Center for International Programs
Study Abroad Guidebook

CHIANG MAI 17-18
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Thailand

-Audra Hudson K’16


THAILAND 17-18

CHIANG MAI, THAILAND LT GUIDEBOOK

INTRODUCTION TO THE THAILAND PROGRAM

With your departure for Thailand fast approaching, many of you have begun to wonder what it's really going to be like spending two quarters abroad. What will you experience living and studying in Chiang Mai? What will it be like to travel to other parts of the country? Are the Thai as open and friendly with foreigners as they're said to be? Will the family you'll be living with accept you just as you are now, or will you need to make some adjustments in order to fit into your new household? Will you be able to get around without speaking Thai? Just how much should you plan to pack in your suitcases? Hopefully, this guidebook can begin to answer these and other questions.

This guidebook is a collection of suggestions and comments from people who have lived and studied in Chiang Mai. We in the Center for International Programs have also provided some additional information, as have your on site Resident Directors. Hopefully, this guidebook can answer many of your practical questions as well as provide a brief introduction to the culture that awaits you.

We have done our best to provide you with the most accurate, up-to-date information possible in this guidebook. We hope that you will help us update this guidebook for the group that follows you. Any feedback from you will be greatly appreciated.

Expect the unexpected. Ultimately, no written materials or any other preparation is going to fully prepare you for what lies ahead. Your best preparation is to commit to keeping an open mind, remaining flexible, and being patient with yourself as you're adjusting to your new environment.
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BEFORE YOU GO . . . PREPARATION

INTRODUCTION TO THAILAND AND CHIANG MAI

The Kingdom of Thailand is a constitutional monarchy, and it is distinct among the countries of Southeast Asia because it was never colonized. Thailand lies in the heart of Southeast Asia; it shares borders with Burma (Myanmar) to the north and west, Laos to the northeast, Cambodia to the east and Malaysia to the south. Topographically the country is divided into four distinct areas: the mountainous North, the fertile Central Plains, the semi-arid plateau of the Northeast, and the peninsula south distinguished by tropical beaches and offshore islands.

Thailand has a tropical climate with three distinct seasons: hot (March-May), rainy (June-October) and cool (November-February), with cooler temperatures in the mountains year-round.

Thailand has a population of about 65 million. Ethnic Thais form the majority, though the area has historically been a migratory crossroads, and thus includes strains of Mon, Khmer, Burmese, Lao, Malay, Indian and, most strongly, Chinese. In Northern Thailand, various upland minority groups (hill tribes) are also an important part of the ethnic mix, including Hmong, Karen, Akha, Lahu, Lisu, Mien, and others.

Theravada Buddhism is the primary religion in Thailand, practiced by more than 90 percent of all Thais. The remainder of the population adheres to Muslim, Christian, Hindu and other faiths. The king wields moral authority rather than political power. He is very highly respected, as is the rest of the royal family, and speaking against them is a crime.

Located 700 kilometers north of Bangkok, Chiang Mai is a bustling international city of around 250,000. Typical of Northern Thai geography, Chiang Mai lies on a large flat plain surrounded by mountains. Chiang Mai was founded in the late 13th century (1296) and is one of the oldest continually inhabited settlements in Thailand. It was once the capital of Lanna, an independent Thai kingdom, and has preserved its unique cultural heritage to a marked degree—including a regional dialect distinct from the Thai spoken in Bangkok. Within the city’s original perimeter, still marked by a moat and fortified gates, are numerous ancient Buddhist temples and other monuments attesting to a distinguished past.
Doi Suthep Mountain, topped by one of Thailand’s holiest temples, rises 1676m to the west of the city providing a dramatic backdrop to the city.

Thailand is a popular tourist destination for both Westerners and Asians, and as such has numerous guesthouses, an active night bazaar and other attractions. Chiang Mai is also the home to many long term residents from abroad, including Japanese, Australians, Americans and others involved in business, development work and other activities.
Please note: All dates and block course schedules are subject to change at the last minute. Arrive August 17, 2017 and depart February 10, 2018

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*Huay Nam*

~ Kathy Zatoff K’10
PASSPORTS AND VISA

You need to have a passport and visa to enter Thailand. Your passport must be valid for six months after your last day in Thailand (i.e. until August 2018). During the spring/summer, you will apply to the Thai Consulate for a visa through the Center for International Programs. You should apply (either individually or through the CIP) for a multiple entry non-immigrant visa. Please check to make sure you have the correct type of visa (not a tourist visa).

PLEASE NOTE: If you are planning to travel outside of Thailand during the holiday break, you need to obtain a re-entry permit from Thai immigration or you will lose your student visa and have to travel—at your own expense—to another country with a Thai consulate to obtain another one. The program will tell you how to get a re-entry permit before the holiday break.

Upon your arrival in Chiang Mai you will be met at the airport by the program staff.

When you arrive you will be issued with an Emergency Card with vital information and emergency instructions in both Thai and English. You should carry this with you at all times. You should not carry your passport with you unless you are changing money, but it would be a good idea to make paper and digital copies of your passport and carry one copy with you in case you need it for some reason. Be sure to keep your passport in a safe place while in Chiang Mai, as replacement will be a costly hassle for you.

Soon after your arrival, you will visit the U.S. Consulate in order to register. Should you lose your passport, you will need to apply for a new one at the consulate.

FLIGHT CONNECTIONS

Please take care not to miss connecting flights. It is your responsibility to be in the boarding area at the appropriate time. Be sure to arrive at least three hours before your flight leaves at the international departure gate. If you are connecting from a domestic flight, leave more time between flights in case of delays. Should you miss a connection for any reason, however, please note that you must be rerouted by an airline representative at the airport. If your connecting flight has arrived late due to weather or equipment delays, start with the agent who meets that flight at the gate. Neither Travel Leaders nor Kalamazoo College can change your tickets once you are en route. If you miss a flight and will not arrive with the group, please contact Dr. Mark Ritchie, the Resident Director of the Thailand program, with your new arrival time (see the contact information in the MAIL section of this guidebook). If you cannot reach Dr. Ritchie, please contact a staff member in the CIP (see the EMERGENCIES section) and we will try to assist you in getting a message to Dr. Ritchie about your situation.
MONEY

The monetary unit of Thailand is the baht. Rates may fluctuate some while you are there, but as of April 2015 the rate was about $3.4 baht to the US dollar. You should take some personal spending money with you to Thailand for nightlife, personal travel, etc. In general, you will find prices for food items and local transportation in Chiang Mai to be cheaper than they are in the U.S. Electronic equipment will be expensive, and products from the U.S. will be as expensive, if not more so, as they are here at home. Between $1500 and $2000 should be sufficient, but you can choose to bring more or less. How much money you should bring with you will depend upon how you intend to live and how much traveling you would like to do. Past participants have suggested that you could get by with as little as 500-700 dollars but you could live lavishly with more. You will receive a stipend in-country which will be more than adequate to cover meals, provided you eat at local (Thai) restaurants. There are many inexpensive places to eat near ISDSI.

