



INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STUDIES INSTITUTE

THAILAND: CULTURE, ECOLOGY AND COMMUNITY SEMESTER

The Culture, Ecology and Community (CEC) study abroad semester at ISDSI is an **academically challenging program studying Thai cultures and ecosystems**. The focus of the program is on experiential learning, including language study and **interdisciplinary field research that integrates both the natural and social sciences**. The program is **based in Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand**. Courses take place in Chiang Mai and Mae Hong Son provinces in Northern Thailand, as well as Trang and Satun provinces in Southern Thailand.

Each course at ISDSI **focuses on a specific community and ecosystem**, from **lowland and upland communities** in Northern Thailand, to **coastal and island communities** in Southern Thailand. Each course is developed in collaboration with local communities, making them both relevant to contemporary issues in Thailand, as well as empowering to the host communities. Gathering and analyzing primary data and **hands-on learning directly from local experts is a hallmark of this program**, along with **independent student led research projects**.

Strong partnerships with local communities are a key part of what makes ISDSI courses successful. **We work together with local communities to help them tell their own stories**. Our partner communities are passionate about connecting with and teaching our students, sharing their lives, knowledge, and struggles. Students then have the unique opportunity to **help empower communities through listening to and learning the stories** of often marginalized people. Living with and learning from local communities allows students to **be a part of grassroots solutions to global problems**.

SEMESTER COURSES	TOPIC	CREDIT
Thai Language and Society: This intensive course focuses on the acquisition of the Thai language and understanding of Thai society and culture. Daily study of the Thai language is complemented by seminars on Thai history and society, as well as experiential learning in the field using Thai language in context. (Language study continues throughout the semester.)	Foreign Language	6
Sustainable Food Systems: Social and Biological Factors in Sustainable Agriculture: This course examines sustainability in food systems by a careful study of small holder organic polyculture farms, as well as agroecological systems, agroforestry, and sustainable production of cash crops (notably coffee and cacao).	Biology / Sociology	4
Political Ecology of Forests: Upland People and Natural Resources: This course explores the ethno-ecological relationship between people and forests. Field studies include upland forests and rotational long-fallow systems, as well as cultural uses of forests products, including weaving and other sustainable forest use.	Anthropology / Ecology	4
Culture and Ecology of Southern Thailand: Islands, Reefs and Mangroves: This course studies the complex interrelationships of coastal and island ecosystems and cultures, including mangroves, sea grasses, and tropical reefs. Both community and state management of natural resources are studied, as well as extensive field research in the coastal and island marine ecosystems.	Ecology / Geography	4
Program length	16 week semester taught on the block plan, each block 4 weeks long	
Eligibility	Currently enrolled in college or university. Recommended for 3rd or 4th year undergraduate students.	
Deadlines	Fall Semester: March 15 / Spring Semester: October 15	

For more information, see www.isdsi.org

Interested? Email admissions@isdsi.org today to learn more!

