

The International Studies Degree Internship (IS 4998/4999)

The administration of the internship program is the responsibility of the Director of International Studies in the College of Liberal Arts.

Students who undertake a BAIS internship must enroll in IS 4998 or IS 4999 (Honors Internship). The IS internship requires at least 3 but no more than 6 hours of credit. A 3 hour credit involves 120 hours of work during the semester (@ 8 hrs/week for 15 weeks).

The internship may be either student-initiated or faculty/administrator-initiated. Those that are initiated by the student must be approved by the Director of International Studies.

The internship site will require significant work and/or learning opportunities related to the intern's field of study. The specific responsibilities of the internship must be worked out before the student undertakes the position by the Director of International Studies or the student's faculty advisor in cooperation with the interning agency.

The competence of the student to perform the responsibilities entailed in the internship must also be determined beforehand by the Director of International Studies in consultation with faculty who have worked with the student. Because the internship is required, no specific GPA is required.

We ask personnel supervising ISD students to do the following:

1. Meet with student to work out a description of his/her activities/responsibilities
2. Supervise the student's work experience
3. Acquaint the student with the operations of the agency or business
4. Evaluate the student at the end of the semester (a form for this evaluation will be provided by the Director of International Studies)

The internship requires an 8-10 page paper, the topic of which will be determined by the student in consultation with his faculty advisor or the Director of International Studies. The topic will be related to the internship itself. The Director or the student's faculty advisor will grade the paper.

Should a graduate student take the internship, he or she will be required to turn in additional written assignments appropriate for graduate level work.

The intern is required to keep a log of his/her activities in the internship. This log will be reviewed by the intern's faculty advisor or by the Director at periodic intervals throughout the semester. This log will be turned in as a part of the intern's final project, together with a cover letter summarizing the experience.

Payment for the interns' work may occur when appropriate or when funds are available for such purposes.

The internship will be offered every semester.

Regarding your writing assignments for the Internship:**The Log:**

You should turn a log in 3 installments (DO NOT wait to do this at the end; keep it up daily, or at least every few days). The log should be a record of what you do from day to day, but it should also contain essential information for readers who are not familiar with the agency your working with. For example,

Your first log should contain the name of your supervisor, his/her email address/ telephone / contact info. The first log should provide some kind of narrative of how you became aware of, and interested in, the agency. It should contain an account of how your first days went, how you were shown the ropes and familiarized with the work of the agency.

The rest of the log should be a kind of diary of what do you from day to day, from week to week, and it should contain any observations about the work, the agency, and about the internships relationship to, and contribution to, your IS curriculum and educational goals.

For convenience, the log should be turned in as follows: The first one should be turned in during the second week of October, the second one during the second week of November, and the last at the end of the semester with your internship paper.

The Paper:

The paper should be 8-10 pages on a subject related to the work you are doing at the internship. The paper can be entirely academic, or it can be a reflection on the way in which the work in the internship contributes to your education and curriculum in IS, or a combination of both (the last of these is, I think, the best option). It must follow standard academic format, with a Works Cited page and external research sources. For the Works Cited page and for references and citations throughout the paper, be sure to follow the MLA format.

