

**THAILAND: GLOBAL CHANGE, COMMUNITIES, AND FAMILIES**  
**FSoS 3150/5150**

**Group Leader:** *Acharn Cathy (Dr. Catherine Solheim)*, Family Social Science  
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**Co-leader:** Tasha Bell, Doctoral Student, Family Social Science

**Course Description:**

This interdisciplinary course uses a human ecological lens to examine global change that is occurring at the intersections among Thailand's natural environment, communities, families, and culture. Topics include globalization, human trafficking, education, religion, environmental issues, and cultural integration/identity formation, particularly among the ethnic minority populations in northern Thailand. Students interact with key community leaders, village leaders, elders, and students who serve as teachers that lead to a more critical understanding of Thai culture and the contemporary issues faced by Thailand's families and communities. Through digital stories, blog writings, and discussions, students will synthesize and communicate what they've learned.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Observe, document, and critically analyze impacts of globalization on families and communities in northern Thailand (e.g., Chiang Mai, Mae Kampong, Chiang Dao, Chiang Rai, and Chiang Khong). Specific attention will be paid to population changes, ethnic minority integration, human trafficking, education, Buddhism, community advocacy to protect local resources, and deep culture.
2. Understand diverse philosophies and cultures of ethnic minority families and communities and their wealth of cultural traditions and the challenges to thriving due to economic forces and impacts of globalization in northern Thailand.
3. Actively compare and contrast what they are observing and learning in Thailand to families and communities in the United States (particularly Southeast Asian refugee populations in Minnesota), and to further students' own understanding intercultural interacting.
4. Produce a writing journal and take photographs (and/or sketches) to document their learning and use to create blog entries and digital stories on topics relevant to families and communities as well as students' own intercultural development.

**Course Format and Participation:**

This course is designed to encourage you to develop your critical thinking skills about global change, families, culture, social justice, and the environment. Experiences in Thailand have been selected to help you meet the learning goals listed above. Some unscheduled time is built in to allow you to explore on your own and with others. We will also spend time thinking, reflecting, and writing as individuals and discussing as a group. These processes are critical to your learning and growth; specific assignments that demonstrate your learning and growth are included below.

This course is guided by six core principles

- Stay engaged in the process
- Think critically and reflectively
- Speak your truth
- Respect others' truths
- Experience and learn from challenges
- Expect and accept ambiguity and non-closure

**Course Assignments: 160 points**

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|---|-----------|
| <b>1. Pre-departure class sessions (See email)</b>  | <b>10</b> |
| <b>2. Cultural immersion pre-departure session</b>  |           |
| Attend either a) Thai New Year Festival on Sunday, April 9 between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. or<br>b) Uptown Thai New Year Celebration on Saturday, April 29 between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.<br><b>Write a brief description and reflection about your experience;</b> email to Acharn Cathy by<br>May 5 | <b>10</b> |
| <b>3. Readings, discussions, and reflections</b>  | <b>15</b> |
| <b>4. In-country participation</b>  | <b>35</b> |
| a. Completion of assigned readings  |           |
| b. Active engagement in discussions   |           |
| c. Respectful culturally appropriate conduct  |           |
| d. Respectful intergroup interactions   |           |
| e. Honoring departure times and schedules   |           |
| f. Disconnection from technology devices during learning experiences  |           |
| <b>5. Required daily journaling (3-5-point checks in-country; one final check)</b>  | <b>25</b> |
| Journal notebook will be provided   |           |
| <b>6. Individual blogs (pre-departure, in-country, post-return)</b>   | <b>15</b> |
| <b>7. Content focused blog based on team project</b>  | <b>25</b> |
| <b>8. Digital story (personal learning focused)</b>   | <b>25</b> |

**Grading Standards:**

**The final grade is recorded according to U of MN definition of grades:**

93-100%	A	For exceptional work, well above the minimum criteria
90-92%	A-	For outstanding work, well above the minimum criteria
87-89%	B+	For excellent work, significant above the minimum criteria
83-86%	B	For work above the minimum criteria
80-82%	B-	
77-79%	C+	
73-76%	C	For work which meets the course requirements in every respect
70-72%	C-	
67-69%	D+	
63-66%	D	Worthy of credit even though it fails to meet the course requirements
0-63% F		Failed to meet minimum course requirements

**Student Conduct Code:**

The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community.

