



# Internship in Thailand

## Course Details

**Course Designator & Number: THAI 4896**

**Number of Credits: 4**

**Language of Instruction: English**

**Contact Hours: 60**

**Instructor: On-Site Faculty**

## Course Description

This course provides a cross-cultural experience of working on various development issues with a regional nonprofit organization. The course focuses on guiding students to understand their own identity as they integrate theory with reality by participating in local development sites. Students are prepared for entering into their community work through discussions on stakeholder and agency analysis, culture specific gender and diversity context, ethics, and power and privilege. Through the course students will develop, defend, and challenge their own values and beliefs.

The mentoring continues while students are at their internship placement as they come in contact with social actors, community organizations, and local and national authorities in various regions of Chiang Mai province at the marginal urban and rural levels. The students are urged to play an active role in their internships by providing suggestions and solutions, discussing alternatives, and investigating all areas of their internship placement to garner a holistic view of the realities of development work. Through practical internship experiences as well as readings, discussions, and written assignments, students will deepen their understanding of the host-country cultural context and development work from an international perspective, as well as critically examine their own worldview.

This course also includes an optional 10 hours of Thai language instruction as needed.

## Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, the students will be able to:

- apply development theories learned in the classroom to the realities of the work experience at the internship site;

- understand ideas, concepts, ethical standards, and theories related to the internship agency and community served by the agency;
- gain professional competencies such as intercultural communication, interpersonal skills, problem-solving and decision-making;
- strengthen self-confidence, self-esteem, independence, and self-awareness; and
- strengthen Thai communication skills.

## Methodology

The goals of this course are to provide students with an opportunity to apply what they have learned about international development in a real-world situation, as well as to help them develop better crosscultural and practical skills.

The internship course focuses on direct engagement with a local organization and community through (a) interactions and discussions with on-site organization staff and participants; (b) structured analysis, discussions, and presentations on the experience; and (c) consultations with faculty during the placement and paper writing.

During the on-site portion of the course, MSID local faculty are available through email and in-person meetings with the students, both during the faculty site visit as well as the meeting at ISDSI.

During the classroom phase of the course, students will meet with the internship coordinator to finalize their placement and research options. The classroom phase includes a series of seminars that focus on the practical as well as theoretical issues involved in participating in an internship in a developing country. This will include both establishing rapport in the field and cross-cultural learning.

During the classroom phase and before their placement, students will write a proposal about their placement and their specific focus. This will be 2-3 pages long and due at the end of the first week of the internship phase.

The internship involves a placement with a local organization and living in a local community. Students will keep a field notebook describing their experiences, participate in organization and community activities as appropriate, and write a final paper. The internship is focused on the specific organization, with the paper written as a topical case study—examining how the organization deals with an issue in international development of interest to the student.

The final seminar in the last week of the program is focused on reflection, peer-to-peer learning, and discussions of skills gained throughout the internship experience.

## Required Reading / Materials

Students are expected to conduct independent research and read materials related to their agency. Additional readings may be assigned during the course to help prepare students for the field portion of the course.

- Delcore, Henry D. (2003) "Nongovernmental Organizations and the Work of Memory in Northern Thailand," in *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 30: (1), 61-84 pp.
- Denzin N K and Lincoln, Y S (2008). "Introduction, the Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research," *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, London: Sage Publication. Pp: 1-19.
- Miller, Wesley (1990). "Internship, the Liberal Arts, and Participant Observation," in *Teaching Sociology*, Vol. 18: (1), 78-82 pp.
- Mompoti, Tlamele and Prinsen, Gerard (2000). "Ethnicity and Participatory Development Methods in Botswana: Some Participants are to be Seen and Not Heard," in *Development in Practice*, Vol 10: (5), 625-637 pp.
- Plews-Ogan, Erin et al. (2017) "Polyculture, autonomy and community: the pursuit of sustainability in a northern Thai farming village," in *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability*, Vol. 15: (4), 418- 431 pp.
- Zinn, Maxine Baca (1979) "Field Research in Minority Communities: Ethical, Methodological, and Political of Observation by an Insider," in *Social Problems*, Vol. 27: (2), 209-219 pp.

# Grading

## Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

## Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Class participation	10%
Learning objective and responsible project	5%
Work performance assessment	25%
Daily field notes	20%
Peer internship groups/weekly email update	5%
Presentation in final seminar	10%
Final paper	25%
Overall grade	100%

## Assessment Details

### Attendance & Class Participation

Students are expected to come to every class having completed all required readings and able to contribute to the discussions, questions, critiques, and analysis and express ideas about the topics. They are expected to actively participate in the field studies by engaging in a meaningful conversation with the organization representatives.

### Description Of Assignments

Class participation: Students are active participants in the course, both in the classroom and internship meetings, as well as the midcourse and final seminar. This includes discussing the readings, asking questions, and being an informed and active member of the class.

