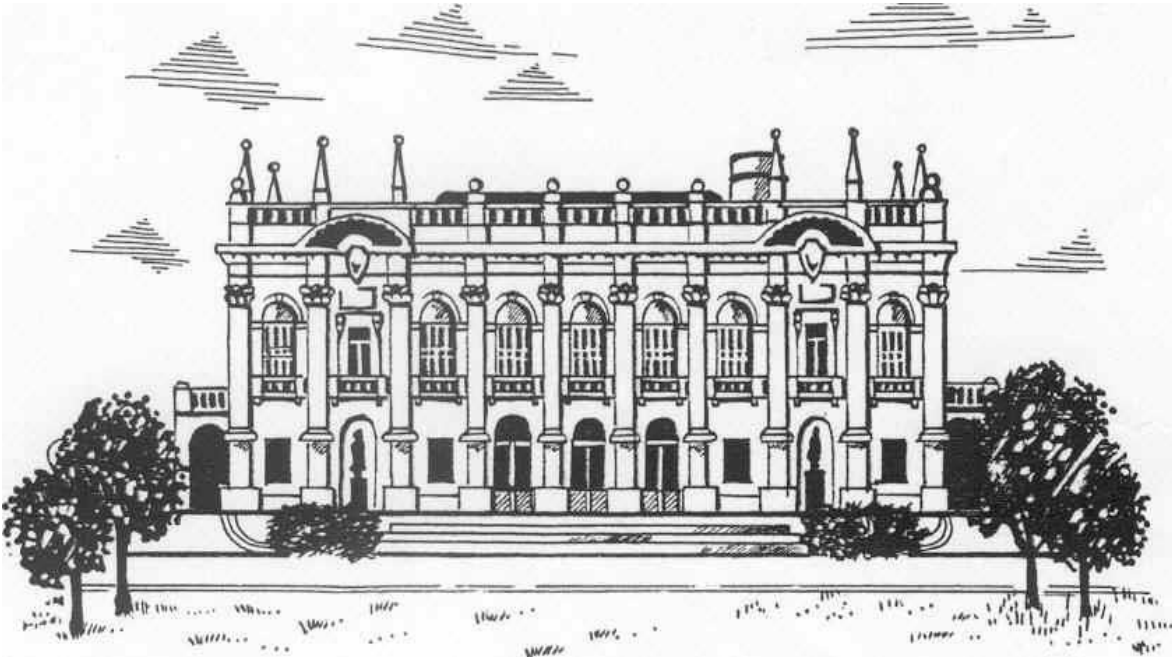




# POLITECNICO DI MILANO



## ERASMUS IN ITALY

SUMMER SEMESTER 01/03/2016-30/07/2016

ANTON HRISTOV | [anton\\_georg2002@yahoo.com](mailto:anton_georg2002@yahoo.com) |



ERASMUS – an experience every student should make!

*Studying abroad changes your mind settings in a positive way and gives you the freshness to continue your education in your regular school without getting frustrated and annoyed about things, that don't work the way you wish they would work. This was my second time going on Erasmus as I've got a previous Degree from The University of Potsdam in Germany. Both times I made the greatest experience during studying ever and I would recommend to everyone not to miss this great opportunity!*

In this report I will try to outline my experiences during my abroad semester in Milan/Italy and give some advices to future students intending on going to take an Erasmus Semester in Milan.

On the one hand chose to go on Erasmus in 3th semester of the education because is kind of the middle of the education, when one has passed the first two – most difficult- semesters in a higher education and would need a break, a change! In my opinion the first two semesters are the hardest in an education because one has to deal with a situation he/she has never been in before - getting used to an educational structure, which is pretty different from what one is used to from High school. On the other in third semester one does not stick in the education that much yet and is more flexible in terms of choosing subjects and experimenting within the education.

I chose to go to Milan Politecnico di Milano is known as one of the best schools for Architecture. So I expected a great education- especially in Architecture. I am intending on taking the Master's degree in Architecture, so I wanted to get some knowledge in the fields of designing a building, working with space and proportions and learning some 3D and Graphics software, which is different from REVIT.

From Italy and the Italians, I was expecting a welcoming, warm, southern mentality, beautiful places to visit and good food.

*POLITECNICO DI MILANO*

*(Professional and Administrative Experiences at PoliMi)*



**POLITECNICO  
DI MILANO**

## Functions and Principles of School Administration

*The Functions and Principles of the University's Administration can be easily bracket together in the Sentence:*

***Be prepared to make your worst experience ever!***

My headache with the University's Administration started before even leaving to Milan. I was supposed to contact my tutor from Polimi to sign and approve my study plan. I tried to contact her at least 3 times but I never got a respond. I tried to get my study plan signet and approved a few more times during my stay in Milan but this never happened. My tutor just never responded to my mails. I was not the only one having this problem. The University's stuff just doesn't care about the students.

