had dinner and then we all gathered to drink tea. There were twelve women sitting in a room inside the house with eight children ranging from 1 to 12 years old. Six men were sitting outside.

Unexpectedly, we heard a loud sound that was sadly familiar to all of the people in the village. The women ran with the children to hide inside the bathroom as the men stayed outside, trying to communicate with other units nearby to find out where the bomb had hit. We waited a few minutes in the bathroom and then eventually went back to the room where we had been drinking tea. I asked a young girl about the frequency of episodes like the one we had just experienced. She answered, "We hear at least ten bombs every day. It's normal. We start worrying when we don't hear bombs." Other women in the room assured me that the area in which we were located was 'relatively safe'. Still, government aircrafts could be seen surrounding the area on a daily basis.

Additionally, the electric power and water supply had been cut from the village two weeks before my arrival. Locals told me that this was a common tactic used by the regime before bombarding an area. For the next

couple of days I visited families around the village, including those that were forced to seek refuge from government attacks in ancient Roman ruins. Every family that I met had been directly affected by the war, and every household had lost at least one person.

The FSA and the Jabhat al-Nusra (two separate entities) controlled the village and the surrounding areas. The Al Nusra front, a growing minority of rebels, has recently been portrayed in Western media as a terrorist group linked to Al Qaeda. Locals had diverse opinions regarding the Al Nusra front. Many civilians felt that members of Al Nusra were spreaders of a pure form of Islam, while FSA members comparatively expressed their concern regarding the infiltration of government officials in the Al Nusra front. I was not able to communicate with any members of the Jabhat al-Nusra, but I did speak to several members of the Free Syrian Army. They claimed that they were fighting for democracy and for the freedom of their nation. Each one of them mentioned that their struggle would continue until they saw the fall of Bashar al-Assad, as one of them declared, "the lives that have been lost in this fight will not be in vain, we won't stop fighting until we see the fall of Bashar." However, the alleged supply of modern artillery to the Syrian government by Iran and Russia diminishes the chances of the FSA to attain their goals in the face of growing difficulties in weaponry acquisition.

Countless numbers of rebel fighters have been subjected to torture by the regime, or have had their fathers, uncles, or cousins tortured or killed. Therefore, their desire to fight is fueled by personal experiences. The al-Assad family has been governing Syria since 1971, when Hafez al-Assad took power through a coup d'état. Successively, his son, Bashar al-Assad, came to power in 2001. Bashar al-Assad continues to govern in the same authoritarian, brutal manner that his father was known for, despite the wide spread perception that his regime would bring the liberation of Syria. As a man interviewed by the BBC put it, "Hafez al-Assad destroyed Hama but Bashar al-Assad is destroying Syria."

Graham Hughes: A Man of the World

By: Kyle Wagner

1,426 days traveled, 201 countries visited, 4 passport books used, and 0 flights. Graham Hughes, who embarked on this epic journey at the start of January 2009, has since traveled over 160,000 miles by bus, taxi, train, cargo ship, leaky canoes, and by foot. His aim was to travel to every member state of the United Nations without ever boarding a plane. Given his refusal to fly or to use any type of private transportation, Hughes is undoubtedly a fearless individual who believes that no dream is too large to pursue. Still, some questions remain: why would anyone attempt such a stunt? Did he win the lottery to finance all of this? Isn't the world full of wars and conflicts that would render this impossible?

Hughes explains that his goals for the journey were to set a new Guinness World Record, raise money for Water Aid (an organization helping to transform millions of lives worldwide through access to clean water, safer toilets, and hygiene education), and to show that the outside world is not such a scary place after all. He has impressively accomplished his journey all on his own within a modest budget of less than \$100 a week and without any professional support team. In order to stay on budget, Hughes has hitched rides on motor bikes, cargo ships, and has spent countless nights sleeping on overnight coach buses or various couches found on the website *Couchsurfing*.

Although Hughes maintains a positive memory today, not all four years of his adventure were filled with fun and ease. He recalls that being jailed in both Congo and Cape Verde were among the toughest situations he faced throughout his travels. Senegalese fisherman, whom he had met only days earlier, sailed him to Cape Verde in a leaky, wooden canoe. Upon arrival, Hughes was immediately jailed because the authorities

suspected that he was smuggling people into the country. Hughes persevered through this difficult situation and was able to complete his journey despite obstacles.

On a lighter side, Hughes felt that the higher points in his journey helped him overcome some of the tougher ones. His experience in Iran, for example, is one of the highlights of his entire adventure. Hughes emphasizes the importance of not judging locals by the stereotypes that their nation's broader political conflicts generate. "Some countries cannot be judged by their government or the people that are running them," declared Hughes in an interview. "I had an amazing experience in Iran. I was on an overnight bus heading across the country when a little old Persian grandmother who was sitting in front handed me her mobile phone," Hughes continued. "I said 'hello?' and the person on the other end replied, 'Hello, you are sitting behind my grandmother who says the bus gets in at 5:00am. She worries that you will not have had any breakfast, so she would like to take you in and feed you some breakfast'." In light of his experiences, I am amazed at people's desire and capacity to connect with each other, despite differences.

