



Foundations: Development, Environment and Society in Thailand: History, Theory & Methods

Fall Semester, 2010

Instructors: Daniel Ahlquist, Amanda L. Flaim

Course Overview

To complement the necessary language skills you are acquiring in your Thai language classes, this course offers an equally necessary substantive, methodological and theoretical foundation that will enable you to get the most out of your semester at ISDSI, both in the field and in the classroom. Foundations is built on three interrelated areas of inquiry that are woven together throughout the four weeks of the course. First, in order to get your bearings in a region with which many of you may be unfamiliar, we provide an orientation to Thailand and mainland Southeast Asia. This substantive element of the course is intended to help you both situate yourselves in the current context, and to trace the socio-historical dynamics that have shaped the region. Second, as you begin to get your bearings, we will be introducing various research methods with which to dig deeper into the processes and phenomena that you encounter in your daily life in Thailand and throughout your field courses. The skills you acquire in the research methods series will enable you to ask informed and creative research questions about the phenomena you encounter, and to begin to discern appropriate methods to employ in pursuit of particular types of questions. The final component of this class is theory. Theory provides a set of lenses that illuminate processes, structures, and power relations that shape our social world (and, in many cases, our physical world). We will focus in particular on social scientific theories and critiques relating to development and the environment. We hope that Foundations will provide you with a solid substantive, methodological and theoretical toolkit that will enable you see the world around you anew, and to challenge you to approach research, and development issues in general, with a new reflexivity toward ethical and responsible engagement.

Expectations and Requirements

Given your considerable time and energy commitments to the Thai Language component of the course, the daily reading assignments for Foundations have been kept to a minimum, and you are not required to write a final paper. However, the Foundations component of the course is vital in ensuring that students gain the necessary substantive, theoretical and methodological base you'll need to get the most out of your semester at ISDSI. Therefore, students are expected to attend and participate in all class sessions, do all reading and journal assignments, and conduct a final small-group research project culminating in a final presentation. Students are required to wear the appropriate student uniform to all classes and course-related activities, unless otherwise instructed. Finally, at all times, students must demonstrate respect for each other, all staff of ISDSI, and everyone else you encounter, both inside and outside of the classroom.

In summary, students are expected to:

- Attend every class;
- Arrive to class prepared (having read the assigned readings and prepared at least one question for discussion);
- Participate in class discussions and activities, including group discussions, asking questions or offering productive comments during lecture, as well as taking notes during class;
- Wear the student uniform for every class and course-related activity, unless otherwise instructed.
- Demonstrate respect for each other, ISDSI staff, and everyone else you encounter, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Class participation and preparedness account for 40% of student grades in Foundations.

Journals

Students are expected to keep an ongoing journal of thoughts and observations related to readings, lectures and the course, more generally, as well as field notes from all class activities. Your journals are not evaluated for writing style per se, but rather they are intended to serve as a forum for you to critically engage the readings, lectures and activities, and to develop your skills as field researchers. By keeping your thoughts on

the readings, questions for discussion, and field notes from activities in one place, you are encouraged to return to these notes and consider your own growth throughout the course. You are also encouraged to include notes, drawings and stories about your experiences over the course of the month. The possibilities for this are endless, and may include sights and smells in the market, life with the host family, creative communication when language fails etc. Journals are due at the end of each week.

Suggestions for critical journaling: (Note that you are not required to address these questions in your journal entries, but they may help you to write and develop your ideas.)

1. In three sentences, what are the author's/instructor's key arguments?
2. Does the argument presented relate to issues of development, sustainability, or both? If so, how? If not, why not?
3. What, in your informed opinion, did the author/instructor leave out?
4. How does an argument presented in one reading or lecture relate to an argument presented in another reading/lecture? How do they complement each other or conflict with one another?
5. How do the substantive topics covered in relation to Thailand inform or challenge your understanding of American history or current developments in the US?
6. What questions did the reading, lecture or activity raise for you? How might you go about answering your own question(s)?

Student journals account for 30% of student grades in Foundations.

Final Research Project

It is estimated that currently, over half of the world's population now resides in cities, making the urban environment a necessary and vital subject of research on sustainability and development. In small groups (3-4 students), students will employ at least two research methods covered in this course to conduct short research projects on sustainability issues in Chiang Mai.