If you are planning on doing extensive and/or luxury traveling, plan your budget accordingly. There are many budget guides available to help you in your planning. Past participants have reported that *The Rough Guide* for Thailand is the best available. In addition to being an excellent travel guide, it offers valuable cultural information. The program also has a resource room, with guidebooks to Thailand and Southeast Asia, as well as other information.

Students recommend bringing an **ATM card**. The Plus and Cirrus networks are available in Chiang Mai – look at the back of your ATM card to ensure that they use these networks. (Check with your bank if they use a different network.) Make sure, however, that this isn't your only source of funds since there are times when the networks are down. Also, make sure your ATM card will not expire while you are on the program; in addition, you should notify your bank that you will be out of the U.S. to ensure that your card won't be deactivated due to suspected fraudulent activity. **You should plan in advance how you will obtain cash should the ATM not be an option.** All participants should bring an internationally accepted credit card to use in case of emergencies (Visa and MasterCard are the most widely used). Additionally, there is a fee for each time you use your card to withdraw money. Past participants have recommended taking out larger sums of money at a time but warn that getting change for larger bills can be difficult.

When walking around the city, carry your money on your body, either in a pouch that you can wear under your shirt or in a money belt to protect yourself against pickpockets.

BILLING
The Center for International Programs does not handle the billing for the program. The Business Office issues the bills and will send your bills for the program cost to your home address just prior to the beginning of each quarter that you are abroad, as when you are on campus. For specific questions regarding your account, please direct these to Patrick Farmer in the Business Office, 269.337.7226 or patrick.farmer@kzoo.edu.

CLIMATE
The weather in Thailand will be hot and humid when you arrive, in the 80s and 90s most days. It will gradually turn cooler, leading to a very pleasant and cooler winter, especially at night, with daytime temperatures in the 80s and down into the 70s or cooler at night. There is a marked difference in temperature between the lowlands and the mountains. Be sure to bring a few warm clothes (a fleece-like jacket and a warm hat) for trips into the mountains, where it can get cold. You will be arriving during rainy season, when it often rains every day. While rain seldom lasts all day, when it does rain it can be quite intense. Be sure to bring an umbrella. Rainy season lasts most years until late October or mid November, when the rains cease and the weather turns cooler.

Clothing is inexpensive in Thailand, although not available in larger sizes. You may be able to purchase warm climate clothing here, or have it inexpensively made near campus.

Thailand’s heat can be a difficult adjustment. It often makes people tired and sluggish or unable to engage in activities that they routinely enjoy, like exercising or walking long distances. It can affect your sleeping and study patterns. The tropics are also full of animal life that will be new to you—many houses have ants, geckos and spiders in them, mosquitoes can be bothersome, small lizards live inside most buildings on the walls and cockroaches can be found even in the most luxurious homes. In rural areas you may encounter such things as mice, rats, lizards and snakes, but usually they stay out of your way.

PACKING AND LUGGAGE RESTRICTIONS
Check with the airline or with Travel Leaders to find out the luggage restrictions for your flight to and from Thailand. Generally, you will be limited to one carry-on and one piece of checked luggage. You will be charged by the airlines for any excess weight or additional bags.

PACK LIGHTLY!! Few things are as disheartening as dragging around excess baggage or overloaded suitcases while traveling abroad, especially when you could have done without most of it. If you can't carry your bags, it's a sure sign that you've packed too much. A good rule of thumb when traveling is to pack your bags, dump everything out, and put no more than half back in. It is strongly recommended that you try to limit yourself to one large bag (such as a backpack) and one carry-on for the program.

Some of the field visits require backpacking. If you do not own a backpack, they can be rented from the program in Chiang Mai. The program will issue sleeping bags to each student, so you do not need to bring one with you.

Past participants have all strongly urged that students should avoid packing last minute and pack light!

WHAT TO BRING

All students must check the ISDSI gear list for participants, covering clothing and other related equipment. Please follow those guidelines carefully. Some items are required and others are suggested! Additional things to bring include:

- Student uniform including close-toed shoes/nice sandals (see below: A Note on Clothing Expectations in Thailand)
- Culturally sensitive clothing for outside of class (see below: A Note on Clothing Expectations in Thailand)
- One outfit and shoes for dressy occasions. Men should bring a tie.
- Bring plenty of underwear and socks, because in some cases, especially when traveling, laundry access may be limited
- Sturdy sandals and walking shoes
- Good expedition gear (make sure you check the gear list)
- Toiletries (enough for the first weeks—most everything can be purchased in Chiang Mai)
- Personal first-aid kit (band-aids, motion sickness medicine, aspirin, cold medicine that you know works, Pepto-Bismol, vitamins, cortisone cream, Imodium, etc.) Note that the basic medical supplies are generally cheaper in Thailand.

- Prescriptions (in original bottles with prescription) and other medical supplies. Students have recommended that women bring Monistat 7, since you might need it and it is impossible to find in Chiang Mai.

- Sunscreen (it is expensive and hard to find in Thailand)

- Towel and washcloth. Unlike hosts in America, Thais usually do not supply towels for guests as they are considered to be personal items

- Photos from home to show your host family

- Contact solution/other supplies (if you wear glasses, you may want to bring along a copy of your prescription in case they are lost or stolen. Contact solution is available in Chiang Mai.)

- Money belt or neck pouch

- Tampons (O.B. – a non-applicator brand – are often found in Chiang Mai, but others can be hard to get). Difficult to find outside Chiang Mai. Students have recommended bringing a six month supply.

- Condoms – whether you plan on being sexually active or not

- Personal Journal and pens

- Batteries (can be bought there, but sometimes certain ones are hard to find, like 6V)

- A watch (required on field visits)

- A few garbage or zip-lock bags (great for toiletry items, batteries, film, etc.)

- Flashlight or headlamp

- ATM/credit cards, traveler's checks, copies of your passport, 4-5 passport photos.

- Bathing suit

- Gift for the host family (see suggestions in "Gifts" section)

- Thailand guidebook(s)

- Study Abroad Handbook

- ICRP Handbook

Remember to be flexible and choose clothing that is multi-purpose.
Pack for your emotional self as well. Bring books, pictures of friends and family—things that can help cheer you up and get you through difficult and lonely times. Thai people very much value families, and will be delighted to see pictures of your family. These are also nice mementos to leave with the host family in the city and the village. Bring lots of pictures.