Sample Paper

Joelle Robertson
 IS 4998: International Studies Internship
 August 27, 2008

Austrian Foreign Integration**Introduction**

The typical American might associate an Austrian with the stereotypical blond hair blue eyed **Arian**, especially when references to Austria usually include either Heidi, World War II, or both. History, however, reveals an Austria of quite a different demography. Indeed, before World War I, the then Austrian-Hungarian Empire was a multi-ethnic state encompassing not only Austria and Hungary, but also parts of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Italy and the former Yugoslavia. In fact pre-World War I Vienna was one of the most culturally diverse and cosmopolitan cities of Europe. The current Austrian reality, however, is a much different story. Not only is Austria less multi-cultural, but there seems to be a fear of immigration and ethnic diversity, which is reflected in Austrian immigration policy. For example, in recent years “traditional labor migration and family reunification programs have been severely curtailed in the wake of widespread public discontent over levels of immigration” (Jandl). The reason for this paradigm shift is hard to pin point. It can be debated whether it is due to Austrian cultural and social isolation ensured by the Alpine ranges or to the incidents of the twentieth century or just steadfast tradition which caused an attitude of **homogeny** to arise. It can be called conservatism or cultural religiosity or **personal reservation**, but basically it comes down to an “us versus them” mentality. It is not surprising then that the concept of Austrian immigration has created a controversial problem for this central European state. As a member of the European Union and as a developed country in these globalizing times, immigration is inevitable. Therefore, the solution to the problem of immigration should not be based on border control, but rather on successful integration. This paper will investigate the current situation of Austrian integration by examining the integration policy, surveying local and foreign attitudes, and by citing my own experiences as a volunteer at the Innsbruck Integration House.

Comment [MSOffice1]: I think you mean Aryan

Comment [MSOffice2]: Homogeny is not an attitude. Rephrase this.

Comment [MSOffice3]: I don't understand this phrase. Can you find another that is clearer.

Austrian Integration Policy**Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries**

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries marked an age of industrialization and migration in Europe which triggered mass migrations in what was then the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. Although the Empire was large and multicultural, encompassing most of present day Slovakia, Czech Republic, and the countries of the former Yugoslavia, as well as Austria and Hungary, the government felt responsible to respond to these mass movements with a policy that restricted migration. The legislation was enacted to give locals preferential status, giving rights to

citizens based on municipalities of birth. This new policy even boasted the ability to “expel ‘alien residents’ considered a burden”(Jandl). This had significant negative implications for much of the population, especially those living in major urban centers in the Empire, since more than half of the population of Vienna and Prague, for example, were born outside of those urban municipalities.

World War I saw the demise of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and a rise of many more culturally homogenous countries. As a result, Austria, itself, was reduced to a mostly Germanic population.

In the periods between World War I and World War II, many people emigrated from Austria due to an economic depression and then later due to the fascists’ rise to power (Jandl). During this period, many influential Jews emigrated to other European nations, as well as to the United States and Canada; many of these emigrants were prominent scientists. In 1938, with the unification of Germany and Austria, Austrian migration policy was replaced by German policy, which instituted severe restrictions on Austrian Jews and the ‘aryanization’ of property expropriated from Jewish people (Jandl). Between 1938 and 1941 alone, 128,000 Jews were forced to leave Austria, and by 1945, 64,459 Austrian Jews had been murdered by the Nazi regime (Jandl). The end of the war also saw the settlement of at least 500,000 displaced persons in Austria.

Post World War II

In the post World War II years, an economic boom in Austria produced a need for more workers. Since a sufficient number of workers could not be gathered within the country, Austria began to look outside itself to fulfill its employee needs. In the 1960’s the Austrian government initiated its *Gastarbeiter* or guest worker policy by forming formal bilateral agreements with many southeastern European nations, chief among those were Turkey and Yugoslavia (Newald). Recruiting centers were set up in these countries and soon a large influx of foreign workers began to enter Austria. In 1969, the number of foreign workers from Turkey and Yugoslavia numbered 76,500, but by 1973 this number almost tripled to 227,000 with 27,000 of these coming from Turkey and 178,000 from Yugoslavia (Jandl).

The oil crisis of 1973, however, depressed the economy to a state where foreign workers were no longer needed or even wanted. Recruitment was subsequently ended and in 1975, formal legislation in the form of the Aliens Employment Act restricted the employment opportunities for guest workers (Jandl). By 1985 the number of workers from Turkey and Yugoslavia was half of the 1973 total.

