Notes and Reflections Journal Global Change, Communities, & Families in Thailand May 14 – June 4, 2017

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"It is better to travel well than to arrive."

The Buddha



Adapted for the Thailand Learning Abroad course by Dr. Catherine Solheim, Professor, Family Social Science

This journal was designed for you to reflect on your experiences as you journey in Thailand. The purposes of these writing assignments are:

- Capture your experience in detail so that you can return in the future and remember what you saw, heard, smelled, tasted, felt, and experienced;
- Write your ideas and reflections down will also help you synthesize what you're learning;
- Integrate what you've learned into your knowledge and experience base;
- Contribute to your personal growth through examining and understanding your beliefs, values, and culture; and
- Demonstrate your critically thinking about your experiences and what you've learned in this course.

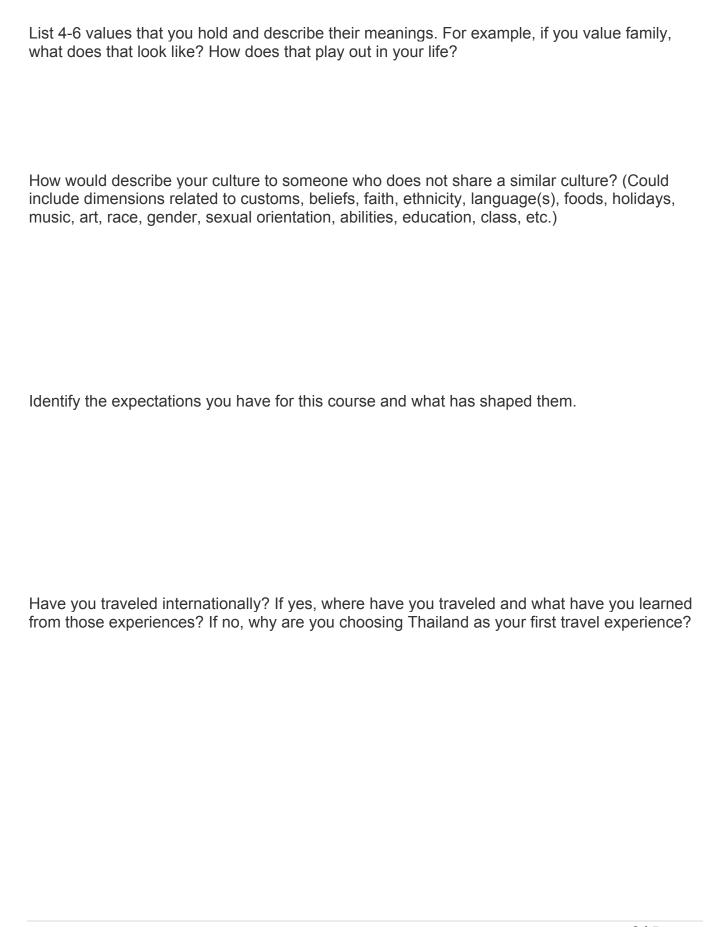
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Who are you and how were you shaped as a culture being?

Write down 5-10 words or phrases that help others understand how you see yourself.

Write down a few words or phrases to describe how others tend to describe you.

Identify 2-3 significant events from your life that have helped to define and shape you. In what ways did they impact you?



Interacting in a New Culture ODIE: Observe, Describe, Interpret, and Evaluate

Spend the most time and effort on these two steps.

Observe: Watch and listen to what is happening without allowing your own thoughts to

interpret or evaluate.

Describe: State observable facts. Provide rich detail. Choose words that are non-

judgmental.

When you believe you have a good grasp on the situation/phenomenon/interaction, then move to the next step...

Interpret: Don't rush to interpret what you've seen or experienced. First, ask questions of

cultural insiders that can help you understand. Why might this be the case?

Then ask yourself: Why am I frustrated, excited, sad? What is influencing me to think about what I've observed in this particular way? What is influencing what

I'm observing from a Thai cultural or contextual perspective?

When you have grappled sufficiently to understanding your own and another's perspectives, you may be able to move to this step. Without sufficient cultural insight, this is a rare occurrence.

