ALL 3773 Hmong Language and Culture Immersion in Thailand

PRE-REQUISITE:
This course is designed for students who are able to speak Beginning level Hmong. No reading/writing skills required. No previous Hmong language courses required.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Hmong in the United States trace their story of diaspora directly to Thailand as the most recent country of immigration. While many traced their refugee stories to Thailand, before immigrating to the United States and other countries, Thailand is also a country where many Hmong settled. Thailand is a country of many Hmong stories, intertwined with settlement, immigration, social economic struggles and successes, language development, and more. This study abroad course will focus on learning, observing and exploring the Hmong diaspora through language and culture in Thailand. The course will explore the historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts of Hmong settlement and immigration in Thailand as well as compare to contexts of Hmong in the United States. This course will also fulfill the Liberal Education guidelines in order to give students a wholistic approach to learning. This class will provide students with: Diversified Core, Designated Theme, and Writing Intensive opportunities of learning. The course will teach students to analyze the “why” and “how” of the Hmong diaspora journey and how it affects communities beyond just Hmong in Thailand. Designated themes of ethnic communities and tourism, the environment and sustainable living, as well as refugee communities and host countries will be discussed in depth. Students will be journaling daily on reflections and learning, as well as work on the final project presentation topics.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
With this course, students will become better Global Citizens and:

1. Learn about the differences of Hmong diaspora in Thailand, pertaining to the Hmong American experience. Students will learn and engage in analytical thinking and application of experiences from interactions with the local community versus information learned through readings.
2. Be immersed in Hmong terminology, both formal and informal contexts, in everyday social settings, and through music, art, and songs. Students will have hands on opportunities to learn from the locals and present the values of their learning to peers and locals.
3. Learn in depth about Hmong history and cultural experiences in regions of Thailand, pertaining to language, culture, social structures, and more. Students will understand how historical experiences greatly affect communities and those around them. Students will apply these experiences to their own experiences back home and learn how they, themselves, are agents of history.
4. Discover the similarities and differences of social norms, clothing, art and customs of the Hmong in Thailand, in perspective to the Hmong in the US. Students will learn how to garner respect and appreciation of differences and similarities of communities abroad and back home. Students will apply what’s learned abroad on-site visits, homestays, and excursions to their own home experiences and learn about how to help maintain communities through differences and shared experiences.

5. Apply learned Hmong to connect with students and teachers abroad. Students will have opportunities to be fully immersed in Hmong language and culture. Many of these experiences will be in cultural art exchanges of songs, dance, speeches, and more. Students will engage in exchanges with locals abroad in order to build community and a sense of kinship through language, arts, and shared experiences.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:**
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to locate and critically evaluate information about the Hmong Diaspora experience in Thailand, and other events surrounding the settlement in Thailand. Through the many readings, discussions, and seminars – students will be able to identify key elements of Hmong language and culture, pertaining to the diasporic journey. Students will participate in graded class discussions, journal entries, as well as a final project – presented at the end of the semester abroad.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**
Any texts needed, will be provided by instructor. Students are required to bring a journal for daily journaling.

**ATTENDANCE**
Students are required to be present and on time for each session. All absences are unexcused except for illnesses, which will need to be directly discussed with instructor ahead of time, when possible.

**HOMEWORK & PROJECTS**
There will be assigned readings that must be completed before sessions, seminars. Journal entries are required to be completed each day. Students will be assigned a final project, to be presented at the end of the semester.

**ACCOMMODATIONS**
Any student needing accommodations for any part of the class should talk to the instructor at the beginning of the semester. All students will have equal access to lessons and learning.

**COURSE EVALUATION FOR**
Students are expected to participate actively in the classroom and ask questions when students are unclear about anything. To do well in class, it is expected that students know all materials presented in class for quizzes and exams. Grading for the semester is divided as follows:
Att/Participation  20%
Presentations  20%
Assignments  20%
Journal  40%

Percentage Brackets:
95% - 100%  A  90% - 94%  A-  88% - 89%  B+  85% - 87%  B
80% - 84%  B-  78% - 79%  C+  75% - 77%  C  70% - 74%  C-
68% - 69%  D+  65% - 67%  D  60% - 64%  D-  00% - 59%  F

Tentative Schedule, May Term 2024

May 11th, Depart MSP to Chiangmai (Arrive May 12th for Orientation – pending arrival time)
June 10th, Depart Chiangmai to MSP (In order to be within the Non-Visa under 30 days requirement)

Week 1: Orientation and Context of Hmong Diaspora in Thailand
5/12  Check in, Orientation
Seminar 1: Hmong in Thailand (Demographics, Language, Social, and Cultural Context)

5/13  Survival Thai, Basic Culture and Norms
Seminar 2: Experiences of Hmong Diaspora in Thailand (Past and Present: How did Hmong end up in Thailand?)

5/14  Field Experience: Doi Pui & Chang Khieng (Spiritual Healing)
Field Seminar: Assimilation, Acculturation, and Tourism


5/16  Seminar 4: Language, Dialects, and Literacy
Week 1 Reflection Activity

5/17  Weekend Guided Exploration of Chiangmai (Optional)

5/18  Weekend Guided Exploration of Chiangmai (Optional)

Week 2: Community and People
5/19  Field Experience: Hmong Markets (Cultural arts and language exchange)
       Fabrics and arts factory (Socio-economic application)
       Piyawat Center (6PM-8PM) Immersion

5/20  Field Experience:
Piyawat Center (6PM-8PM) Immersion

5/21  Field Experience: Mae Tang (Health & Healing)????
Week 1:

5/22 Piyawat Center (6PM-8PM) Immersion

5/22 Homestay: Doi Inthanon (Market)
Language and Culture Immersion

5/23 Homestay: Doi Inthanon
Royal Project, Economic Shifts and Self Sufficiency

5/24 Return & Guided Exploration (Optional)

Week 2:

5/25 Guided Exploration (Optional)

Week 3: Securing Culture & Existence

5/26 Seminar 5: IMPECT (hill-tribe NGO working on capacity building and human rights)

5/27 Homestay: Mae Sa Mai (Hike to Mae Sa Mai)
Midcourse Reflection

5/28 Homestay: Mae Sa Mai (Basket weaving, hike to the TREE, batik)

5/29 Homestay: Mae Sa Mai (mochi making, hemp process, farming)

5/30 Return
Seminar 6: Homestay Reflection

5/31 Hmong Village – Cart racing & flower fields

5/31 Pre-Trip Briefing

Week 4: Remnants of Diaspora (Discovering the Past, Framing the Future)

6/2 Depart for Loei Province (2AM)
Arrival Chiang Khan & Mekong River (Where did folks cross?)

6/3 Field Experience Day 1: Ban Vinai (Guide: Nor Pau Moua)

6/4 Field Experience Day 2: Ban Vinai (Guide: Nor Pau Moua)

6/5 Depart back to Chiangmai
Week 4 Reflection

6/6 Final Projects Presentations and End Course Celebrations

6/7 Open Exploration
6/8  Open Exploration
6/9  Packing Day and Check-in
6/10 Flight to MSP