Students may conduct research on issues concerning urban nature, public green space, drinking water, waste management & recycling, transportation, or another issue of your choice. Each group will propose a research topic and question by Wednesday, February 2. We will discuss appropriate research topics in class.

Students will be exposed to a variety of research methods during this course. For the final project, you will be required to employ at least two research methods in your research. One of those methods must be ethnography. Based on appropriateness to your research topics, you may choose which other methods to employ. In your final presentation, you will be required to justify your choice of methods.

On the final classroom day of the course (Thursday, February 10), student groups will present and discuss their findings, including a brief discussion of methods employed and proposed directions for future research. Groups will be given 15-20 minutes to present, followed by 5-10 minutes of question and answer. Every student is expected to ask at least one well-thought-out question of another group during the Q&A sessions.

Final presentations account for 30% of student grades in Foundations.

Grading

This course will be graded as part of the Thai Language & Society course. For the Foundations component of the course, students will be evaluated as follows:

Class Participation and Preparedness: 40%

- Students will be evaluated on class preparedness and participation, including note taking, active listening, questions and comments.

Journals and Field Notes: 30%

- Students will be evaluated on the thought and effort they put into their journals and field notes, their ability to incorporate key concepts, theories and methods into their observations and notes.

Final Presentations: 30%

- Students will be evaluated on their ability to effectively employ in their research projects and analysis the methodological and theoretical tools they have developed over the course of Foundations.

Week 1: Introduction to Mainland Southeast Asia & Thailand

Day	Date	Topic, Activity & Reading	Instructor(s)
1	Monday, January 17	Building Foundations from the Ground Up <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Course Introduction• Geography, Geology and Ecology of Mainland Southeast Asia• Introduction to Ecology Principles and Field Methods	Daniel Amanda Aaron
2	Tuesday, January 18	Historical Overview I <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mainland Southeast Asia• Intro to Thai History: From Mandalas to the Modern Era <i>Reading:</i> Reid, A. (1999). "Introduction: Early Modern Southeast Asia," Pp. 1-14 in <i>Charting the Shape of Early Modern Southeast Asia</i> . Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.	Daniel
3	Wednesday, January 19	Historical Overview II <ul style="list-style-type: none">• History Un-Thai-ed: History, Power & the Making of a <i>Thai Land</i> Social Science Research Methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Historical Methods <i>Reading:</i> Thongchai Winichakul. (1994). <i>Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation</i> . Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. Read Pp. 1-19.	Daniel
4	Thursday, January 20	Burma Brown Bag Lunch with Christina Fink <i>Activity:</i> Methods in Practice: Field Trip to Chiang Mai Art & Cultural Center or National Museum	Christina Fink (Guest Lecturer & Former ISDSI Instructor) Daniel

Week 2: Contemporary Thailand

Day	Date	Topic, Activity & Reading	Instructor(s)
5	Monday, January 24	Politics, Economy and Society in Contemporary Thailand Social Science Research Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ethnography• Politics & Ethics of Social Science Research <i>Reading:</i> Haberkorn, T. (May 14, 2010). "Thailand's Political Transformation." <i>Open Democracy</i> . http://www.opendemocracy.net/tyrell-haberkorn-thailand-1/thailand%E2%80%99s-political-transformation Genzuk, M. (2003). <i>A Synthesis of Ethnographic Research</i> . Occasional Papers Series. Center for Multilingual, Multicultural Research (Eds.). Center for Multilingual, Multicultural Research, Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California. Los Angeles. Tsing, A. L. (2005). <i>Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection</i> . Princeton: Princeton University Press. Read "Forest History 3: Trees are Social Networks," Pp. 256-263.	Daniel
6	Tuesday, January 25	<i>Activity:</i> Methods in Practice: Market Visits	Daniel
7	Wednesday, January 26	Religion(s) in Thailand <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to Buddhism• And the <i>Others</i> (Christianity, Islam & the Spirit Houses) <i>Activity:</i> Methods in Practice: Trip to Wat Ou Mong. <i>Reading:</i> Keyes, C. 1971. Buddhism & National Integration in Thailand. <i>The Journal of Asian Studies</i> . 30(1): 551-567.	Jordan Johnson (Guest Lecturer & ISDSI Alumnus) Daniel
8	Thursday, January 27	Sex in Thailand: Changing Families, Negotiating Genders Social Science Research Methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demography• Feminist Research Methods <i>Reading:</i> Jeffrey, L. A., "Gender, Prostitution, and the 'Standards of Civilization.'" Chapter 1 in <i>Sex and Borders: Gender, National Identity, and Prostitution Policy in Thailand</i> . Vancouver: UBC Press. Pp 3-28. Mydans, S. (Sept. 24, 2010). A Region Where Husbands are Imported." <i>The New York Times (online)</i> . http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/25/world/asia/25iht-thai.html?_r=1 Film: <i>Trading Women</i> , by David Feingold	Amanda Daniel Stephanie