As for his future traveling experiences, Hughes hopes to continue this way of life for years to come. "What I have learned from this adventure is that there are good people all over the world; people who will go out of their way to help out a stranger in need," Hughes concluded. "My faith in humanity has been restored, although my faith in politicians is even lower than it was when I started." Not only has Hughes experienced the world on a local level, but he has also shown that this is an attainable dream that can even be accomplished on a tight, shoestring budget.



ALUMNI IN ACTION: ANA GRAHOVAC

By: Keavy McFadden

Ana graduated in 2012 as an INT-French double major. At DePaul Ana also participated in Model UN and a variety of outside internships. In this issue, Ana shares stories from post-grad life and offers advice to INTers interested in going on to graduate school.



What do you currently do?

I am currently a first-year graduate student at University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. I am studying Health Geography, specifically disparities in access to women's reproductive healthcare in rural and urban regions in the US.

What did you do after graduating from DePaul?

After graduating from DePaul, I took a gap year before returning to school. I took an amazing road trip to Jackson Hole, Wyoming with my family, where we climbed Grand Teton. I also traveled to Bosnia & Herzegovina and to Croatia with my mom. I definitely encourage recent grads to take some time off for themselves in order to enjoy things like traveling, which become more difficult to do as we start working or going to graduate school.

How has being a former INT major helped you in your postgrad life?

For one thing, you never look at seemingly mundane things the same way again. INT trains you to be critical of the world around you. I am most grateful for the intense training that we receive in reading and writing. Being able

to critically analyze what you read in a convincing, professional report is a vital skill in the professional world. I was not aware of how many people lack that skill until I graduated from college and entered the "real" world.

What advice do you have for INT seniors who are interested in pursuing graduate degrees?

My advice is to really think about what you want to study. Do your research and try to pick departments that reflect your interests the most. When I graduated, I knew which topics I was interested in, but I did not know how to take those topics and make them into a career. A very wise INT professor encouraged me to take time to write reflections on what interested me. This was helpful in deciding what I really wanted to do. Pick a program or discipline which intrigues you the most, take a chance, and apply to it.

Also, I suggest that you contact other graduate students who are in the field that you want to be in or who are studying a similar topic. Through my application process, I discovered that graduate students were an invaluable source for information

because we both shared the same perspective that comes with being a student.

Start the application process as soon as schools make their applications available. It helps to create an effective personal statement that can be used for multiple applications with few, if any, changes. Students should do their best to stay organized and apply early. Many departments give priority for funding to qualified early applicants.

Are there any other thoughts or advice you would like to share?

When I was applying to graduate schools, I wish that someone had told me that no amount of advice can really prepare you for the actual experience because, although the application process is fairly similar for all students, each individual has a unique undertaking that must be experienced in order to be fully understood. Enjoy the rest of your time in the INT department because you are surrounded by a positive, engaging, and intelligent community that will influence you to do your very best. The professors and the students are some of the smartest and most interesting people around.

ALUMNI IN ACTION: WILL DAMING

By: Keavy McFadden

Will graduated in 2011 and is now working as a budget analyst for the U.S. Department of Education. Read on for Will's six helpful rules for landing a job and making the most of your college degree.

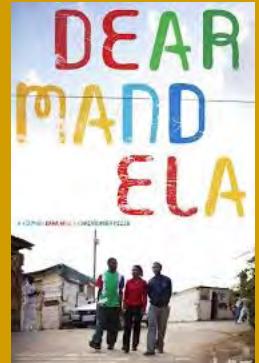
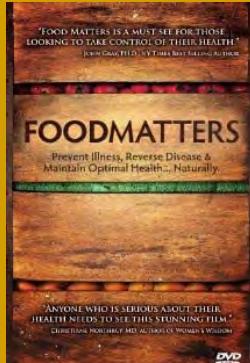
1. **Time Management:** Learn to manage your time better. The book *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* is a great read, and gives a lot of insight on planning your week so that you can learn how to prioritize.
2. **Learn to Write Concisely:** When you're working in policy, you really do need the BLUF (bottom line up front) because nobody has time for anything else. Learning to write and think more concisely is key.
3. **Take the Initiative:** Make sure you are always doing something to improve. Join clubs, work on your technical skills, and network. Every experience, good or bad, can be an opportunity to grow.
4. **Informational Interviews:** Never underestimate the value of an informational interview. Remember to keep the focus on the other person, and allow them to talk about themselves. At the end, ask for 3 more people the person thinks would be helpful for you to meet.
5. **Self-Reflection:** I think it's great to ask yourself "Did I really do my best on this paper?" or "Is there something else I could be doing to be more productive right now?" Self-reflection is really important.
6. **Face Time Counts:** If you want to meet someone or network, don't just email. You need to call or visit someone's office in person. Showing a little commitment and effort can go a long way.