As a student at the University you are expected adhere to Board of Regents Policy: *Student Conduct Code*. To review the Student Conduct Code, please see:

[http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student\\_Conduct\\_Code.pdf](http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf).

Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities."

**Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom:**

Using personal electronic devices in the classroom setting can hinder instruction and learning, not only for the student using the device but also for other students in the class. To this end, the University establishes the right of each faculty member to determine if and how personal electronic devices are allowed to be used in the classroom. For complete information, please reference:

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html>.

**Scholastic Dishonesty:**

You are expected to do your own academic work and cite sources as necessary. Failing to do so is 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. (Student Conduct Code:

[http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student\\_Conduct\\_Code.pdf](http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf)) If it is determined that a

student has cheated, he or she may be given an "F" or an "N" for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University. For additional information, please see:

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/INSTRUCTORRESP.html>.

The Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity has compiled a useful list of Frequently Asked Questions pertaining to scholastic dishonesty: <http://www1.umn.edu/oscai/integrity/student/index.html>.

If you have additional questions, please clarify with your instructor for the course. Your instructor can respond to your specific questions regarding what would constitute scholastic dishonesty in the context of a particular class-e.g., whether collaboration on assignments is permitted, requirements and methods for citing sources, if electronic aids are permitted or prohibited during an exam.

**Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences:**

Students will not be penalized for absence during the semester due to unavoidable or legitimate circumstances. Such circumstances include verified illness, participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, bereavement, and religious observances. Such circumstances do not include voting in local, state, or national elections. For complete information, please see: <http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/MAKEUPWORK.html>.

**Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials:**

Taking notes is a means of recording information but more importantly of personally absorbing and integrating the educational experience. However, broadly disseminating class notes beyond the classroom community or accepting compensation for taking and distributing classroom notes undermines instructor interests in their intellectual work product while not substantially furthering instructor and student interests in effective learning. Such actions violate shared norms and standards of the academic community. For additional information, please see: <http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html>.

**Grading and Transcripts:**

The University utilizes plus and minus grading on a 4.000 cumulative grade point scale in accordance with the following:

- A 4.000 - Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements
- A- 3.667
- B+ 3.333
- B 3.000 - Represents achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements
- B- 2.667
- C+ 2.333
- C 2.000 - Represents achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect
- C- 1.667
- D+ 1.333
- D 1.000 - Represents achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements
- S Represents achievement that is satisfactory, which is equivalent to a C- or better.

For additional information, please refer to:

<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/GRADINGTRANSCRIPTS.html>.

**Sexual Harassment**

"Sexual harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment in any University activity or program. Such behavior is not acceptable in the University setting. For additional information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: <http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/SexHarassment.pdf>

**Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action:**

The University will provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy:

[http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Equity\\_Diversity\\_EO\\_AA.pdf](http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.pdf).

**Disability Accommodations:**

The University is committed to providing quality education to all students regardless of ability. Determining appropriate disability accommodations is a collaborative process. You as a student must register with Disability Services and provide documentation of your disability. The course instructor must provide information regarding a course's content, methods, and essential components. The combination of this information will be used by Disability Services to determine appropriate accommodations for a particular student in a particular course. For more information, please reference Disability Services: <http://ds.umn.edu/student-services.html>.

**Mental Health and Stress Management:**

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website:

<http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu>.

**Academic Freedom and Responsibility: *for courses that do not involve students in research***

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.\*

Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Department Chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost.

**OR:**

**Academic Freedom and Responsibility, *for courses that involve students in research:***

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom and conduct relevant research. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of

study for which they are enrolled.\* When conducting research, pertinent institutional approvals must be obtained and the research must be consistent with University policies.

Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Department Chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost.