There's no need to stock up on basic supplies for the entire time you're there. **You will be able to find just about anything you need in Chiang Mai.** However, some specific name brands may be harder to find and more expensive. Leave expensive or sentimental jewelry and other valuable items at home.

A good idea is to include one change of clothes in your carry-on in case your luggage gets lost, and if you have two checked bags, distribute things evenly between them. For example, distribute your underwear in two bags so you can be prepared if one bag gets lost.

**NOTE:** Do not pack your passport, money, or valuables in your checked luggage. Keep those items in a money belt or pouch on your person. Keep those items in a money belt or in your carry-on which you should keep with you at all times. Keep your carry-on with you at all times! Electronic or battery operated items should go in your carry-on bag.

**A NOTE ON CLOTHING EXPECTATIONS IN THAILAND**

What you plan on wearing—and packing—should be informed by cultural expectations in Thailand. In Thai culture, what you wear is an expression of your respect for others.

During class in Chiang Mai, **all program participants are required to dress in the same style that is worn by Thai university students.** All Thai university students wear a standard outfit. For women, this is a short sleeved white blouse (buttons up the front) with a collar (not a T-shirt) and plain dark (black) skirt. For men, a collared short sleeved button-up white shirt (not a T-shirt) and dark (black) trousers (no jeans). These clothes are available in Thailand, but only in “smaller” sizes. Students have reported that women who wear larger than a size 8 or 9 will have a lot of difficulty finding clothes in Chiang Mai. Men will have difficulty getting XL pants or shirts. You must bring enough for the first week of classes so you do not get stuck without appropriate dress for orientation and class. Students have recommended 3 shirts, two pants/skirts.

For both women and men, closed-toed shoes or nice sandals for women are appropriate footwear. Flip-flops, Tevas or Birkenstocks are **not** acceptable for classes.

This is the required dress for all program classes including orientation sessions. Since you will be in class five days a week, you should prepare accordingly. Foreign students who dress in the university outfit in Thailand have found that they are immediately identified as
university students, not as tourists, and that most people speak to them in Thai first instead of attempting English (or not speaking with them at all). Thus, dressing this way is not only culturally appropriate; it works to a student’s advantage. (It is also cheaper, as local taxis will charge you the local rate, rather than the tourist rate!)

**Outside class**, clothing should be clean, neat and non-revealing. For women, this means avoiding shorts and short skirts, low-cut tops, tight clothing, tank tops and bare mid-drifts. Pants (e.g. khakis), neat jeans and knee-length skirts are fine. Loose fitting 3/4 length pants are highly recommended.

For men, shorts and sleeveless shirts should be avoided. Neat jeans and other casual wear are suitable. T-shirts and jeans are fine. Shorts for playing sports are acceptable for both men and women under some circumstances. Just make sure they are not too short.

**In the village** or on field visits to NGOs, more rugged clothing may be appropriate. The program staff will inform you what would be appropriate depending on the setting.

Smaller sizes in both footwear and clothing are available locally, and will be less expensive to purchase here.

**Personal grooming** is very important. The program has regulations regarding student grooming which students enrolled in the program **must** follow. This means the following:

- No long hair for men.
- No facial hair for men.
- No overly short (e.g. “buzzed”) hair for women.
- Hair should be a natural color.
- No facial or tongue piercing. No earrings for men. Women can wear one set, or a small number (2-3) of additional earrings.

You WILL see Thai students and others dressing in ways that seem to violate the guidelines above. Remember, they are Thai, and know when it is and is not appropriate to bend the rules. As you adjust to Thai culture you will learn what the expectations are, and how to express yourself within the appropriate cultural norms. Also remember that since Chiang Mai is a popular tourist destination, anything you can do to distinguish yourself from the “backpackers” will help with your integration into Thai life, as well as keep you safer (since you will seen as a local and assumed to have “connections”).

**PERSONAL HYGIENE**
“Smell is important not just because it tells us that someone hasn’t bathed or that vegetables are unripe, it is important because it reveals basic spiritual truth. This is why deodorant is essential.”

The above quote from a Thai columnist may sound funny, but it’s actually a serious truth: personal hygiene is important in Thailand. Most Thais bathe two or three times a day and any presence of body odor is considered offensive. You should be prepared to bathe at least two times a day and use deodorant. Hair should be kept clean and neat also. Women who don’t shave should keep body hair discreetly covered.

Understanding the meaning of clothing (and hygiene) in context will be part of your cross-cultural adaptation, and acting on that understanding will aid you in gaining acceptance into Thai society.

**On the plane to Thailand,** wear nice comfortable clothing. A collared shirt (e.g. polo shirt) is a good idea, as are nice comfortable slacks. If you wear jeans, they should be clean and neat. You are less likely to be detained and searched by Thai customs if you dress nicely.

**GIFTS**

You will be living with a host family in Chiang Mai city for one month, as well as with four or five village families. Bring a gift for each family. In addition, you will make Thai friends that you may want to leave a small memento with. You may wish to bring some typical American gifts to share with them or to show your appreciation. Suggestions of what to bring include:

- T-shirts, sweatshirts, or other clothing with Kalamazoo College (or other college and/or sports) logos
- Baseball caps from “K” and/or your favorite team(s)
- Locally handcrafted items or jewelry, (especially Native American)
- Items from your hometown or state (note that for Michigan dried cherries are too tart and fudge is too sweet!)
- Clothing with English words
- Cookbooks/American recipes with metric measurements
- Scenic potholders, aprons, mugs, and glasses
- Place mats with American prints
- Pen-and-ink drawings or professional-quality photos of areas in the U.S.
- Postcards, pictures (these are especially appropriate in the village)
• Handmade gifts
• Past participants have recommended against chocolate or jelly as gifts.

VEGETARIANISM AND SPECIAL DIETS

A common stereotype of Asia is that lots of people are vegetarians. In fact, being a vegetarian on this program is not easy. While Thais do not eat large quantities of meat, they do add meat to almost all dishes (mostly pork, chicken and seafood). Even stir-fried vegetables usually contain small pieces of meat. Some restaurants will prepare dishes without meat upon request, and there are a few vegetarian restaurants in Chiang Mai.

Maintaining a vegetarian diet is impossible during the homestay and difficult at other times. Refusing to be flexible can result in you being culturally offensive as well as hungry. When invited into someone’s home, it is rude to refuse to try something because you don't like what is put before you, and eating together is a crucial part of Thai culture. This is especially true in the setting of a homestay. The number one fear of some Thai host families is having to deal with a strict vegetarian. Unfortunately, some American students have come to Chiang Mai and rudely insisted on a vegetarian diet in the host family. This has left a bad impression.