Will is always happy to help fellow INT friends. Send him an email at williamjdaming@gmail.com if you have questions about informational interviews, networking, or how to start a job search.

TOP 4 NETFLIX PICKS FOR BREAK

1. Miss Representation 2. Food Matters 3. Rang De Basanti 4. Dear Mandela



WHAT ABOUT IMMIGRATION?

By: Dana Jabri

“Being undocumented and with no pathway to citizenship means I actually can’t use my architectural degree. It means I can’t get a job and move forward with my life. This year, once again, we wait for Congress to do the right thing and give undocumented young people all across America a chance to better serve our communities and our country. I am an asset to this country, a resource, with a desire to make good use of my degree. I want to be able to work and design affordable housing for low-income communities.” – Alaa Mukahhal, B.S UIC Architecture

Bipartisan debates in Congress over the Comprehensive Immigration Reform bill have illustrated to the American public that now, more than ever, both the political and legal systems in the United States are unnecessarily complicated. Currently, there are 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States. Every day that Senate Bill 744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, gets delayed in congress, approximately 1,100 hardworking and established families are separated from one another through deportation. The Obama administration has executed nearly 2 million deportations leaving 3,018,319 children without parents. You may be asking yourself, what does all of this commotion and debate mean to me (citizen or noncitizen), my family, and community? Since Election Day 2012, immigrant communities and advocates have been pressing Congress to pass immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship for the undocumented. Establishing a pathway to citizenship would set a historical precedent because it has never before been considered an important legal step to take.

Chicago has a long history of activism and political consciousness. Grassroots community-based organizations are constantly on the forefront of working to simplify the legal system by hosting workshops, providing direct legal advice, and preparing literacy materials that help explain complex legal processes. For the most part, these legal services serve as the only resource that guides undocumented immigrants through the daunting legal system. Since 1996, DePaul has involved students in this process by giving them the opportunity to serve as researchers and assistants to the faculty and staff of the Asylum and Immigration Legal Clinic. In line with their commitment to protecting immigrant rights,

specifically the rights of undocumented immigrants, the Asylum and Immigration Legal Clinic decided to launch the U Visa Summer project in 2010. United States immigration laws provide for nonimmigrant “U” status for victims of certain crimes who have assisted in the investigation and prosecution of the crime and who can show substantial harm as a result of the crime. At DePaul, the U Visa project pairs law and undergraduate students with undocumented victims of crime and helps them pursue immigration benefits.

This past June, I had the opportunity to work with the U Visa summer project team. I helped complete applications for three separate client cases, each which required an immense amount of preparation. My experience consisted of transcribing client interviews, collecting necessary evidence, completing government forms and applications, researching country and state facts, drafting affidavits and cover letters, and preparing the final case file to be sent to United States’ Citizenship and Immigration Services. All of this work was done within a three-months period, and the team I worked with was comprised of an associate lawyer, Professor Sioban Albiol, a post-grad, and a law student. If it was not for the experience I had at the legal clinic, then I would have never been able to comprehend the realities of the legal system that I now understand. It is one thing to read about a system, a people, or a place, but to experience that system, that people or place is a different reality on its own.

The undocumented immigrants that have come to partake in the benefits of what we call “the land of opportunity,” have been evermore marginalized by the legal system itself. Its complex nature is not as simple as either political parties claim it to be. As an undergraduate student who is beginning to learn the importance of what it means to critically engage the social, political, and economic systems that are currently in place, I feel that it is hands-on experiences like my internship at the Asylum and Immigration legal clinic that foster a unique understanding of a developed thinking. This is a thinking that challenges the system and questions its structure, only to then think of innovative alternatives to the broken system. As students it is our responsibility to become familiar with the struggles of our communities, and to work them for change.

Conference Announcements



Every Spring, the Midwest Political Science Association holds one of the largest political science conferences in the discipline at the Chicago Palmer House. Presentations are organized by topic. There are over 70 sections to choose from to suit almost everyone's interests. The deadline to submit abstracts for undergraduate posters is **December 2nd, 2013**.

For additional submission guidelines or to submit your proposal please visit <http://www.mpsanet.org/>.



The Canadian Association for the Study of International Development is hosting a conference this Spring themed "Borders without Boundaries," viewed through a social justice lens. The deadline for paper and panel abstract submissions is **December 1st, 2013**. Abstracts should be 200 words long and must be submitted online to the CASID website. LAS and/or the INT department may be able to provide travel funding to students whose papers are accepted.

For more information visit <http://www.casid-acedi.ca/annual-conference>



The Ford Program in Human Development Studies and Solidarity sponsors the student-run Human Development Conference. The conference will be taking place in the end of February at the University of Notre Dame. It is a great opportunity to "explore interdisciplinary and sustainable research to improve livelihoods while advancing human dignity, this year's theme is inspired by the idea that development is an evolving process." The deadline for submissions is **November 14th, 2013**. Abstracts should be no longer than 500 words.

For abstract submission instructions please visit: http://fluidsurveys.com/s/HDC_call_for_papers/

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