

Thai Language and Society: Thai Language Section

Culture, Ecology, and Community Semester

Course Description

This course is focused on learning the Thai language. The course uses a competency based approach and is designed for beginners for whom Thai is a foreign language. The emphasis of 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.

Understanding and using Thai appropriately is a critical skill for the remainder of the semester during the other courses in the field. The schedule and topics of the course are flexible and depend on student progress and comprehension.

Assessment includes assignments, as well as written and oral exams, and 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
- Be able to apply Thai language skills in the field, using them to engage with local communities and community members during excursions, extended field studies, and homestays

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 students progress quickly to a basic and useful level of Thai language competency.

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 the course and will also be graded by your Thai language instructor.

Grading and Assessment

Component	Details	Total
Class Attendance and Participation	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.	10
Homework and Assignments	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.	15
Tone Test	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 will then pronounce the words to an instructor who was not his/her primary language instructor.	10
Reading Test	This test focuses on comprehension of Thai vocabulary, conjunctions and question words. You will have one hour to complete the test.	20
Oral Presentation in Thai	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.	20
Final Thai Oral Exam	The final oral exam is a 30 minute conversational interview with a Thai language instructor who is not the student's primary language instructor. Assessment is based on conversational ability, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, and tones.	25
Total		100

Course Topics and Schedule

Thai Language

Monday through Thursday 8:30 – 11:30 (Block 1, and week 1 of Blocks 2–4). The schedule and topics below are flexible and depend on student progress and comprehension.

Week 1

Course orientation and introduction to the Thai writing system, including consonants, vowels, and tone marks. Students learn basic greetings, self-introductions, and polite particles, along with numbers and currency for everyday transactions such as shopping, paying for transportation, and handling money in daily life. Vocabulary and conversation also begin to cover food, including ordering at restaurants and street food stalls and navigating local markets.

Week 2

Continued practice with Thai script, building reading and writing fluency. Vocabulary and conversation continue with food — ordering at restaurants and street food stalls, describing tastes and preferences, and navigating markets — then expand to beverages and fruit, including ordering drinks and shopping for fresh fruit at local markets.

Week 3

Continued practice with Thai script, building reading and writing fluency. Vocabulary and conversation focus on beverages and fruit, including ordering drinks, describing flavors and textures, and shopping for fresh fruit at local markets. Students also begin describing tastes in more depth, along with location vocabulary — location verbs and naming places around the city — and introduce family: describing family members, relationships, and basic kinship terms.

Week 4

Continued practice with Thai script, building reading and writing fluency. Vocabulary and conversation continue with family, describing family members, relationships, and kinship terms, then expand to describing people's physical characteristics and personalities, social relationships, and describing objects and things in more detail. Week concludes with a tone and pronunciation test assessing progress from the first four weeks of instruction.

TONE TEST: 10:45 – 11:30 AM

Week 5

Continued practice with Thai script, building reading and writing fluency. Vocabulary and conversation continue describing things in more detail, then cover health-related vocabulary — describing symptoms, visiting a pharmacy or clinic, and communicating basic health needs — along with daily activities, time, and the calendar. Vocabulary also introduces terms related to the food system, connecting language study to the Sustainable Food Systems course running concurrently this semester.

Weeks 6 – 8

No Thai language class during these weeks. Students are engaged in other CEC block coursework during this period.

Week 9

Continued practice with Thai script, building toward more advanced reading and writing. Vocabulary and conversation continue with daily activities, time, and the calendar — describing

daily schedules and routines in greater detail — along with vocabulary related to the forest, connecting language study to the Political Ecology of Forests course running concurrently this semester. Week includes a graded oral presentation delivered in Thai.

PRESENTATION: 8:30 – 11:30 AM

Weeks 10 – 12

No Thai language class during these weeks. Students are engaged in other CEC block coursework during this period.

Week 13

Final week of instruction. Continued practice with Thai script. Vocabulary and conversation continue with daily activities, time, and the calendar, including telling time and days of the week, along with vocabulary related to oceans, connecting language study to the Oceans course running concurrently this semester. Week concludes with a reading test assessing comprehension of vocabulary, conjunctions, and question words covered throughout the course, followed by a comprehensive review of material and the final oral exam.

READING TEST: 10:00 – 11:30 AM

FINAL ORAL EXAM: 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

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.