

GRADUATION DAY CEREMONY

Milan, December 2nd, 2014

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Master in International Relations

By Mark William Valentiner

Professors, parents, students, friends and the staff of ASERI, I am honored and humbled to stand in front of you this evening, a day in which we should all congratulate ourselves for finishing this master.

Before starting first I would like to introduce myself. My name is Mark William Valentiner. My mother is English, my father is German. Coming from a British-German family, you should know that my two great grandfathers experienced the horrors of World War II on opposite sides. So besides my love for history and languages, my greatest personal passion has always been International Relations, the relationship between countries, the foreign policy of states, the objective of avoiding to go to war with other countries.

After my Bachelors I wanted to deepen my academic preparation in IR. When I first saw the wide and impressive ASERI program of International Relations, it was just the Master's program I was searching for. The list of international professors appealed very much to me, the opportunity of an internship, the variety of different topics we would cover in a short time.

Being here today brings me back to the very first day, when we all first met a year ago, on January the 14th. So many nationalities, so many different people, so many international faces and so many languages in the classroom, all coming from a different academic background. So many professors and professionals from the business sector, organizations or institutions coming from all over the world. ASERI is indeed a true international school.

Over the next 6 months we were able to deepen our knowledge in the field of International Relations. We learnt so many remarkable skills for our professional career. Furthermore the course allowed me to become more familiar with the various regions around the world. After a year I have a better understanding how the world out there ticks.

During my courses, International Relations had been described to me as a study which offers many different schools of thought, such as realism, liberalism, constructivism or even Marxism. For me however, International Relations is not only about understanding global issues. For me it is also about how other people and nations act and think. One of the greatest lessons of this course has decisively been to find out how other people from other nations approach different issues.

Everyone brought something from his own perspective, which taught me a lesson to always look beyond, at a more global level. There is always more than one side to look at a particular issue. Talking about regional integration, world order, human rights, democracy, comparative advantage, the UN Millennium Goals, or the European Union in the classroom with my peers coming from

Latin America, the U.S., Europe, Africa or Asia is what International Relations is all about. Indeed, we are International Relations.

Looking ahead, I guess, many of us are concerned about our future. But there is no need to worry. Competition is tough out there, yes it is. Yes, youth unemployment is high. But with all the talent, knowledge, the considerable skills that we have acquired, it is only a question of time and patience and you will find the career you are seeking. Trust your instincts, go out there and show the world you belong to the best. In these times, widely known professors with the likes of Dembinski, Ikenberry, Cox, Redaelli, Parsi, de Grauwe, Kühnhardt, Király, Zoboli, Beretta or Mastanduno, all among the best teachers of International Relations, and act as role models for the global community, who inspire people like us as they share their expertise in International Relations and pass on their knowledge to the world.

But in the future it will be up to us to share our expertise, help other people and nations to understand each other and make the world a better place. Go for the career you want. Have courage to pursue your dreams.

In closing, on behalf of all ASERI students, I would like to thank all the professors of our ASERI course. I also would like to thank the whole ASERI staff, for your kind support.

I would particularly like to thank Teresa, our tutor, who has always been patient with all of us. I would like to personally thank Professor Zoboli for his guidance and assistance. And also thank Nadia Moscato for looking after all of us.

On a personal note, I finally want to thank professor Parsi, who was not only my professor of IR and my supervisor for my bachelor thesis, but who has also always been an inspiration for my professional future, who opened my eyes and thanks to whom I decided that IR was the career path for me.

I also wish all my colleagues the best, it has been a true pleasure to embark on this exciting adventure with all of you. And I am sure that many of you will be my friends for life. A number of you came from very far to study at this remarkable school, for whom I wish to express my true admiration for your courage. Today, dear colleagues, a chapter closes and a new chapter begins.

Today is a day of celebration.

Thank you very much.

Master in International Cooperation and Development

By Lina Correa Posada

Dear Professors, fellow students, family and friends.

I have been given the great opportunity of addressing you on behalf of the Master in International Cooperation and Development and I could not be more honored.

This is it. This is the moment where everything comes together. The moment we celebrate the conclusion of an amazing academic year and a new beginning for our professional paths, and although this might leave us with plenty of uncertainties, I am sure all of us will move on to do something we are passionate about. After all, that is why we came to Milan at the beginning of this year.