With restricted employment immigration, the early 1980’s brought other forms of migration, such as family reunification, spontaneous labor migration, and clandestine migration and asylum. An economic boom in the late 1980’s and 1990’s, however, caused further need for guest workers, but instead of renewing bilateral agreements as had been done in the past, guest workers were enlisted through “informal channels of recruitment” (Jandl). It was then that workers came not only from Turkey and Yugoslavia, but also from the Middle East, Asia, and Africa (Newald). Also during this period, many formerly illegal workers in Austria were regularized to allow them to work.

The 1990's

The fall of the Iron Curtain and the war in Yugoslavia during the nineteen-nineties, however, began to stimulate fear of a mass migration from Eastern to Western Europe. Between 1988 and 1992 alone there were approximately 20,800 applications for asylum per year from mostly Eastern Europe and Turkey and between 1988 and 1993 the total number of foreigners doubled from 344,000 to 690,000 (Jandl). As a result of such high levels of immigration the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), which tolerated “zero immigration,” grew in strength and popularity and a number of legislative reforms were put into place to combat the influx of immigrants. The first of these was a quota set up in 1990 to restrict the number of foreign workers to 10 percent of the total Austrian workforce. Then in 1991 a law on the reception of asylum seekers replaced the granting of financial (?) benefits to asylum seekers with the granting of goods and services whenever possible (Jandl). The legislation also introduced sanctions against companies that hired or transported illegal migrants. As a result of the new Asylum Law, asylum seekers dropped to 4,744 in 1993 and remained low for the next several years. In 1992 a new Aliens Act succeeded in further restricting the entry and residence of immigrants in Austria. In 1993, the Residence Act “established contingents for different categories of migrants” and allowed for only a given number of residence permits to be granted in any one year (Jandl).

In 1997 a new Aliens Act was enacted. This law, unlike the ones previously mentioned, introduced the concept of integration into the legal framework of immigration policy. Known as the “integration package,” it merged the 1992 Alien Act and the Residence Act into a single law while expanding on previous immigration policy (Jandl). It instituted the principle of successive consolidation of residence based on the time period in the country measured by increments of 5, 8, and 10 years. This meant that the rights of an immigrant would be based on the time period of their residency. After 10 years of residence, a migrant would have legal status in all things except political rights. The most important implication of this law, however, was this law’s tie to integration. It was in this 1997 act that the concept of “integration before immigration” was first established in Austrian Law, the goal of which was to promote integration of current resident aliens before allowing for entry of new immigrants (Jandl).

A year later the Naturalization Act expanded on the legal requirements of integration set forth by the 1997 Aliens Act. Besides instituting a ten-year waiting period for naturalization, it made potential Austrian citizens prove that they were sufficiently integrated into the Austrian Society. The level of integration was based on proficiency in German and self-sufficiency and non-reliance on governmental assistance.

The Twenty-first Century

As soon as Austria entered the twenty-first century, a shocking political event in Austria rocked both the national and the European political stage. In January 2000, what was deemed impossible happened. The far-right, anti-immigration Freedom Party (FPÖ) and the conservative People’s Party (ÖVP) formed a coalition government, stirring up controversy all over Europe. The political backlash was tremendous. Israel recalled their Ambassador to Austria, calling the new government “neo-fascist” and “the Austrian Green EU parliamentarian Johannes

Comment [MSOffice4]: The fall of the Iron Curtain and the war in Yugoslavia don’t explain the migration from Turkey do they? You need to include something here about the reasons for Turkish migration.

Voggenhuber used the same term for the FPÖ and referred to Haider as a "fascist" without the qualification of 'neo-' (Johnson). In addition, many European Leaders implemented real and symbolic sanctions against Austria. These uproars eventually led to the resignation of the Freedom Party's chairman Jorge Haider and only two years after the coalition was formed, it dissolved. For all the controversy it stirred, however, the government produced nothing as radical and divisive as was anticipated regarding migration policy.

Comment [MSOffice5]: Be consistent in your spelling. You use a different form of his name above I think.