Evaluation: You must first understand deeply enough to interpret the situation/phenomenon/interaction. You must recognize that your own values and

cultural socialization are influencing how you're judging the situation. You must consider context – what has influenced this situation/phenomenon/interaction?

Reflection 1: Arrival, First impressions, First Interactions

Child Safe Workshop, At Khao San Road, Hotel, Driving in Bangkok, Walking Around, Eating, Orientation, Khan Toke Dinner - Mon, 5-15, Tues, 5-16, Wed, 5-17

Reflection 1 Continued	
	61 P a g e

Reflection 2: Chiang Mai May 18
Local Market, Cooking Class, Wat Suan Dok, and Lecture on Buddhism

Reflection 2 Continued	
	81Page

Reflection 3: Chiang Mai May 19

Suksasongkroh Chiang Dao School

Reflection 3 Continu	ıed		
Reflection 3 Continu	1ed		
			10 Page

Reflection 4: Chiang Mai May 20

Pha Nok Kok Village

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Reflection 5: Home Stay, May 22, 23, 24

Mae Kampong

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Reflection 6: Chiang Rai, May 25 Hill Area Development Foundation and Night Market

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Reflection 7: Chiang Khong, May 28, 29

Mekong Child Rights Protection Center and Visit to Laos

	Reflection 7 Continued	
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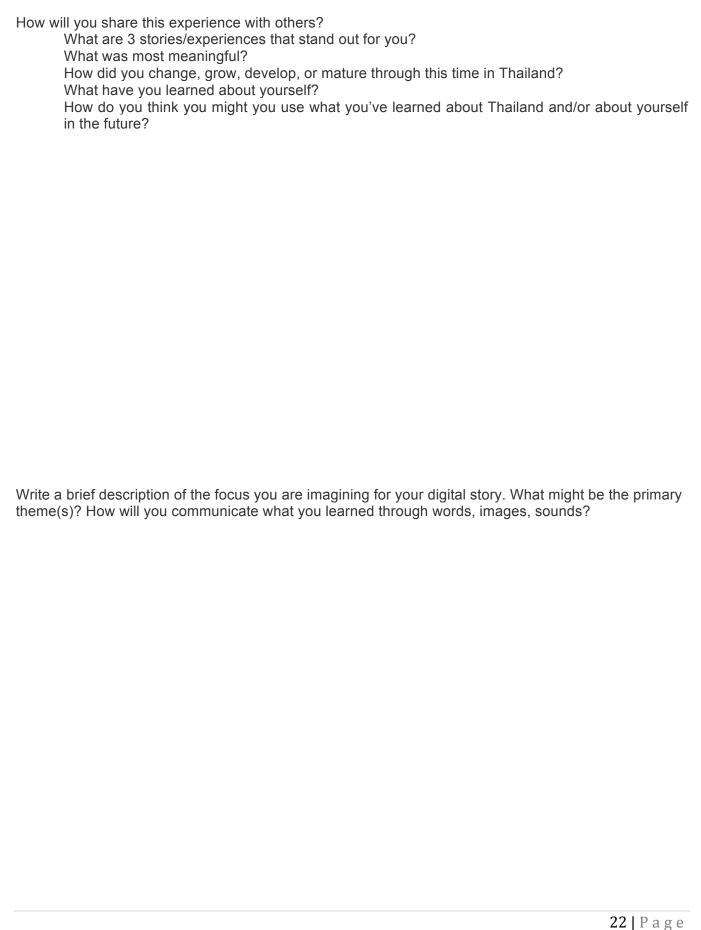
Reflection 8: Chiang Khong, May 30 and 31

Hmong Village and Mekong School

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			20 Page

Reflection 9: Synthesis

Reflections on your time in Thailand
Look back at the expectations you wrote down on page 3 before you left the U.S. Which ones were accurate? Which ones were not? What did you experience and learn that were not included in your predeparture expectations?
What advice would you give future students about this course?
What suggestions do you have to improve the learning experiences in this course?



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