

Thai Language and Society

Culture, Ecology, and Community Program

Spring Semester, 2024

Course Description

This course is focused on learning Thai language and culture. This includes both competency in the Thai language, as well as developing cultural competency and an understanding the social historical context of broader Thai society.

Understanding and using Thai appropriately is a critical skill for the remainder of the semester during the other courses in the field. Understanding the social historical context is important so that students understand the context and issues in the other courses during the semester.

Thai Language

The majority of the course is focused on the Thai language, both written and spoken. The course uses a competency based approach and is designed for beginners for *whom Thai is a foreign language*. The emphasis on this course is on speaking, listening comprehension, and reading and writing skills. Students will develop fundamental language skills in Thai helping students to practice and build vocabulary, use Thai in daily life, as well as use Thai during courses and independent learning during their time in Thailand.

Thai Culture and Society

During the first month weekly seminars on Thai history and society, along with experiential learning activities, will help the students to develop cultural competency and an understanding of Thai society and social issues. The schedule and topics of the language portion of the course are flexible and depend on student progress and comprehension.

Assessment includes assignments, as well as essays, and written and oral exams, as well as a presentation.

Course Objectives

The objectives for this course are that:

- Students will have a core working vocabulary and fluency sufficient for daily life in Thailand
- Be able to carry out basic conversations in Thai with good comprehension and understanding
- Will have the capacity to be independent learners of Thai, adding contextually appropriate vocabulary and phrases as needed in their studies and independent learning
- Will understand the social, cultural, and historical context of Thai culture and language

Methodology

Classes are in small groups primarily in Thai, with some discussion of cultural or related issues in English as needed. The instruction uses several language teaching methods to help student progress quickly to a basic and useful level of Thai language competency.

The weekly seminars in the first month will be in English, setting the context for the semester, including reading, essays, and field studies.

Grading and Assessment

Course Component Details	Total
Class Attendance and Participation	10
Class participation in this course means on-time attendance, active involvement in the classroom and during other activities, being responsive and active in peer teaching/learning, exhibiting culturally appropriate dress and behavior, and regularly bringing personal experiences from outside the classroom to class for focused discussion.	
Homework and Assignments	10
Homework will be assigned for you to review and practice on learned topics that relate to your daily living. This will include reading and writing assignments, and speaking in class about daily activities, interactions with Thai people and cross-cultural experiences.	
Tone Test	10
This test focuses on analyzing the word and correct pronunciation. You will have 20 minutes to write the tone that corresponds with the given words. Following this, one at a time students per time, will then pronounce the words to an instructor who was not his/her primary language instructor.	
Reading Test	15
This test focuses on comprehension of Thai vocabulary, conjunctions and question words. You will have one hour to complete the test.	
Oral Presentation in Thai	15
The presentation is a 10 minute individual presentation with Thai instructors assessing the presentation. The Thai language instructors will give students the topic rubrics during the course. The grade is based on the presentation content, organization, and language proficiency.	
Final Thai Oral Exam	20
The final oral exam is a 30 minute conversational interview with a Thai language instructor who is not the student's primarily language instructor. Assessment is based on conversational ability, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, and tones.	
Field Studies	20
Field Study Notes: Take notes on your observations during the field studies. Your notes can be in any format, but need to be clear about what you are writing about, what you are observing and any questions you might have about the field study. Be sure to write the date on the top of the page of each field study observation.	10
Independent Field Research Project (IFRP): The IFRP is research on a topic of your choice related to Thai History and Society. The emphasis is primarily on field observations broadly defined, drawing on both class-related field studies as well as independent observations on your own time. This is not a book report or literature review, but an independent research project.	10
Proposal: The IFRP proposal will be one page long and a short presentation to the class explaining a statement of intent, how data will be gathered, the feasibility of studying this during the course, how this is related to the topic of the course (history and society) and any potential challenges you may anticipate running into.	
Progress update: This part of the IFRP is a short update during the course delivered orally on what the student has discovered about their topic so far, what further questions this raises, any challenges they have faced and how they have overcome them, as well as further information they will be looking for during the second half of the field study.	
Final Presentation: On the last day of the course each student will give a presentation on their topic, focusing on the initial question, methods, challenges, and the outcome of their focused inquiry. This should be presented with supporting slides. This will be followed by questions and comments from fellow students and instructors.	
Rubric for final presentation	
1. Clarity and organization — is the issue clearly explained, linked to the topic and readings of the course, and well organized?	
2. Experiential learning/field studies/observations — does the presentation link to specific examples of observations?	
3. Interviews — does the presentation reflect discussions, interviews, and talks with local people and community members?	
4. Depth — is the issue analyzed and explained well and thoroughly?	