In 2002, amendments were made to both the Aliens Act and the Asylum Law. The Aliens Act is especially important to my purpose, as it elaborated on the integration policy that had been introduced in 1997 by establishing mandatory integration classes for immigrants. The amendment states that immigrants "shall be required to enter into, and comply with an integration agreement... [which] has the objective of motivating aliens to acquire a basic knowledge of German and the skills that will enable them to participate in the social, economic and cultural life of Austria. This can be achieved through attendance of a German-language integration course" (Art. 50 of Austrian Federal Law (2002 amendment of the 1997 Aliens Act) [THIS CITE NEEDS TO BE INCLUDED IN YOUR WORKS CITED PAGE AND CITED HERE IN ABBREVIATED FORM.] The topics in these courses included, but were not limited to, German, Austrian studies and civics, and fundamental European Democratic values. However, the program exempted immigrants who were avowed key professionals or those who could prove that they were sufficiently integrated.

Comment [MSOffice6]: You need to make clearer what this is.

In recent times, Austrian immigration policy has been subject to a paradox of periods of mass immigration and restriction. This phenomenon can only be explained on a basis of "requirements of the economy" (Newald). During economic booms, policy has allowed for an influx of guest workers, especially from traditional labor source countries such as the former Yugoslavia and Turkey, to fulfill a temporary need. When the economy evens out or goes into decline, however, immigration is severely curtailed. It is unfair to say that migration policy is purely based on economic interest, however. Austria has also been a temporary sanctuary for many refugees from Eastern Europe during the later part of the twentieth century. I am primarily interested, however, in immigrants' lives once they enter Austria. As mentioned above, with the coalition of ÖVP and FPÖ in 2000, compulsory integration was built into immigration policy. Integrate or leave. The question remains, however, what integration means. If it is defined solely as knowing the native language, the laws, history, and culture of the nation as policy dictates, the challenge of integration is minuscule. The challenge of full social integration, on the other hand, seems to be nearly insurmountable.

Comment [MSOffice7]: In what sense is this a paradox?

Contrasting ideas of integration

According to Austrian policy, continued residency, integration, and a clean criminal record are grounds for legal alien status and eventual naturalization. Article 50 of the Austrian Federal Law defines integration as proficiency in German, self-sufficiency, and the ability to succeed socially in Austrian society. This, however, is not the only definition of integration. Many Austrian citizens have their own take on what it means to be successfully integrated. Implicit conditions and public attitudes, however, can be invisible impediments to integration.

Comment [MSOffice8]: How does the law define "social success"? Does one have to shine at cocktails parties? Can you clarify?

Austria has a homogenous population and it soon becomes apparent that, according to many Austrians,

being Austrian means more than holding an Austrian passport or merely living there. Being Austrian is culturally supported genetics. It is heritage, and those who do not share the Austrian blood (?) line can easily be identified by accent, skin color, or ignorance of traditions and customs. Citizenship itself is based on the “ius sanguinis” or the “law of blood” instead of the “ius soli” or “law of the soil,” making it more important that one’s ancestors were Austrian than that one was physically born in Austria (Newald). Due to such attitudes, foreign populations often face prejudices since they come from diverse places and backgrounds and hold different customs and beliefs from those held by the majority of Austrian citizens.

Comment [MSOffice9]: This phrase is unclear. Clarify.

Challenges of different immigrant groups

In my experience, the groups that faced the most discrimination were Africans, Turks, and, surprisingly, Germans. Africans can immediately be distinguished from other Austrians by their skin color and are often associated in popular opinion with poverty and drug dealing. Such assumptions are little more than bigotry. I suggest that what really hinders Africans’ integration into Austrian society are fundamental social and cultural differences. Africans tend to be extroverted and communal in nature. They thrive on personal interactions and show a lot of physical affection. Austrians, on the other hand, tend to be introverted, conservative, hesitant, and shy away from physical affection apart from the customary cheek-kissing salutation. In the case of African integration, it is often the case that Africans try to integrate and Austrians resist them.