Week 3: Development & Environment

Day	Date	Topic, Activity & Reading	Instructor(s)
9	Monday, January 31	Development I <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Histories & Theories of Development <p><i>Discuss Final Project: Sustainability in Chiang Mai</i></p> <p><i>Reading:</i></p> <p>Orwell, G. (1984). "Shooting an Elephant." Pp. 3-12 in <i>Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays</i> by George Orwell. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers.</p> <p>United Nations Millennium Development Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Familiarize yourself with each of the goals, how they are framed and discussed, and the data used to support each claim/objective.</i> <p>McMichael, P. (2004). "Whither Development?" Ch. 8 in McMichael, P. (2004). <i>Development & Social Change: A Global Perspective</i> (Third Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.</p>	Amanda Daniel
10	Tuesday, February 1	Development II: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critiques of Development• What is 'Sustainable Development'? <p><i>Reading:</i></p> <p>Goldman, M. (2001). Constructing an Environmental State: Eco-Governmentality and other practices of a 'green' World Bank. <i>Social Problems</i> 48(4): 499-523.</p> <p><i>UN Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD)</i>. FAO, UNDP & UNEP Framework Document. June 20, 2008. Read Pp. 1-19.</p>	Daniel
11	Wednesday, February 2	Introduction to Upland Southeast Asia <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Histories, Cultures and Peoples• Agriculture & Environment in the Uplands <p><i>Reading:</i></p> <p>Scott, J. (2008). <i>Stilled to Silence at 500 Metres</i>. (2 pages)</p> <p>Sturgeon, J. (2005). "The Production of Marginal Peoples and Landscapes." Chapter 3 in <i>Border Landscapes: The Politics of Akha Land Use in China and Thailand</i>. Seattle: University of Washington Press. Pp. 42-64. (<i>Skim portions on China</i>)</p> <p>Lewis, P. (2002). "Proverbs," in <i>Akha Oral Literature</i>. Bangkok: White Lotus Press. Pp. 129-154. (Very quick, fun read!)</p> <p><i>Research Topics Due!</i></p>	Daniel Amanda

12 Thursday,
February 3

A Closer Look at the Nature of Nature:
• Social Constructions of Nature
The Commons/Common Property

Daniel

Laura

Reading:

Demeritt, D. (2001). "Being Constructive about Nature." Pp. 22-40 in Castree, N & B. Braun (Eds.). *Social Nature: Theory Practice, and Politics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Cronon, W. (1995). The Trouble with Wilderness; Or, getting back to the wrong nature. Pp. 69-90 in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (W. Cronon, Ed.). New York: W.W. Norton.

Week 4: Final Research Projects

Day	Date	Topic, Activity & Reading	Instructor(s)
13	Monday, February 7	Education & Development in Northern Thailand <i>Activity:</i> Visit to Wat Suan Dok School &/or panel discussion with education NGOs <i>Reading:</i> Kesmanee, C. (1994). "Dubious Development Concepts in the Thai Highlands: The Chao Khao in Transition." <i>Law & Society Review</i> . 28(3). Special Edition of Law and Society in Southeast Asia. Pp. 673-686.	Amanda Stephanie
14	Tuesday, February 8	Research Day	Daniel Amanda
15	Wednesday, February 9	Research Day & Preparation for Final Presentations	Daniel Amanda
16	Thursday, February 10	Final Presentations & Course Wrap-Up	Daniel Amanda