If you are really serious about coming to Thailand and adapting, you may have to temporarily give up a vegetarian practice in order to adapt to the Thai diet. By refusing to eat meat or fish when it is served to you, you risk offending the people with you and it is seen as culturally insensitive. This is especially the case in the villages where you will be staying, as most villagers are poor and do not have the luxury to choose their protein sources. They will likely serve you meat as an honor to their guest—and it may mean killing their only pig to do so. To refuse meat in that setting would be considered extremely rude.

Being flexible in your diet not only assures that you will be able to eat, it is a sign of acceptance and appreciation to your Thai hosts. Eating is more than just filling your stomach. In Thailand sharing food is a social event. Refusing to try new foods or join in with others may be misunderstood or considered anti-social. Joining in is a way of “being with Thais.”

No special accommodation will be made for vegetarians on the program or during field visits. You can follow a vegetarian diet while living in the dorms and when you are choosing your own food. If you have dietary restrictions for religious reasons (e.g. you do not eat pork), or medical reasons, Thai people may not fully understand, but will usually accept your explanation.
HEALTH AND MEDICAL ISSUES
You need to be up-to-date with your standard immunizations. Consult the Study Abroad Handbook for the list of required and recommended immunizations for Thailand. Further information on immunizations is also available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (http://www.cdc.gov), a travel clinic, or your county health department. We also recommend that you take care of routine dental and eye appointments before you depart.

If you are currently taking a prescription medicine, you should plan on packing enough of that medicine (in the original containers from your pharmacy) with you for the entire time you will be in Thailand. It is a good idea to also take the physician information sheets for each prescription that you take. We also recommend that you take copies of eyeglass prescriptions, in case you break your glasses while abroad.

Finally you may want to take your favorite cold remedy with you as well, along with any over the counter medicines you use regularly. This will give you time to find a store that sells the products you like and also give your time to try some of the local approaches to coughs and colds.

YOU'VE ARRIVED!

ARRIVAL IN CHIANG MAI
Your exact arrival plans will be determined by your point of arrival in Thailand. Once you arrive in Chiang Mai you will pick up your suitcases and go through immigration and customs. Outside of customs, the program staff will meet you. They will take participants to a local hotel in Chiang Mai for an on-site orientation program before meeting the host families.

FOOD AND WATER
Tap water in Chiang Mai is not drinkable. However, the use of purified bottled water is almost universal, and in most places the ice is safe as well. Be sure to use safe water for brushing teeth and taking medications.

Generally food in Chiang Mai is safe. You should be sure to eat hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Fresh fruit is available cut up, and is generally safe. If in doubt, buy fruit that is not yet peeled. While most food is safe, use your judgment—is the vendor’s cart clean? Do they keep the food cold until it is cooked? Etc.

Don’t take unnecessary risks with your health. You may find yourself in a situation where it would be culturally offensive not to eat something that is offered to you. You will have to
decide what to do in those situations on an individual basis. There is no one right answer, but one suggestion might be to say that you like something else that's being offered better than the dish that you think would be unsafe to eat. That way, you'll be given more of the dish that you do like. Just be careful!

You will be given a stipend in Chiang Mai to cover your meals and other expenses both during the host family visit and afterwards. This will be more than adequate if you eat mostly Thai food at local restaurants frequented by students.

SAFETY
Just as you need to do in any U.S. city, you will need to take safety precautions while walking and traveling around Chiang Mai. Using your common sense at all times will aid you well. Avoid unlighted areas at night when you are walking around the city, and do not walk or take buses alone at night -- especially women. Don't take any unnecessary risks.

Both men and women should be aware of their safety at all times. In the past, men have been just as susceptible as women to potential risks. As students, you will stick out as "foreigners." The best advice is to be aware of your surroundings, listen to your instincts, and use your common sense.

DRUGS
The penalties for carrying or using illegal drugs (including marijuana) in Thailand are extremely harsh—even for small amounts. To be sentenced as a “dealer” you need not actually be selling the drug, since it is determined only by the amount of the drug you possess—an amount that is very small. Penalties include death, life imprisonment or long prison terms. There is nothing the Program or the US government can do to help you if you are found in violation of Thai laws. The use or possession of illegal drugs is also cause for immediate dismissal from the program.

MAIL
Regular mail between the U.S. and Thailand can take anywhere from 7 to 14 days (or more!) to arrive. When you need to receive or send something in a hurry, you can use Express mail (DHL) or a fax at a private telecommunications center. Family and friends should send mail to:
Packages that are sent through airmail often take longer than letters to arrive. It is important to be patient. Students have recommended DHL or FedEx if something needs to be shipped quickly. Be advised, however, that the package will probably be opened, and its contents examined by customs. Do not ship medications from the United States. There is a tax paid on everything that is mailed into Thailand so it is important to consider the value of the package. All packages should have written “Gifts—of no commercial value/personal use” on the outside to avoid having to pay extra import duties. Lists of items in packages should be general to help avoid the contents getting pilfered.

EMERGENCIES

► In case of an emergency, you should first contact Dr. Mark A. Ritchie (mobile phone: 011-66-81724.0860). If calling from within Thailand, drop the 0011-66 and add a 0. If calling from the US, remember there is a 12-15 hour time difference.) He will notify the appropriate people on site. If you are outside Chiang Mai and an emergency arises, try to use a phone to call to Dr. Ritchie or to someone else in Chiang Mai to find out what to do or to ask for help.

To contact someone in the Center for International Programs, call the following numbers:

Center for International Programs (voice) (269) 337-7133 cip@kzoo.edu

*Margaret Wiedenhoft, Executive Director (269) 267-5800 mwieden@kzoo.edu

*Program manager for Thailand Study Abroad Program

HEALTH PRECAUTIONS IN CHIANG MAI

ANIMAL BITES
Dogs are common in Thailand. If a dog or a cat bites you, let the Resident Director know IMMEDIATELY. A rabies vaccination must be administered within a few days of the bite, so it is imperative you check with a doctor.

**DIARRHEA**

You will need to watch what you eat and drink. You will observe the Thais eating many things and not becoming sick. That is to be expected, since they have lived there much longer than you and their systems have adapted to certain bacteria that will be very unfamiliar to you. A certain amount of stomach discomfort and diarrhea is to be expected and should not cause undue alarm. You may experience some abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

However, if diarrhea becomes severe and prolonged and/or if you become dehydrated, you should do the following:

**Drink at least three liters of liquid a day (three full Nalgenes).** The treatment of diarrhea always begins with maintaining an adequate fluid intake.