The Turkish population of Austria is surrounded by much more controversy than the African one perhaps because the population of Turks in Austria is much higher in consequence of the past *Gastarbeiter* policy. It is commonplace to hear Austrians repeatedly complain about Turkish people, citing their lack of economic self-sufficiency. It is normal to hear comments such as “*We pay taxes so they can collect government assistance,*” or “*They come over here, have six children, and expect to get welfare money,*” or even “*Our taxes make up for the fact that their women don’t work.*” These arguments, however, never satisfied me. If nothing else, the traditional welfare system of Austria would welcome such a family structure, since it is based on the “traditional” family structure in which the father works, the mother stays at home, and the couple has enough children to sustain the welfare state by supplementing the next generation of workers and tax payers. Even if the first generation of Turkish immigrants are poor, by educating and employing their children, Austria can perhaps help to reverse the trend of an aging population and thus its declining welfare state.

What I believe to be a purer source of intolerance towards the Turkish population is a matter of religion and culture. Turks are often Muslim, which could sometimes be seen as a threat to the Austrian Catholic-based society. Just as important, Turkish immigrants tend to be proud of their religion, their culture, and their homeland, just as Austrians are proud of theirs. In addition, Turks are similar to Austrians in that they are conservative, traditional, and reserved, preferring to stay in their own family units to interacting with outsiders. In this way, the problem of Turkish integration in Austrian society can be seen as two positively charged magnets opposing one another.

From a historical perspective, Turkish intolerance is not just the result of the influx of migrants during the *Gastarbeiter* policy of the 1960’s and 1980’s, but goes back to the competing Ottoman and Habsburg Empires

hundreds of years before. The expansion of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century began to threaten the Austrian Empire. The Ottomans tried to take Vienna in 1529, then again in 1683 during the 16-year Habsburg-Ottoman War, failing on both occasions, but not without leaving a legacy (“Habsburg-Ottoman Wars”). As a result of the Habsburg-Ottoman interactions, much Ottoman architecture and technology was replicated in Austria. Today, ironically enough, statues of Mary with her foot on the Crescent moon symbolizing Habsburg-Christian success over the Muslim Ottomans stand in the foreground of city skylines with onion-shaped towers of the Ottoman style.

Strangely enough, the country that brings the largest **number** of immigrants into Austria is Germany. Most of these migrants go to Austria to find jobs due to recent high unemployment rates in Germany. This may come as a surprise to many since, for the latter part of the twentieth century, Germany was regarded as more economically stable and advanced than Austria. Since the 1990’s, however, **this trend has begun to reverse**, with many Germans seeking economic refuge in Austria. It is not merely the number of Germans in Austria or that they are taking many jobs that angers local Austrians, however, but something deeper. I personally pin it to two things: historical memory and the so-called big brother syndrome.

Although Austria and Germany share the same language and heritage and are culturally similar, the two countries have not always gotten along. In the sixteenth century, for example, the spreading influence of the reformation in Germany met with hard resistance in the Catholic Habsburg Empire. In fact, the reformation sparked many counter-reformations in Austria, in many cases resulting in the strengthening of the Catholic tradition. Later, during the Napoleonic wars in Europe, western Austria braced itself against Germany to the north, where Bavarian forces allied with Napoleon tried to invade Tirol. Tirolean troops, led by Andreas Hofer, however, were triumphant against the Napoleonic troops. Finally, some Austrians still resent the *Anschluss* or annexation of Austria by Germany preceding World War II, particularly since the connection had such ill-fated consequences.