The study plan turned out being a little problem. After arriving at Politecnico, we were told during the Welcome Event, that some of us are enrolled in the wrong semester, even in the wrong school, which meant, that the online system was not going to let us register for the lectures we wanted to participate in. I forgot to write above, that we had to make a new Study plan because many of the lectures we picked before the semester start, were not available, even if they were offered. The bad thing was, that we were informed about the issue with the enrollment and in the same

time we were told that, that we will have to register for lectures really quickly, because the online registration was going to open a few hours later and all lectures were going to be booked out within one hour. Once a lecture was booked out, there was no chance to get in. So, I started asking question, about how the enrollment issue can be fixed, so we can get the lectures that are relevant for us. I was told that we have to send an email and they will try to fix everything. After my bad email communication about my study plan, I of course had to ask, if they are really going to check the mails and try to fix the issue. The lady got mad and started telling me how stressed out they are due to the huge amount of exchange students they receive. I just told her I was stressed out too, because I was not going to get the lectures and the 30 Credits I needed to bring back to KEA after my Exchange Semester. The lady just looked at me really mad, turned her back to me and went away. She was the one from the administration and responsible for the exchange students from Copenhagen but she just did not care.

The only thing I could do is to see in which semester I was enrolled and to pick some lectures from the list the online registration system was going to offer me. I did so and this caused me a huge amount of stress and problems because the lectures I picked were from the last year of the Master's Degree- really high level!

During my stay at Polimi I tried to fix some other smaller administrative issues, but I barely got a support and help by the University's administration.

In the end of my exchange I tried to get my records to bring them to KEA- of course they were not able to give me the document. So one month later I am still waiting for my records from Polimi. Let's hope that I will get them!

## *STUDYING ARCHITECTURE AT POLITECNICO DI MILANO*



Politecnico di Milano is known as one of the top Universities for Architecture- I can only agree with that!

I took Subjects only in Architecture because I am going to take the Master's degree in it as I already mentioned above.

At Polimi you will be only taught by Professors. For those who had never studied at a University, this might take a little getting used to that. The quality of teaching (if you are lucky to get Professors, that speak proper English) is really great- the expectations to the students as well. The expectations do not change, even if you have a Professor, who's English is really bad. I personally liked that. I got to learn a lot. Polimi offers a large pallet of amazing workshops, studios and lectures with great architects from all over the world.

Most of the Professors at Politecnico are pretty conservative, in terms of way of teaching as in the way of thinking about Architecture. But not all of them.

I was arguing with one of my Professors during the entire semester, because she was trying to make me convince me to adopt her Ideas, Concept and Design. She did not



succeed. She was also one of the Professors with very bad English. She was not able to give me arguments, why I should change certain things in my project. She would either say “It is ugly” or “I have never seen that before” with the very strong Italian accent. Yes, you will have to get used to the Italian accent- sometime you will ask yourself if the speak English or Italian right now.

Don't worry to argue with Professors, if you are convinced in your work. They will always be fair in the end. I got the highest grade from the Professor I was talking about above.

Despite all this, you can really learn a lot if you want to!

Be prepared to deliver a lot of work every week. You will have Project Reviews every week. They are not mandatory, but I would suggest you to take part in them. They are very useful if you want to learn and pass your exams.

I took one Studio and two Workshops. I had amazing projects- very interesting and informative.

Just keep in mind that studying at Polimi is very demanding but in a good enjoyable way.



To get the picture about the projects I had in Milan, I'll show you some pictures from my work.

## *Advanced Architectural Design Studio*

In this studio we had to design a Tower in the city of Milan considering an existing gas station. We had to adapt our design to the gas station's design as it is an architectural heritage.



## *Architectural and Urban Simulation*

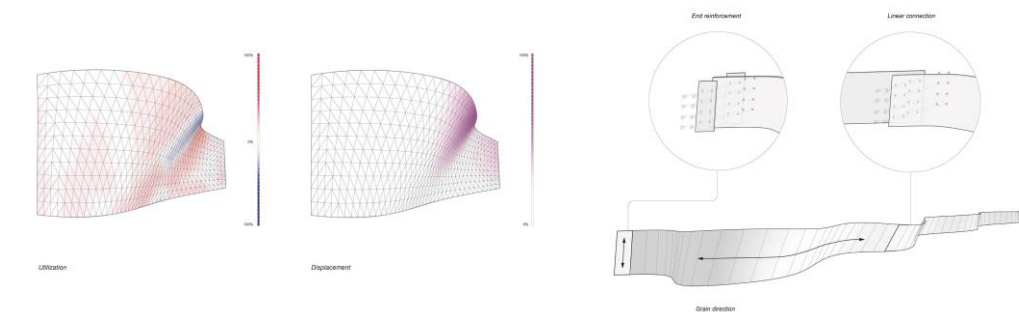
In this workshop we had to design an abandoned urban space in Milan basing our design on a various number of different analyzes we made before the design stage.