## Appendix A

### Course Assignment Descriptions and Requirements

1. **Writing Journal:** There are two parts to your journaling. Part I will address questions posed in your journal notebooks. These questions will focus more on the content of the day/activity. Your writing will share: a) what you **observed**; b) provide rich **descriptions**; c) offer your evaluation of what you experienced, and d) evaluate what you learned. For c – **evaluation**, and d – **interpretation**, I want you to critically think about the basis for these responses and provide a reflection on not only what you learned about ‘another’ but how observing ‘another’ has contributed to a deeper understand of their cultural selves.

Part II will be focused on your personal feelings that were experienced as you walked through the day. What were your joys, your frustrations, your hopes, your questions? This is free writing – contrary to the first section, I am not so interested in your writing being grammatically correct (though I need to be able to understand it). Rather I want you to tap into your emotions and feelings. Feel free to sketch, shift from poetic to monosyllabic. Attach artifacts or mementos that you gathered that day. Bring in the senses. What did you smell, hear, see, feel, and taste?

I will ask you to turn in the journal periodically (see syllabus for turn-in times) so I can read what you’re learning, what you’re experiencing, what you’re feeling. Please keep that in mind. Also know that if you want something keep confidential, please label those sections as such. You may also want to keep a personal journal

2. **Online Blog:** The online blog writing is a first person narrative that is aware that others will be reading. A blog posts retains the feeling of a writing journal, but is shaped for an audience, meaning that you should revise it so that it begins in one place and evolves to another. It should be free of spelling and factual errors, and revised for vivid, specific prose.

Your online posts should be shaped by your personality, written in your voice, should be honest and true, and also culturally respectful and anticipate what readers who are not journeying with you in northern Thailand will need to know in order to engage with your insights. Acharn Cathy will be available to read and provide feedback prior to posting it to the blog if you would prefer.

#### ***Requirements for Online Blogs***

- Students will post one blog prior to departure.
- Each week in-country, students will post one online blog that others will read. Inclusion of photos or short videos are encouraged. Students will read all other blog posts and comment on at least two.
- Students will also post one blog after returning to the U.S. (due June 15).
- *Note: A blog entry should be at least four solid paragraphs.*

3. **Group Topic Blog Project:** This project will be based on your group’s pre-departure research that is expanded/enhanced through your experiences in Thailand. You will become familiar with topics and themes while you shop at the food market, interact with students and teachers at a school, meet and learn from elders, stay with families and explore their village in Mae Kampong, learn from elders in a Hmong Village

and visit other Hill Tribes' villages, see the Golden Triangle, visit the Hall of Opium, cross the Mekong River to Laos, and visit with community members, guides, van drivers, hotel staff and students.

In small groups of four, you will focus on one of the following five topics:

- Human Trafficking
- Community Development
- Multicultural Thailand
- Environment
- Education

### ***Requirements for Group Topic Blog Project***

- Your small group will determine what and how you will move forward in understanding your chosen topic.
    - This may include having a conversation with a local person (if needed, with the help of an interpreter), walking along the Mekong and taking photos, mapping the streets, or taking notes after visiting the market.
    - Your group can divide the responsibilities, or work in pairs or as a foursome.
  - Each group will create a two to three page blog post that will include at least two images on the selected topic.
  - Please quote and cite outside research.
- 4. Individual Digital Story:** Once you return to the U.S. and you've had some time for reentry, each of you will create a short (6-10 minutes) digital story reflecting on the learning you experienced in Thailand. You will create a storyboard, a kind of visual outline or map of your digital story, that anticipates your use of narrative, photos, videos if relevant, music, text, and considers the arc of your story. You can create your digital story with the program of your choosing (for example, iMovie).

Peers or Acharn Cathy can give you feedback on a draft of your digital story via VideoAnt. Finalized digital stories will be due on June 30, 2017.

### ***Requirements for Individual Digital Story***

- At final group meeting in-country, share your initial ideas about focus for your digital story.
- After returning to campus, create storyboard for digital story. Consult with Acharn Cathy as needed.
- Upload final digital story to Google Drive (link will be provided). Stories will then be uploaded to our Thailand course website digital story page.
- Watch classmates' digital stories after they are posted on our website.