The second factor that causes prejudice against Germans, as mentioned above, is the big brother syndrome or even a perceived superiority complex on the part of Germans. After World War I, Austria was reduced to less than one-fourth its former size and lost its power and royal tradition. This, paired with an economic depression after the war, left Austria weak and vulnerable. It was then that Germany emerged as a powerful neighbor, electing a leader who promised prosperity to a depressed nation. Austria, seemingly orphaned by the Great War, was in a sense adopted by Germany, embraced the Nazi regime, and fought and lost the Second World War. After the war, while Germany went through a restructuring by the allied powers, Austria was simply made neutral and, besides the assistance given by the Marshall Plan, left mostly to its own devices. Germany, however, thrived economically and became a powerful political player in the forming of the European Communities and is still a powerful political entity today, even if the economy has lagged in recent times. After the World Wars, however, Austria was left in Germany’s wake and developed an inferiority complex. It is still common to hear Austrians complain about the superiority complex of Germans, many of whom vacation in Austria. I once heard an Austrian woman imitate a German saying, “‘Our land is nicer, our food is better, our women are prettier!’ If it’s so damn perfect there, stay in Germany!”

Moreover, the question of German integration is quite interesting. Although they speak the same language and are fundamentally similar, a definite tension exists between Austrian and Germans. It could be that Austrians

Comment [MSOffice10]: Liquids and other inseparable entities come in amounts; things that can be separated into individual units (like people) come in numbers.

Comment [MSOffice11]: Can you explain this? Does it have something to do with the integration of East and West Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall?

feel historically betrayed by Germans; it could be that Germans feel that they do not need to make an effort to integrate into such a similar culture; or it could be a mutual prejudice that roughens the edges of understanding.

Through the assessment of the integration of three of the main immigrant groups in Austria, I have concluded that prejudice and mistrust are significant impediments to integration. Although immigration policy states that foreign residents should be able to succeed socially in Austria, it does not account for possible integration failure due to resistant attitudes of Austrian locals. Furthermore, immigrant groups who mirror this resistant attitude can amplify the problem. Therefore, changes on both sides must take place before integration can be successful. Only with tolerant and flexible attitudes can both locals and foreigners thrive together.

Integrationshaus: My Personal Experience

My internship at the Caritas Integration House in Innsbruck helped me to understand the problems of foreigners and the challenges of integration by personally exposing me to immigrants from all over the world who were living in Austria. One of the main goals of the Integration House is integration. There, people from all over the world and Austrians who are suffering from addiction, sickness, etc. live together and interact with one another. The Integration House residents are also encouraged to interact with the greater Innsbruck and Austrian community by finding employment, enrolling and advancing their children through college preparatory school, and mingling with Austrian locals. The Integration House facilitates such goals through many different social programs. I worked with two of such social programs, one of which was *Dinnerclub*, a program where people from the Integration House, the Innsbruck community, and other parts of the world got together to eat and converse. Each week I helped organize the program and serve food to the participants. From this experience, I got to meet people from all over the world and gain insight into their background and the challenges they faced in this new country.

Twice a week, I also participated in *Lernhilfe*, a tutoring program for foreign primary and secondary school children on the college track. Through my experiences in working with Turkish and African children, I realized that my concept of integration was unclear. These children seemed completely integrated to me. They went to *Gymnasium* (college preparatory school), used public transport, had friends of many different backgrounds, and spoke not only German, but the local Tirolean dialect. And although all of the Turkish students spoke Turkish, listened to Turkish music, and were proud of their culture, I couldn't see how it damaged the concept of integration since they seemed to be socially integrated. I came to understand, however, that children adjust more easily than adults. I realized this when one of my Turkish students asked me how long I had been learning German. "Two years," I said. "Wow," she replied. "Your German is pretty good. My aunt has been here for almost ten years and she can't speak a word." Being in contact with Turkish families, I came to realize why this could be so. Not only do Turks have tight family units, they also tend to stay in Turkish communities in which they can speak their native tongue and feel more comfortable while living in a new place.