Learning objective and responsible project (MOU): This is the collaborative effort between students and their supervisor to outline the five main learning objectives involving new learning, expanding growth throughout the internship, and the outcomes that will benefit both student and organization.

Work performance assessment: Performance assessment will be evaluated by the host organization with the following criteria:

- Taking responsibility of the assigned tasks
- Interpersonal relationship

- Adaptability
- Learning attitude
- Participation with organization activities

The purpose of the work performance assessment is to give the student feedback on their ability to work with and function in a cross-cultural setting and organization.

Daily field notes should have two parts: **Daily Entries** and **Interpretive Entries**. Students must clearly label all material in their journals.

**Daily entries** will consist of two parts: a **“time log”** and **“descriptive entries.”** The “time log” is a brief description of what happened (Date-Time-Location-Activity). The “descriptive entries” are a record of informal conversations/interviews, observations, and site descriptions from the field experiences. Students’ descriptive observations will enable them to provide the illustrative detail that gives human interest and credibility to their interpretations. Each daily entry should be at least 1 page.

**Interpretive entries** should begin to identify patterns that give meaning, order and predictability to your particular cultural scene. These entries will serve as a first attempt to analyze the study and can be used in the final essay. Students are expected to have at least five interpretive entries. Each interpretive entry should be 2 pages.

### **Peer Internship Groups/Weekly Email Update**

#### **Peer Internship Meetings:**

Each week students must meet with a group of their peers to discuss their internship progress and brainstorm ways to move forward together. This meeting can be held in person or using social media channels. At the end, students must write up all meeting results in their field notes and clearly label them.

#### **Weekly Email Update:**

Students must send a brief email update to the project advisor (in message text, not as an attachment). The email should include information about the Peer Internship Meeting, as well as a general update about the project paper, answering the following questions:

A. Paper update: Students should describe their organization, what they are learning about development, and what challenges they face in their placement.

B. Peer internship meeting update: Students should discuss their placement with each other and work together as a group to reflect on the process and solutions to cross-cultural and organizational challenges.

Weekly email updates are due by the end of each week.

Note: Students do not need to meet with their peer internship group or send an update email during the last week of the course.

Draft of final paper: Students will submit a draft of their final paper to the on-site faculty halfway through the internship phase.

Final presentation in the internship seminar: This seminar is conducted at the end of the semester. This provides an opportunity for students to share experiences from their internship site with the whole group in a well-prepared, 10-minute presentation. Each student's presentation should contain 7 to 10 slides explaining their experience.

Final paper (15 pages): The final paper must include an introduction to the topic of the paper and a section describing the placement organization, with specific emphasis on a topic that the organization is working on. In addition to the paper introduction, each student should also write about their role in the organization and how this helped them learn about the topic under consideration.

# Course Content

## Unit 1

- Introduction to course
  - Course expectation
  - Course schedule and activities
  - What is internship?
- One-on-one check-ins about placements
  - Recheck student's preferred placement
  - Student expectation toward placement
  - Placement options and details

## Unit 2

- Continued check-ins about internship placement
- The internship assignments
  - How to write learning objective and MOU
  - How to selecting an appropriate design for the paper
  - How to write the paper
  - How to do the presentation

## Unit 3

- Introduction to field study and community field work
  - How to collect data
  - Formulating the field work question/problems
  - Data analysis and interpretation
  - Assignments for the village field study

## Unit 4

- Extended village field study (practice exercise)

## Unit 5

- Sharing experience and discussion of field study and community field work

## Unit 6

- Finalized the placements



- Roles and responsibilities at the placement
- Meeting with the internship placement

## Unit 7

- Work culture in Thailand
  - How to work with the local organization
  - Stakeholder analysis at the workplace
  - Gender
- Meeting with the internship placement (continued)

## Unit 8

- Internship preparedness and review
  - Internship placement
  - Timeline and assignments
  - Health and safety
  - Dress code
  - Gear check

## Unit 9

- Break

## Unit 10

- Internship placement orientation
- Get familiar with host agency
- Revise internship goal and internship plan
- Finalized roles and responsibilities
- Journal writing
- Peer internship meeting and email update

## Unit 11

- Internship
- Develop internship project
- Journal writing
- Peer internship meeting and email update

## Unit 12

- Internship
- Internship midcourse meeting
  - Experience exchange at the placement

- Progress of the project
- Feedback and suggestion from faculty
- Journal writing
- Peer internship meeting and email update

## Unit 13

- Internship
- Site visit from MSID faculty member
- Journal writing
- Peer internship meeting and email update
- Compile first draft or final paper

## Unit 14

- Internship
- Site visit from MSID faculty member
- Journal writing
- Peer internship meeting and email update
- Draft final paper due

## Unit 15

- Internship
- Journal writing
- Peer internship meeting and email update
- Revise final paper and feedback from supervisor/MSID faculty

## Unit 16

- Final week seminar
  - Prepare final paper and presentation
  - Paper presentation
  - Wrap up course

# Policies

## Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

## University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

### Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

### Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).