Course Materials

Thai Speaking for Beginners Book: The purpose of this book is to supplement what you learned in class with more speaking practice. It includes vocabulary, sentence structure, examples of how to use question words, conversations, language notes, and culture notes.

Thai Reading for Beginners Book: The purpose of this book is to supplement what you learned in class with additional reading about Thai language rules. This includes a review of Thai grammar, consonant classes, tone rules, and vowels. There are also exercises in the back of the book.

Thai Workbook for Beginners: The purpose of this workbook is to practice and review what you learned in class. There are various exercises and each lesson corresponds to what your Thai language instructor has taught in class. Your assignments in this workbook will be graded by your Thai language instructor. Additional assignments may be given through at the course and will also be graded by your Thai language instructor.

Thai Culture and Society Reader: This is the reader for this course and will be an important source of contextual information for other courses during the semester. Additional readings may be assigned.

Course Topics and Schedule

Thai language

Monday through Thursday 8:30 — 11:30 (Block 1, and week 1 of Blocks 2-4)

Seminars

Monday or as scheduled 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Thai Language

Week 1 - January 15 - 18

Thai language course orientation, literacy, introductions, numbers, money, food

Week 2 - January 22 - 25

Literacy, food (continue), beverages, fruit

Week 3 - January 29 - February 1

Literacy, fruit, tastes, place, family

Week 4 - February 5 - 8

Literacy, family (continue), describing people, social relationship, describing things

TONE TEST: February 8 from 10:45 - 11:30 AM

Week 5 - February 12 - 15

Literacy, describing things (continue), health, daily activities, time, calendar, vocabulary related to food system

Week 6 - March 11 - 14

Literacy, daily activities, time, calendar (continue), vocabulary related to forest

PRESENTATION: March 14 from 8:30 - 11:30 AM

Week 7 - April 15 -19

Literacy, daily activities, time, calendar (continue), vocabulary related to oceans

READING TEST: April 18 from 10:00 - 11:30 AM

FINAL ORAL EXAM: April 19 from 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Monday January 15: Thai Geography and History

Baker, Chris and Pasuk Phongpaichit, *A History of Thailand*, Cambridge University Press, 2014

- Glossary
- Chronology
- Chapter 1: Before Bangkok
- Chapter 9: A political society, 1970s onward

“Territorialization and state power in Thailand,” Vanderveest, Peter, and Nancy Lee Peluso, in *Theory and Society* 24: 385-426, 1995.

Tuesday January 16: Wiang Kum Kam Field Study

Ng, S., Wood, S.H. & Ziegler, A.D. Ancient floods, modern hazards: the Ping River, paleofloods and the 'lost city' of Wiang Kum Kam. *Natural Hazards* 75, 2247–2263 (2015)

Originally a Hariphunchai settlement, Wiang Kum Kam became the Lanna Kingdom capital in 1286 before the capital was moved to Chiang Mai. The city was eventually abandoned sometime after the 1500s. The city is an important archeological site going into the deep past of Northern Thailand.

Wednesday January 17: Maejo University

Orientation to Maejo University, campus, Thai cultural activities

Thursday January 18: Traditional Lanna House Museum Field Study

The Lanna Houses collection is a part of Chiang Mai University, and is both a collection of vernacular architecture of Northern Thailand, as well as a center for learning about traditional handicrafts.