Through my work with *Dinnerclub*, I was able to become friends with several African immigrants. They were all friendly and open and almost always participated in social events. They seemed outwardly happy, but inwardly troubled, because, despite their open and tolerant attitudes, the closed attitudes of many Austrians made it

nearly impossible for them to integrate. One Ghanaian man once complained to me that out of a whole train car of passengers, he alone was asked to present his passport. He told me that he asked the man, “Did you check anyone else’s passport? Tell me honestly, are you singling me out because of the color of my skin?” He never told me the man’s reply. The same Ghanaian went on to tell me that everywhere he goes he tries to be nice to people and make friends, though many times they reject his friendliness. “I don’t care, though,” he told me. “Hate me all you want. I will just love you back.”

I was able to get to know another man from Cote D’Ivoire who had problems more far reaching than social integration. Because his mother and father were in his home country, he fled Cote D’Ivoire and sought asylum in Austria. The Austrian government, however, refused to grant asylum, and each day he was in danger of being taken away by the authorities. If anything like that were to ever happen, though, there would be hundreds of outraged people pleading his case, for he had more friends than anyone I knew, had a job delivering newspapers, and was fluent in German. To me, he seemed not only the perfect example of a person in need of asylum, but also the perfect example of successful integration.

Conclusion

My experiences at the Innsbruck Integration house opened my eyes to the challenges of successful integration faced by Austrian immigrants and sparked my curiosity about the reasons for the invisible barriers to social cohesion. Most importantly I realized what was involved in a real integration. In the words of the Director of the Innsbruck Integration house, “integration is not assimilation. Too often people get those two concepts mixed up.”

My experience has led me to conclude that merely fulfilling the conditions dictated by Austrian immigration policy do not bring about successful integration; such a result can only be brought about by openness and flexibility on the side of both foreigners and locals alike. Integration is the peaceful and successful coexistence of different people. It does not require that immigrants change their past, religion, or culture, but allows those with differences to live in harmony with one another.

Works Cited

Put these entries in alphabetical order and use MLA format.

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Sample Log

Internship Journal Excerpts from the United Nations in New York City by Angel Novelo (BAIS, '10)

Thursday June 26, 2008: First Day on the Job

Apprehensive is the best adjective that can be used to describe how I felt on the first day of work at the UN. Although I had made all of the preparations for my internship, I was still nervous and unsure about what to expect. The train ride from my apartment to Grand Central Station was forty-five minutes of mental turmoil. What would the first day be like? I wanted to be received with open arms and bright smiles, which is fortunately exactly what I received. The first person I met was Janine Coye-Felson, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations. She greeted me warmly and introduced me to the UN website, the UN Handbook, *inter alia* (a daily UN journal), ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) documents, and the SALW (Small Arms & Light Weapons) document.

I did not have a UN identification card, so I could not enter the building. So instead I spent my first day three blocks from the UN headquarters, doing desk work.

Tuesday July 1, 2008: Small Arms and Light Weaponry

I had only one meeting today. It was called by the Permanent Mission of Barbados to the UN concerning the Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) working document. I was excited, because I knew I would be meeting with four other Caribbean missions, including my own from Belize. The other three were Guyana, Jamaica, and Bahamas. Mr. Mohammed Deji, the meeting chair, told me that he was not expecting many people to attend because there are not enough staff at any given mission to deal with all the issues. Delegates, representatives, interns, and ambassadors must select the most relevant issues affecting their countries and focus their energies on those. This was my first major lesson. My second lesson was the fact that the UN is not as perfect as it appears to be on television. I was shocked at the behaviour and manners of some of the ambassadors. I saw a very different form of diplomacy in their actions from the one I had expected.

Wednesday July 2, 2008: Day of Meetings

Things are really going well for me. My boss assigned me to attend three meetings. At 9:30 am. I walked over to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Chambers. After the ECOSOC session ended at 1 pm, I had a quick lunch and then went to another meeting with the Third Biennial Meeting of States (BMS-3) on Small Arms and Light Weaponry (SALW). I was surprised by the vast amount of information that is available on how to monitor and stop the illicit trade in arms. My last meeting of the day was devoted to a discussion of what countries are doing to conserve the environment and find alternative fuel sources to provide energy for farm lands.