Avoid drinks containing caffeine and milk if you become dehydrated. Take Pepto-Bismol or Imodium AD as directed. Before you depart, talk with your physician or call the Health Center if you have questions about what might be appropriate for you.

**Seek medical attention** if diarrhea persists more than 72 hours or if you have bloody diarrhea, severe abdominal pain, or high fever. ISDSI staff will provide doctors’ names and addresses to you.

In general, you need to let the ISDSI staff know when you are ill and want to seek medical attention. Local health care is good and very accessible, and visits should not be prohibitively expensive.

**MALARIA**

**The best way to avoid malaria is to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes.** Malaria is no longer a problem in Thailand, except in remote border areas, where the malaria strains are resistant to anti-malaria medication. The Thai Center for Disease Control does not recommend anti-malarial drugs at this time, since it is not effective and is contributing to the emergence of drug-resistant malaria strains. They recommend instead being careful to prevent mosquito bites by using a mosquito net and/or DEET repellent if in an area where malaria is a problem.

If the program is going to travel to an area where malaria exists, the program will take the students to a hospital in Chiang Mai where the students can see a doctor familiar with the
specifics of malaria prevention in mainland Southeast Asia, and if recommended, obtain anti-malarial drugs.

You should talk over your malaria prevention strategy with your doctor in advance. The decision about what you will do about malaria is one you must make yourself. Neither CIP nor ISDSI can make this decision for you. If you decide to take anti-malaria medication, follow the instructions from the physician carefully.

To minimize mosquito bites:

- Cover up with clothing. Wear garments with a high neckline (or a bandanna around the neck), long sleeves, and long pants.
- Use a DEET-containing insect repellent on exposed skin AND permethrin, an insecticide, on clothing. Make sure you wash it off, daily, before applying another coat. It is a toxin!
- Avoid shiny jewelry and perfumed cosmetics, as they may attract mosquitoes.
- Remain indoors at dusk and after dark.
- When traveling on your own, choose accommodations with tidy grounds and air conditioning or with windows having well-fitting screens. Use mosquito netting elsewhere.
- Check that bed netting has no holes or rips. Tuck netting under mattress.
- Avoid local preventatives. Many are unproved, such as mosquito coils or Avon Skin-So-Soft. While these are popular folklore insect repellents in the U.S., they perform poorly in scientific studies.

If you become ill:

Remember that malaria is rarely acquired if you’ve taken the proper precautions. Early treatment is essential if you do acquire it, though. Consider any febrile, flu-like illness in a malarial area to be malaria until proven otherwise.

Common symptoms of malaria include fever and chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches, and dizziness. See a physician promptly. Delay in seeking medical care and delay in diagnosis increases the chances of complications and death.

Malaria can occur as early as six days after being bitten by an infected mosquito or as late as several months after exposure. Rarely, symptoms occur many months later. Inform physicians of recent travel history.

AIDS
AIDS has reached epidemic proportions in Thailand, which posts one of the highest infection rates in Asia. HIV infection rates among prostitutes in Chiang Mai have been estimated at over 80%. Since over 90% of Thai men have used prostitutes and the majority of men regularly frequent brothels, the risk of heterosexual transmission (from men as well as women who are not prostitutes) in this country is quite high. IV drug use provides another vector for transmission. Please be warned and be prepared to take all precautions necessary to avoid exposure to the HIV virus.

LOCAL HEALTH CARE
Adequate medical care is available in Thailand. In Chiang Mai there will be access to medical facilities that can provide modern medicines, vitamins, and ordinary health care products—although they might not have the same brands that are available in the US. The city of Chiang Mai has several large modern hospitals with dental facilities and also many clinics. During field visits to rural areas there will be access to local government hospitals.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION
Transportation in Chiang Mai is generally cheap, and once you learn how to use it, easy. The transportation in the city consists of red songtaews (also called seelaws) pickup trucks with the back converted to accommodate two benches and a covered roof. These work like a “group taxi” with the driver picking up and dropping people off as they go along. The red ones do not have fixed routes, but will decide on picking you up depending on the destination of the other passengers. They are a great way to see the city! The fare is fixed and cheap (usually around 30 baht), and if you are not sure ask another passenger. If you travel outside of the normal route, you will be charged an additional fare. Wearing the university student dress will be a good way to keep the price low! Different colored songtaews go out to various towns and villages outside the city, and have a somewhat more fixed route. The tuk-tuk or three-wheeled taxi of Bangkok fame is also available in Chiang Mai, and while more expensive, will take you directly to your destination. Past participants have suggested that when possible, walking is the best (and free)!

TRAVEL/VACATIONS
TRAVEL OUTSIDE CHIANG MAI
When you travel outside of Chiang Mai, it is a good idea to let someone know your plans, indicating where you are going and approximately when you will return. If you are planning on being gone for more than 48 hours, you are required to notify the Resident
Director. You should also leave addresses where you can be contacted at approximately 48 hour intervals. **This is a policy for all students on study abroad.**

**TRAVELING IN POLITICALLY TURBULENT AREAS**

Choose with care the routes on which you travel. Some border areas, especially after the rains stop, are dangerous as fighting between insurgent groups in Burma spill over the border. **Check State Department travel advisories at [http://travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov)**

Some parts of Southeast Asia are very dangerous and should be avoided. Do not travel to areas where there are political uprisings of any kind or to places that the Consulate advises you to avoid. Since you are a visitor, being present in such situations would be highly inappropriate and potentially dangerous.

If you find yourself in a situation where there is political trouble and/or violence, please do the following:

- First, remember that it’s probably not aimed at you and that as an international visitor; the situation does not welcome your participation.
- Lay low and stay inside.
- Contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate or other diplomatic representation (British, Canadian, French, etc.). Follow their instructions.
- Contact your family and/or the Center for International Programs as soon as possible. The Embassy or Consulate can help you do this. It’s a good idea to carry the Center for International Programs’ phone and fax numbers with you at all times. Phone: 269-337-7133 Fax: 269-337-7400. (This will be on your emergency card.)

**TIPS ON INDEPENDENT TRAVEL IN THAILAND AND SOUTHEAST ASIA**

These tips cannot *guarantee* that you will have fewer problems, but we hope they will at least help you to minimize your risks and/or inconvenience.

- Make sure you really know how to get where you’re going.
- **Avoid traveling alone.**
- Definitely take some kind of pouch for documents, money, and tickets. The best rule is never to remove it. Sleep with it and take it in the shower if you have any doubts. When traveling, keep documents with you, not in your luggage on top of the bus or in a checked bag.
- On buses, try to get a seat where you can watch luggage being on- and off-loaded, so you can keep an eye on your own.
Plan an itinerary and leave a copy of it with the Resident Director.

