

## Service Learning Internship/Independent Research: NGOs, Development and Culture

(Internship/Supervised Research)  
Spring Semester, 2011

Instructors: Dr. Laura Meitzner Yoder, Angkarin Pimpaeng

### Course Overview

The purpose of ISDSI internship program is to involve students directly in the local culture. Internship research topics for ISDSI may focus on issues relevant to sustainable development within Thailand or a particular aspect of Thai culture/society. All research projects must include significant cultural integration—working with a local NGO, interviewing local people, or participating in local activities. The goal of the Internship Program is threefold. First, the Internship Program is intended to facilitate student integration into local culture, creating understanding and appreciation of the values around which local people organize their daily lives. Second, the Internship Program is designed to help students gain a contextualized understanding of a particular social, environmental or cultural issue. Finally, the Internship Program will give students the opportunity to develop valuable research skills by conducting the Internship Program in a systematic and methodical manner.

**Because of the nature of the Internship Program, it requires that students are independent and self-directed learners. More than with other coursework, the Internship Program necessitates that students take the initiative to structure their own learning experience. Students are expected to spend at least 40 hours/week on their Internship Program.**

**Dates:** Monday, May 23 - Friday, July 15, 2011

**Location:** There are four possible locations for your Internship Program: Chiang Mai; UHDP (Fang); Mae Taa; and Huay Hee, Mae Hong Son. Limited travel outside of these locations with your host institution and with instructor approval is possible, but students must be based in one of these locations. Exceptions can be made, but you must speak with an instructor first.

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### Options for Designing your Individual Internship Program

#### Individual project

Students can propose to pursue a specific topic of interest for the duration of the internship. ISDSI has hands-on projects that we would like to support, or you may select your own subject.

#### Directed research project (group/individual)

Students can work as individuals or in teams of 2-3 students to investigate sustainability issues raised in the semester's courses in a more concentrated and rigorous manner. This year, we aim to present student research on the urban sustainability indicators in Chiang Mai (mass transit; walkability; urban foodshed; river health and access; recycling and solid waste management; and organic/sustainable agriculture). Student research projects may be published on the ISDSI website.

#### Internship

ISDSI can facilitate an internship placement with a local organization working on environmental issues, human rights, development, ecological research, and other social issues. Note: the absolute prospectus deadline for ISDSI to facilitate an internship placement is **Thursday March 17, 2011**.

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### Assignments and Grading

#### Internship Program Journal (30%)

The Internship Program journal should have three components. These should be *clearly labeled* in your journal. Each day you should fill out a brief “**time log**” tracking what happened (Date-Time-[Location]-Activity) on a separate page. Second, your journal should have rich, **day-by-day**

**“descriptive entries”**. This is the space to record informal conversations/interviews, observations, site descriptions, etc from your field experiences. Your descriptive observations will enable you to provide the illustrative detail that gives human interest and credibility to your interpretations. Finally, after immersing yourself in research for a week, begin to use your journal increasingly for **“interpretive entries/memos”**. Interpretive entries should begin to identify patterns that give meaning, order and predictability to your particular cultural scene. These entries will serve as a first attempt to analyze your research and can be used in your final essay.

### **Research Prospectus (5%)**

The research prospectus should be 1 page in length outlining your project proposal, following the format given. It should address what you are going to study, what you expect to get out of the project, a detailed description of how you are going to gather information and most importantly a research *timeline* for your project. Also consider how your project can benefit those who are hosting you, and note that in your prospectus.

**Due: 9 AM, Thursday 17 March 2011** in hard copy.

### **Supervisor and Peer Research Meetings (10%)**

You are required to communicate with your supervisor (Ajaan Laura—unless another supervisor is assigned) as needed during the duration of your Internship Program. The first meeting should occur after you have submitted your Internship Program prospectus. You must meet **each Wednesday night** with two other students to talk about your research progress and brainstorm ways forward together. Write up all meeting results in your fieldnotes.

### **Email Update (15%)**

On **Friday** of the *second* week (June 3), Friday of the fourth week (June 17) and Friday of the sixth week (July 1), you are required to send a brief email update of your research project to Ajaan Laura and Pi Tik (in message text, NOT as an attachment). Your email should describe where you are on your research so far, how your research plan/topic/questions are changing and developing, and any questions you may have. Please take initiative to email or sms/call as needed at other times.

### **ICRP Final Paper (40%)**

Your final paper, about 2000-2500 words. The final paper is the culmination of your cultural research project and **must** utilize both field research and academic research.

**Field Research:** You will have wide latitude with respect to the information-gathering method(s) you choose to employ. Feel free to be creative in combining several methods. Possible methods include, but are not limited to: observation; participation in an activity, organization, or event(s); informal conversations; formal interviews and/or questionnaires. Please be sure to exhibit appropriate respect and diplomacy when studying people, especially if you intend to photograph or tape record individuals. We will discuss ethics by case. Any questions regarding appropriate methodology should be brought to the attention of the Project Advisor.

**Academic Research:** The balance between field and academic research will vary from project to project, but all projects should draw on both sources of information. The academic research component may include resources such as books, journals, NGO publications, newspapers and the internet.

**Final paper due: 12 noon, Tuesday July 12<sup>th</sup> via email and one hard copy. Exact directions will follow.**