Thursday July 3, 2008: Acting on my Duties as Elections Officer.

This morning, my boss asked me to meet with a CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) candidate from Afghanistan. Before the meeting, I was joking with a colleague that Afghanistan and women's rights were oxymoronic, but after meeting the candidate, I quickly realized that that country has made significant progress in this area. She convinced me that she would make a good candidate for the position. Shortly afterwards, I met with a candidate from China who has been on the CEDAW committee since 1997 and knew exactly what areas need to be fixed. In fact, she had drafted the Beijing Platform for Action in relation to CEDAW. She had an impressive CV and convinced me that she would continue to make great efforts on behalf of women's rights.

Wednesday July 9, 2008: Climate Change

Yesterday and today I have been dealing with climate change issues. I listened to a well organized presentation on the various effects of climate change and attended a seminar hosted by the bilateral relationship between Malta and Switzerland on Climate Change Diplomacy. I was grateful for the information though it meant I had to miss a luncheon organized by The Netherlands on Victims Rights and Defence Rights. At the seminar, I also met other interns and exchanged contact information.

Thursday July 10, 2008: Election's Officer and Diplomat

Today, my boss invited me to a meeting with the Central American System for Integration (CICA). The meeting was attended by all the regional ambassadors, who were discussing issues that affect the area. In Central America, someone who becomes the ambassador to the UN has reached the pinnacle of a diplomatic career, so I was working alongside people who had direct phone lines to their presidents back home. They looked every bit the statespersons that they were. The women looked like they had just stepped out of a *telenovela* (Latin American soap opera), and the men all looked like presidents. Beyond their looks, what came out of their mouths was also impressive. These people clearly wanted to see real change. They declared that less talking and more action was needed (I was later told that they say that at every meeting).

Later in the day, I met with the Malaysian CEDAW candidate for lunch and a discussion entitled "Strengthening the Implementation of the CEDAW convention." Afterwards, I met with the Malaysian elections officer who told me that the UN was "all talk and no walk." I was beginning to feel that this might be true, but I did not want to believe it because I had long dreamed of working for the UN, the one organization I was convinced could bring about change. Today, however, I got the strong impression that the Security Council's permanent members control everything. If they cannot agree, nothing comes of the proposals from other members.

Later in the evening I met with the French CEDAW candidate. I saw her CV, and it was very impressive. In her French accent, she told me what she planned to propose if she is elected to serve on the committee. She has been active not only in Europe, but in Africa and Asia, and she plans to move to Latin America and see more programs getting started. After that meeting I headed back to the office to eat some Godiva chocolate, given to us by the delegation from Taiwan.

Monday July 14, 2008: Job Offers and "Working" a Diplomatic Reception

Today, my boss asked if I could stay at the mission beyond my internship. She said that the office would really appreciate the help when the General Assembly meets with heads of states in September and October.

Later in the evening, I attended a reception in honour of the new chair of the BMS-3 committee. It was another opportunity to meet more people after my regular job. Luckily, attending these receptions still counts as work! One needs to walk around greeting ambassadors as "Your Excellency," shaking hands, and giving smiles. What I enjoyed the most this evening was my crash course on guerrilla diplomacy. The Dominican diplomat told me that the best people to befriend at receptions are security guards, waiters, and bartenders. The security guards will ensure that you have a parking spot and that you can find the nearest fire escape. The waiters will make sure that you get a belly full of good food. The bartenders will ensure that your drink is always made to your liking and that you won't have to stand in line. After you make the acquaintance of these very important people, *then* you befriend the ambassador. And who knows? The ambassador's security guard might put in a good word for you. That is how the man from Dominica met the Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon. Humility was really the lesson of the day. We may be wined and dined, but we should never forget our manners.