Call home when you get a chance, especially if there is an itinerary change.

Lock your luggage with combination padlocks (so you don't have to worry about losing keys).

Allow plenty of time before scheduled departures -- at least two hours at the airport. If possible, buy bus tickets early, but then get there early to claim your seat. Be very clear as to your precise destination, and once you're on board or on the bus, make sure your destination matches that of your vehicle!

Talk to security personnel concerning where you will enter boarding areas, which plane or bus is yours, etc.

US Passport holders should consider enrolling in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at https://step.state.gov/step/

Be wary of complete strangers who approach you and offer you rides. As is expected here in the U.S., never accept a ride from a stranger when you are alone. Remember that hitchhiking is grounds for dismissal from the study abroad program.

PLEASE NOTE: As noted earlier, students leaving and re-entering Thailand during the holiday break are required by Thai immigration to get a re-entry permit. Students failing to do so will lose their student visas, and will be required to travel to another country at their own expense to get another student visa.

THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

RESIDENT DIRECTOR

The Resident Director of the Kalamazoo program is Dr. Mark A. Ritchie. As Resident Director, Dr. Ritchie is your official contact for the Kalamazoo program in Chiang Mai. He is responsible for the day-to-day management of the program, acting in emergency situations, advising you about your academic work, assisting you with your arrangements for your Integrative Cultural Research Project, and communicating with the Center for International Programs at Kalamazoo College. ISDSI includes staff members that are host family coordinators, instructors, field personnel, and office assistants. You may approach any ISDSI staff member regarding questions or concerns you may have regarding the program.

CLASSES AND CREDITS
Students are eligible to receive the equivalent of 6 K-units in this program. All completed coursework will be automatically transferred back to Kalamazoo College and will count towards your degree. In order to have your two language units count as the College’s intermediate language proficiency requirement, you must a score a minimum of “Intermediate High” on the proficiency test given at the end of the program. They will be distributed (transferred back) as the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>K-units</th>
<th>Department/Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thai Language and Society</td>
<td>2 K</td>
<td>Language (Cultures: Asia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICRP</td>
<td>1 K</td>
<td>ICRP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Ecology of Forests</td>
<td>1 K</td>
<td>ANSO/ENVS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agro ecology</td>
<td>1 K</td>
<td>BIO/ENV (AOS: Science)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islands, Oceans, and Sustainability</td>
<td>1 K</td>
<td>BIO/ENV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INTEGRATIVE CULTURAL RESEARCH PROJECT**

While in Thailand this year, you'll carry out an Integrative Cultural Research Project (ICRP) that will form a part of the credited academic work you're required to complete on the program. Your ICRP will provide the opportunity to get involved independently and systematically in the local culture while you're there. Through that involvement, you'll be able to widen your circle of acquaintances, improve your mastery of the local language outside the classroom, and broaden your understanding of sustainable development in the context of Thai culture. You will be able to explore a topic that is of interest to you within the field of sustainable development by doing an internship with a non-government development organization (NGO). Academic staff on site will provide support for your project in terms of establishing contacts, selecting appropriate sites and topics, and meeting with you to assist in completing your projects; however, you are ultimately responsible for developing your ICRP project and paper. **The ICRP must be carried out and completed in compliance with the guidelines and deadlines provided by the academic staff or you will not receive academic credit for the project.**

**Six distinctive features characterize the ICRP projects**, regardless of where they are completed, and should guide you in the selection and implementation of your particular project—

1. **Emphasis on “hands on” human interaction**—your project should allow you to interact with local people outside of the usual academic environment in a systematic, integrated way.
2. **Choice of the Project Topic, Type, and Scope**—the project should reflect your own goals, interests, and skills. Although you will need to consult with the local project coordinator who will ultimately approve your topic, you may exercise wide latitude in selecting the sort of project you wish to pursue in the host city; however, the project should give you an opportunity to apply what you are experiencing to your academic experience and to interact with a diverse group of people within the local culture.

   a. Service and volunteer projects

   b. Cultural externships or internships—participation in some facet of the local culture
      Life histories

3. **Choice of Methodology**—in consultation with the project coordinator, you’ll have wide latitude with respect to the information-gathering method(s) you choose to employ in your project.

4. **Systematic Research** (cf: Describe, Interpret, Evaluate, Validate, Act)

   a. Consistent journaling

   b. Painstaking interpretation

5. **Cultural Insight** (cf: DIEVA)

   a. Insight into the particular cultural activity or aspect you’ve selected

   b. Insight into the larger culture and/or social structure of the host country

6. **Advising and Mentoring**—from a local project coordinator and also a site supervisor

   a. Selection of topics and methods

   b. Introductions and first contacts

   c. Review of journal notes

   d. Interpretation

**GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR ICRPS**

- What is the main activity of the placement? What was produced?
- What are the goals and mission of the organization?
- Where does this particular organization stand in relation to similar ones in the city? In the region? In the state? In the country?
Thailand 17-18

- Whom does this organization serve?
- How do people view this organization and its mission?
- What problems and tasks are to be accomplished?
- How was this done?
- How successful is the organization?
- What are the basic skills and knowledge needed to work for this organization?
- What would be a typical day or week in the organization?
- What were your responsibilities?
- What contribution did you make to help the organization achieve its goals?

The following pages provide a sampling of recent ICRPs, including the locations and activities that students performed and discussed in their final papers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISDSI/ New Life Center Foundation</th>
<th>A New Life in Thailand</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My research focused on the existence of New Life Center Foundation (NLC), an NGO that is a home to young women who either have previously been or are at risk to be exploited for labor, abused, or trafficked. During my time at NLC I was able to observe and participate in efforts to empower these women through means of education and skills training. I was also able to participate in rehabilitation/therapeutic projects provided by the center such as art and music.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Studio Xang</th>
<th>Influences in Children’s Artwork in Northern Thailand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My project involved working with a staff of people from Thailand, Burma, Australia and France teaching and providing art classes for migrant children living in Northern Thailand. I looked at the influences of the children’s villages on their artwork by observing and documenting the process and product from each location visited. I went to three different villages and recorded observations of the village and the artwork created by the children.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thai Freedom House &amp; Free Bird Café</th>
<th>Recipes with a Cause – Creating a Cookbook for Free Bird Café</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For my project I volunteered at Thai Freedom House, a community learning center for Burmese refugees and Indigenous Peoples that teaches Shan, Burmese, Thai, and English as well as acting as a resource for displaced individuals and their families by providing education, legal, medical, and occupational resources, and helping to preserve cultural identity. Specifically, I worked at Free Bird Café, Thai Freedom House’s charity café who’s profits go towards funding Thai Freedom House. Based upon my own interests and those of Free Bird Cafe, I proposed creating a cookbook for the café so that the proceeds could help further Thai Freedom House’s efforts as well as enriching my own knowledge about local food culture. Thus, I transcribed, photographed, designed and published the Free Bird Café Cookbook, which is comprised of Shan, Burmese, and Thai, recipes mainly from the café’s menu.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Mae Tha

**Communities of Farmers and Farmers Markets**

I decided to further explore the community that we visited during our Agro-Ecology Field Course for my ICRP time. I lived with Mae (mother in Thai) Sohn, Paw (father in Thai) Phat, and their daughter Pi (a person older than yourself) Pui. Every day I’d work side by side with Mae Sohn tending to her vegetable farm learning what it takes to be a farmer that personally sells her produce at a farmers market.