Friday January 19: Ban Haw market Field Study AM / Chiang Mai City Arts and Lanna Folk Life Museum Field Study PM

The morning will be spent at the Friday market at the gates of Chiang Mai's largest mosque, with a diversity of ethnic hill tribes, Burmese, Yunnanese and other vendors. This field study will include studying the market, as well as a market study at Wararot Market (Kat Luang).

The Chiang Mai City Arts and Culture Center / Lanna Folklife Museum are in the center of the Old City in Chiang Mai, focused on the history of Northern Thailand and its cultural heritage.

Sunday January 21: Evening Walking Street Market

The Sunday Walking Street was one of the first walking street markets in Thailand. Several streets in the old city are shut down and turned into a large sprawling market with food, handicrafts, art, and more for sale.

Monday January 22: Thai Society and Social Structure

Saichol Sattayanurak, “Thai identity and nationalism,” 241-252 in *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Thailand* (RHCT), Pavin Chachavalpongpun, Editor, Routledge, 2020.

Glassman, Jim, “Class, race, and uneven development in Thailand,” in *RHCT*, 305-317

PROPOSAL PRESENTATION

Tuesday January 23: Buddhism Discussion at Wat Suan Dok Field Study

This field study will be at Wat Suan Dok, traditionally one of the more important temples in Chiang Mai containing the chedi of the Chiang Mai Royal Family. There will be an extended discussion with one of the monks at the temple about Buddhism in Thailand.

Wednesday January 24: Maejo University

Alternative and organic agriculture, fertilizer production, cannabis cultivation

Thursday January 25: Ping River

Lanna's Lifeline: The Ping River and life surrounding it, *CityLife*, 2018

The Ping river is an important part of the heritage of Chiang Mai. We will be traveling on the Ping through the heart of Chiang Mai to learn more about the urban area, as well as how the river has influenced the development of Chiang Mai.

Friday January 26: Mosque Field Study

This field study will visit and learn from the large Muslim community in Chiang Mai.

Saturday January 27: Old City and Kiew Chom Muang NGO Field Study

This field study spends time in the “old city” (inside the moat) and elsewhere learning about the geography and history of Chiang Mai.

Monday January 29: Historical and Social Context of Thai Politics

Pavin Chachavalponpun, “Introduction: a timeless Thailand,” in *RHCT*, 3-14

Connors, Michael K., “The two faces of democracy,” in *RHCT*, 55-70

IFRP UPDATE

Tuesday January 30: Seminar with Dr Wanwilai: Thai Economic Development

This seminar will focus on the economic structure and development of Thailand.

Wednesday January 31: Gender, Identity and Human Rights with Khun Matcha

Sanders, Douglas, “Sex and gender diversity,” in *RHCT*, 340-352

Thursday February 1 - Saturday February 3

MSID: Village study in the rural community of Don Jieng

CEC: Expedition and leadership at Mok Fa National Park

Monday February 5: Engaging Local Communities within a Global Context

Kanokwan Manorum, “NGOs and civil society in Thailand,” in *RHCT*, 366-378

Tuesday February 6: Thai cooking school

Thai food and cuisine is world famous and a central part of Thai culture. Learning about the traditions and how to cook Thai food is an important (and fun) way to learn more about Thai culture and life ways.

Wednesday February 7: Maejo University

Aquaculture, Thai gastronomy

Thursday February 8: Independent Field Research Presentation

Field Journals handed in.

Introduction to courses (CEC / MSID)**Friday February 9: Patara Elephant Farm**

Hilary Cadigan, “The Human Cost of Elephant Tourism” in *The Atlantic*, May 19, 2016

Ingrid Suter, “In Defense of Elephant Tourism” August 9, 2020, *The Elephant Collaborative*

The Patara Elephant Farm and Veterinary Clinic is one of the best examples in the world of breeding and conservation of the Asian elephant.

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes. If you are ill or otherwise need to miss a class, please inform your instructor or teaching assistant.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in ISDSI 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.

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 an 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.

Grading Standards

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	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B	83–86	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C	73–76	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C-	70-72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
D+	67-69	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
D	60-66	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
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 Incomplete.