

Study Abroad in Thailand

Culture, Ecology, and Community

An expedition-based semester exploring Thailand's diverse ecosystems and communities

Spend a semester exploring Thailand's many cultures and landscapes, traveling to villages, mountains, and coastal islands — living with host families and completing an Independent Field Research Project in every course.

BLOCK 1 — FOUNDATIONS

Thai Language & Society

4 weeks · 6 credits · Chiang Mai

Small-group Thai language classes begin day one and continue all semester. Seminars cover Thai and Southeast Asian history, society, and culture — from the Lanna and Ayutthaya kingdoms to today's politics and ethnic diversity — grounded in experiential learning around Chiang Mai.

- Daily Thai language classes while in Chiang Mai
- Experiential, hands-on learning exploring the 700-year-old city of Chiang Mai
- Independent Field Research Project

BLOCK 2 — FIELDS

Sustainable Food Systems

4 weeks · 4 credits · Biology / Sociology

Hands-on learning in sustainable and organic agriculture, working in the fields alongside host families and village experts. Homestays in organic farming villages ground the course in agroecology and small-scale agriculture, with an additional focus on coffee, cacao, and medicinal cannabis — an important sector in Northern Thai agriculture.

- Village homestays
- Hands-on farming practicum in organic polycultures
- Independent Field Research Project

BLOCK 3 — FORESTS

Political Ecology of Forests

4 weeks · 4 credits · Anthropology / Ecology

A multi-day backpacking expedition through Karen (Bak'en yaw) villages in Mae Hong Son. Homestays in mountain villages ground the study of rotational upland farming, indigenous ecological knowledge, community forestry, and land-rights issues directly with the communities managing these forests.

- Exploring remote mountain forests and villages
- Learning traditional weaving and handicrafts
- Independent Field Research Project

BLOCK 4 — OCEANS

Culture & Ecology of Southern Thailand

4 weeks · 4 credits · Ecology / Geography

Coastal fieldwork in mangrove and seagrass ecosystems and fishing communities on the Thai coast, followed by a multi-day sea-kayak expedition through the Adang–Rawi archipelago, learning from the indigenous Urak Lawoi sea-nomad communities and surveying coral reefs and islands.

- Multi-day sea-kayak expedition through the islands
- Reef, mangrove, and seagrass ecology surveys
- Independent Field Research Project

WHAT MAKES A SEMESTER STUDYING ABROAD ON THE CEC PROGRAM UNIQUE

Independent research

Every block integrates an Independent Field Research Project throughout the coursework.

Where you live

Homestays with local communities during the field blocks, and independent living in Chiang Mai in between.

Hands-on learning outside the classroom

Field practicums, homestays, and independent projects anchor each block's material.

Community-based

Every course is developed in collaboration with local communities, village leaders, and local experts.

18 credits per semester · Fall & Spring terms · Fall deadline: March 15 · Spring deadline: October 15

Questions? Email us at admissions@isdsi.org

Learn more: isdsi.org/semester/cec