I think what we are doing here today is remarkable, especially if we consider that all of this would not have been possible if over a year ago, the 22 of us did not have the same idea: come to Milan to this same University to gain more knowledge and experience from our Master. That right there was the first thing we all had in common but certainly not the last one. Over the last year we have had the opportunity to get to know each other very well, to be completely aware of our backgrounds, expectations and strengths and to work through stressful situations, exams and group works that only helped bringing us closer together.

It amazes me to look back and remember the first day of school on January 15 of this year. We were just strangers from around the world, coming together for the first time, and now, looking at you I am glad to see that we have become much more than that, we are now colleagues, friends and in some cases family. I am very proud of that, and of what we all have and will accomplish.

This Master opened our eyes to different subjects and important realities. It left us with a sense of what we want to do and how to achieve it, allowing us to learn more from different cultures, students and professors, which for me was the most interesting part of this year.

I remember that at the beginning of the Master one of the first questions the faculty asked us was "*Why did you choose this Master?*". Our answers were very different but they all had one element in common: the possibility of doing an internship with an NGO or International Organization. This was one of the most challenging and stressful parts of the Master. The search, the application process and most of all, waiting for a feedback. I think we got lucky. We found amazing experiences that took us to very different places, and just like that, six months after coming together we were once again scattered through the world. I, personally, was very lucky. I got the chance to go to Africa for the first time in my life, and see Kenya, learn from its wonderful people and from the professionals I found at the UN. The work and experience I had in this past three months will be unforgettable; it has helped me deciding what I want and what I need to do to get it.

I want to take this opportunity to thank every single professor who left us with something really important, you all were extremely important to us, so thank you. On the top of my mind, and just to name some of you, Professor Beretta, thank you for introducing me to the world of economics. I have to confess I struggled with the concepts and notions of this lesson but the results and knowledge gained are more than gratifying. I would also like to thank Professor Nebel for the funniest class ever, on governance. We will always remember the impacts of corruption of our own Father Joaquin and Alan Ricardo! Finally, but surely not the least I want to thank Cristina Rago for going over and beyond to help us through this year in every aspect imaginable, and to Nadia Moscato for assisting us with the administrative work. On behalf of all of us, thank you!

I am proud to say that we have come a long way, we have had the same battles, the same worries and the same victories, and I am sure that our paths will cross many times in the future. Thank you all and I wish you the best future possible, and see you out there!

Master in Economics and International Policies

By Mattia Modonesi

Good afternoon everybody,

I am here today to share our enthusiasm for the goal achieved. And, to express our gratitude to all of you. It is not simple to find the right words on such a special occasion, but I will do my best.

Cari tutti,

this was how Vittoria Campagna used to greet us at the start of her e-mails. Using this expression made us feel part of a group and members of a team. My classmates and I shared a common goal during those magical months, along with a relationship of affection, trust and mutual esteem. Thanks to our group's strength, we were able to face all the most difficult challenges we encountered during this program.

This experience was both educational and moving. During the MEPIN experience I met marvellous group-mates along with incredible Professors. Skilled Professors, able to inspire us and stimulate our interest always paying attention to details. And, I can say this, without a hidden purpose, as I have already graduated.

I was presumptuous and I had prejudice towards Lugano which I thought was dull and only attended by private bankers and tax lawyers. The city turned out to be a magnificent welcoming place, which made me feel at ease from the very first moment. At this time I discovered that such reality was built up on a solid and strong cultural identity: the University of Italian Switzerland. Concerning Milan, here we had the opportunities to strengthen our group and cooperation. Not only in the way we studied, but also how we bonded during extra-curricular activities. I learned a lot from this experience: both from a human and didactic point of view. Studying long hours didn't prevent us from having fun together.

Let me say that, when I started this Master course I felt a bit frightened and worried. It may sound funny, but on one hand I feel exactly the same way now since I am about to enter the world of work. But, on the other hand I feel stronger. I realized that difficulties can be overcome relying on more experienced group-mates and team work. We were stimulated by another passionate team: the Professors' team. A group of committed, dedicated and enthusiastic individuals, who were able to face an eager and hungry audience and to stand up for their vision of the world.

On behalf of everybody I would also like to thank Vittoria and Nadia for their continuous and patient support.

Cari tutti,

this expression will always be dear to me and it will always mean a lot to me. I must admit that in these months I have opened many letters this way. By expressing myself like this, I was looking for the same feeling I had in receiving the ASERI communications.

I am proud in saying that I consider myself a “mepiniano” and quoting professor Vittorio Emanuele Parsi a “masterizzato”.

Thank you all once again. And keep up the good work!