(Unfortunately, I lost the folder with this course' s documents)

### *Woven Wood*



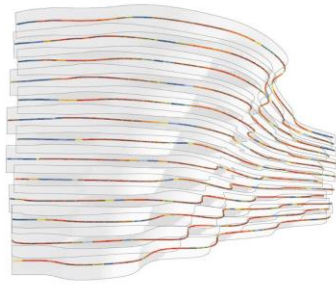
In this workshop we had to design and laser-cut a wall made of plywood. It was a workshop about the software Rhino and some plug-ins like Grasshopper, Kangaroo etc. The Installation we created was exposed during Milan Design Week- “Fuori Salone”



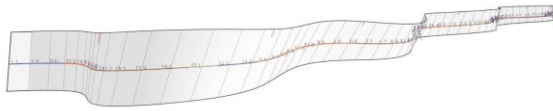
Woven Wood Workshop

Woven Wood Workshop





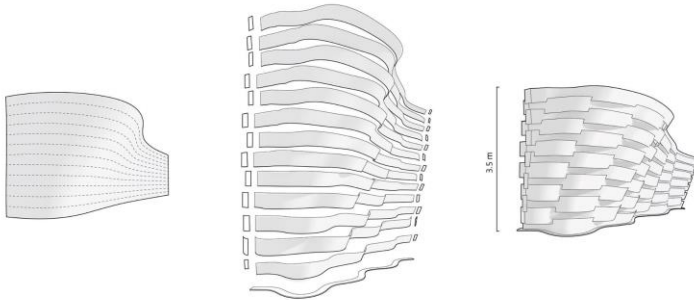
Curvature analysis



Bending angle

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Woven Wood Workshop




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Surface Division // Strip Generation // Installation Diagram

Woven Wood Workshop



## *Social and Cultural Experience*



**yes, i am  
italian.  
yes, my family  
is really loud.**

Italian Mentality and Culture can be very shocking.

In my opinion, Italian people are not very open to foreigners, not even the students at the University.

Italians can be really rude. They are loud. Good manners are nothing for Italians. Very often they are impolite and lazy. I feel that they really hold all stereotypes.

I had a great social life during my Stay in Milan. I met many nice people and became good friends with them but they all are not Italians, unfortunately- mainly Exchange students from other countries or international students taking their education at Polimi.

ITALIANS DO NOT SPEAK ENGLISH! Be aware of that!

I really don't have much to say about Italian Society and Culture. I got pretty disappointed in the very beginning.

I don't want to judge! I don't want to say Italians are good or bad. I guess their culture and mentality are just way too different from what I am used to.

## ITALY

I got to travel a lot during my stay in Milan. And I would recommend to everyone who goes on Exchange to Milan to do the same. You will get to see amazing Nature and Cities with great old architecture.

Traveling by train from Milan to any destination in Italy happens pretty fast and cheap. You can also fly. From the three airports in Milan you will find many low cost flights to any destination. Milan is very well connected to entire Europe, as it is the financial and fashion centre of Italy.

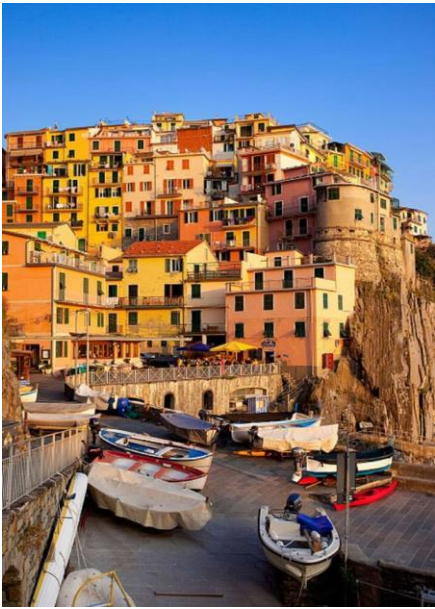
Some of the places I visited were the Italian Alps- Lago Como, Varenna, Bellagio, Como, Lago Maggiore, Arona, Cinque Terre, Venice, Florence, Genova, Torino, Santa Margarita and many, many others.

Go to the Alps and the Sea. It is stunning.

*Here you will see a few pictures of just some of the places I visited.*

















## *Living in Milan*

Milan is pretty expensive compared to the rest of Italy- especially Nightlife. You would pay 25 Euro just to enter a night club. One beer costs around 5 Euros. But compared to Copenhagen it is cheaper.

There is this area called Colonnen downtown, where young people gather together on the square to pre-drink before they join a party. Drinks in this area are pretty cheap. Drinking on a square or street is very common in Italy.

Italians have the so called “Aperitivo”. I loved that. You go to a bar or restaurant (every bar, restaurant or café in Milan offers “Aperitivo”) and buy a drink, which you pay for and you get free food- usually buffet with various number of dishes. This would cost you from 5 to 10 Euros.

Great areas to go out for drinks or food are Navigli (along the canals), Porta Venezia (not far from Polimi) and Brera (close to Arco de la Pace, behind Parco Sempione).







If you like modern architecture and high-rise buildings you should visit Milano Porta Garibaldi, which is the city of Milan. There you will get to also see the famous vertical gardens.





## *Accommodation*

Finding accommodation in Milan is not very easy. I would suggest, that everyone who wants to spend his Erasmus semester there starts looking for a place to stay very early. In Italy you will barely find someone, who rents a room or apartment for less than one year. Many apartments get rented out for at least four years.

## *Conclusion*

*My Exchange semester was nothing what I was expecting but in a very nice way. I had a marvelous time. I would again recommend to everyone to go on Exchange!*