## ENGINEO

**The Sciences and Culture Behind a Green Energy Business in Chiang Mai**

I participated in an internship with a local small business called ENGINEO. ENGINEO is just one example of a business in Thailand rapidly progressing due to the popularity and growing importance of green energy around the globe. This company designs, builds, and installs several green energy systems including solar cell systems, wind turbine systems, and hydro turbine systems. I was given my own projects to complete on the job including the conduction of research on the tung oil tree and its use in biodiesel, setting up a solar cell system and participating in a solar cell installation in a clients home, and building two identical LED panels composed of two hundred and forty lights each and installing them in ENGINEO's new office building.

## Muay Thai Gym

**Entering the Ring**

My project involved training at a local Muay Thai gym and observing the culture of this sport through direct interaction with its participants. I trained under Kru Andy and his other Thai trainers. About eighty-five percent of the fighters training at the gym were foreigners, which added to the cultural dynamics shown at this gym.

## ISDSI

**The Struggle of Organic Restaurants in Chiang Mai, Thailand**

My project was to examine the process of restaurants in Chiang Mai obtaining organic food. I decided to conduct my research using mainly primary information from interviews. I also observed meetings between the various stakeholders in the process; farmers, suppliers and restaurant owners. I did additional research using both online and written sources. I was able to conduct formal interviews with four restaurants advertising organic food in Chiang Mai as well as informal talks with a handful more.

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## LIVING IN CHIANG MAI

### THE HOMESTAY EXPERIENCE

Much of the Thailand program is spent in a homestay with a family in Chiang Mai. While most of these families will be middle class, there will be some differences between the families. Some families will have hosted a student before, some not. Some will speak English, some very little, if any. Whatever the type of family, this will be your first introduction into Thai culture, and a unique and special glimpse into Thai life. You will also
have homestays in both ethnic Thai and tribal villages. While lasting much shorter lengths of time, these too can be powerful learning experiences.

In Thailand the “family” often means more than just the nuclear family, and can include distant relations and close friends. You will likely have “mystery guests” that come and go, and a general bustle of people in the family going about their business.

**ADJUSTING TO YOUR FAMILY**

There will be some new issues for you as you adjust to living with a Thai family. Some things may be very different than what you’re accustomed to here in the US. As you will no longer be living the independent life of the residence halls in the US where you can come and go as you please, be prepared to give up some of that freedom in Thailand so you can better integrate with your family. They may worry if you stay out late, so early on in the stay have a discussion about what time they expect you to be home.

However, since Thai culture avoids direct confrontation, talk with program staff about what the family may be really trying to communicate. (This type of indirect communication will be covered more during orientation.) Your family may want you to accompany them on certain visits, activities or excursions. Take advantage of such cultural opportunities as they provide an ideal way to get to know the different aspects of the culture first-hand.

Ask lots of questions! Families appreciate getting asked about themselves, their food, what they like to do, etc. Look for ways to get involved and help out around the house. Adapting to a different family lifestyle will take some time. There will most likely be instances in which you are aware that your family does not

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*Host family
~ Kelly Campbell K’10*

*Host Mom*
understand why you act the way you do, and vice versa. Listen and observe closely; often, messages are given in a non-verbal manner or indirectly. Also, pay attention to how your Thai peers act and relate to others and follow their model. Be flexible in learning cultural differences, be aware of yourself and learn from your mistakes.

GUIDELINES FOR A POSITIVE FAMILY EXPERIENCE

▪ Keep your expectations minimal.

▪ Always check and double-check when the family expects you to be home: at night, for meals, for family outings. If you are going to be late, call them.

▪ Try and speak Thai all the time, even when you are with your English speaking friends.

▪ Don’t hesitate to tell them if you don’t understand something, and ask them to be patient as you try and improve your Thai.

▪ Respect the rules and customs of your family (schedules, opinions, religions, beliefs, etc.)

▪ Ask your host mother for permission to have friends over. When you do have guests, entertain them in the same way that your family entertains theirs. NEVER take a friend of the opposite sex into the bedroom, even with the door open.

▪ Expect to make your own bed, keep your room clean, and offer to help out, as you would in the U.S. when visiting relatives.

▪ Inform the Resident Director immediately of any problems relating to your safety and well-being.

▪ Finally, at the end of your homestay experience and then again after you return to the U.S., write your family a letter letting them know you appreciated their hospitality and that you’ve arrived back in the U.S. safe and sound.

When in your homestay, it is important to remember to:

▪ Turn the lights in your room off when you leave the room.

▪ Turn off your fan when you leave the room.

▪ Turn off the air conditioner, if there is one, when you leave the room.

▪ Take your shoes off inside the house.

In almost all cases, if you are doing something culturally offensive, you will not be told directly in order to avoid embarrassment and to save face for all involved. Thai people value social harmony and avoid direct confrontation. If you think you may be offending them, try and gently find out why (perhaps asking your host sister rather than your host
mom). However, they may still not tell you. You can also ask a Thai friend or program staff who can help you figure things out.

The expectations of you in the homestay will be different than you are used to in the U.S. You may be expected to be home earlier, and not have as much freedom. Some families may have a maid or other help. **Be prepared to have little to no privacy.** During the homestays you may have to share a room with a Thai family member. In many cases, double rooms in Thailand consist of one very large bed, with separate bedding. You can expect the privacy of your personal belongings, room, etc. to be respected, but if you are used to solitude, realize that you won't have much time alone.

This means you will have to find time for personal reflection in new ways—such as when you are riding a mini-bus or walking to the post-office.

While fulfilling your own study responsibilities, you should try to participate in the normal life of the household; help with the chores, play with the kids, and learn how to cook. Try to fit into their schedule, diet and lifestyle as much as possible. They may feel a bit protective of you, so in your daily schedule be sure to let them know where you are and when you’ll be returning to their home.

During your homestay, you should expect to be limited in your freedom. It is not appropriate for guest students to stay out late at night (past 9:00 PM or any other time that would be inconvenient for the family). You may feel at some times as if you were being treated as a child—when someone puts food on your plate, for example.

Some bathrooms will be Thai-style, some will be Western-style. Thai-style bathrooms consist of a shower and a ceramic “squat” toilet. Most guesthouses and hotels will have Western bathrooms. Some Thai homes have Thai-style bathrooms, some Western-style. Most public bathrooms are Thai-style and **do not have toilet paper.** It is a good idea to carry toilet paper with you at all times.

There will be times when living with a family with whom you cannot communicate well may become stressful. This is normal and, as stated before, you should be ready for it. Keep in mind that staff will be available to talk to you if you are having difficulties. But, remember also, that stress is not necessarily a sign that things are not going well. It is a given in any experience of cross-cultural adjustment. Remember, too, that the rewards of this experience with your Thai family will most likely outweigh any difficulties you may encounter.

**LAUNDRY**
Laundry is still done mostly by hand in Thailand, although washing machines are beginning to be more common. During the homestay, you will either wash your own clothes, someone will do it for you possibly you will be able to pay someone to do it for you. We will discuss this more in-depth during orientation.

**Note:** When giving your laundry to someone else, do not give them your underwear or socks, even if they use a washing machine. These are considered personal items, and are highly offensive to give to someone else to wash. These are commonly washed out on a daily basis and hung to dry in a discreet place. Be prepared to wash your own underwear and socks by hand. You can ask your host mother where to do this.

**MEALS**
On weekdays you will eat breakfast and supper with the family, and lunch near ISDSI. On weekends you will eat all meals at the homestay. If you are going to miss a meal, it is important that you tell the family in advance. Given that the homestay is only for four weeks, missing meals is strongly discouraged. They are a great time to get to know your family and a chance to practice your Thai, so you should take advantage of it.

**HOMESTAY GIFTS**
It is typical to bring a gift to your host family. Any of the gift items mentioned earlier would be appropriate. Often students give the gift at the end of the stay, when they know what the family or individual members would appreciate most. When you first arrive showing them pictures from home is a good “ice breaker.” Your family may not open the gifts while you are around so it is best if they do not need a lot of explanation.

**TELEPHONE USE**
Most past participants purchased cell phones for about $20-40 and then bought minutes at the 7-11. You can also contact your current provider to find out about data costs for Thailand. It may less expensive and more convenient.

**THE DORMITORY EXPERIENCE**
At the conclusion of the first block course, students will move into private dormitories. The program staff will arrange appropriate accommodations. There are a huge number of restaurants and noodle shops near the dorms catering to the student population, in addition to Internet cafes, video game shops and convenience stores. When living in the dorm you will be able to use either the dorm laundry service if available, or one of the many local laundry services near the dorms.

**EMAIL**
Email access via the numerous Internet cafes is easy and cheap (less than $1 an hour). ISDSI also has wireless Internet access and a mini computer lab. If you are planning on using email while in Thailand, you will be able to use your Kalamazoo e-mail account via the web.

ADAPTING TO THAILAND

THAILAND THE COUNTRY

Besides the challenge of adjusting to a new culture (which will be discussed further below), students will be faced with the task of adapting to a new country. Thailand is a developing country in a tropical region. Adapting to these physical conditions alone will require you to make significant changes to your lifestyle—changes which may cause you to feel more limited in your freedom and choices than you would at home. Be prepared.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Thailand’s infrastructure is not as developed as that of the U.S. This is evident by a lack of infrastructure in some sectors or what appears as “uneven” development of infrastructure in others. Controls on pollution and pesticide use are not as strong (or are not enforced), nor are policies on environmental protection. Stray dogs live in the streets and in and around market places. Not every street has sidewalks and some streets have partially constructed ones. The wide range of choices you are used to regarding your food, reading material, recreation and choices of medical care will not be available. Keep in mind, though, that it will be your experience of these kinds of conditions and others that will contribute to your understanding of the context in which the struggle for sustainable development is taking place.

DOING WITHOUT

In addition to adjusting to the conditions mentioned above, there are things you will have to give up to live in Thailand—and this may be hard at first. Eventually, though, you may realize that you don't necessarily “need” what you thought you did. Not everyone misses the same things and different people react differently to the sacrifices they must make. For some people, not having their own car may prove frustrating since possibilities for travel will be limited. For others it might be the unavailability of certain foods (brown rice or herbal tea, for example), or not being able to maintain a vegetarian diet. For some people it’s hard to find clothes or shoes that fit or suit their taste.

You will also have to adapt to a new city and a new community. This means using a map to learn where things are and making use of public transportation. In a new community where
you don't know anyone, your usual support systems will not be available. It's important to consider beforehand how you will cope in such circumstances. Your routine will be different. During the homestay, you may spend evenings and weekends with your family instead of going out. You will be required to give up some of the freedom and flexibility to which you are accustomed. You may find structure where you don't want it and none where you do. This is a normal part of cross-cultural learning and adaptation.

Finally, you will have to give up some control over your health. Sickness—especially that which you've never experienced before (like food poisoning)—is inevitable. It's quite common for one's digestive system to have a negative reaction to a completely new environment—new food, new water, etc. It's not uncommon for people to have at least one bout of food poisoning, which typically involves vomiting and diarrhea. You might also find yourself more susceptible to other kinds of infections. A balanced diet and plenty of sleep will help you to maintain your health.

**THAI: THE SECOND CULTURE**

In addition to adapting to Thailand as a country, you will be learning to adjust to a second culture. Learning to live in a new culture requires a great deal more than a list of do's and don'ts, or a brief description of the cultural traits of a society. For one thing, any culture is much too complex to narrow down to a definitive description. Descriptions can describe general characteristics, but they will not explain each specific encounter. Secondly, and more importantly, adaptation has as much to do with understanding oneself and one's own culture as it does with understanding a different culture.

As individuals, we are cultural beings with ways of behaving and perceiving which we do not always identify as springing from our culture. It is when we attempt to understand, or become a part of, another culture that we come to see that many of our values, beliefs and behaviors stem from our own cultural background. Interaction in a new cultural environment can cause conflict both within oneself and between oneself and the new culture. Some of this conflict is inevitable. However, by understanding yourself as a product of your own culture and of your own personal background, you will have a much easier time observing your interactions and learning to adapt to a new set of behavioral ground rules.

The task of culture learning requires a high tolerance for ambiguity and a patient willingness to work through culture shock in a constructive manner. Students must be willing to learn from situations where they may have mis-communicated or failed at communication. They will be expected to examine how their own cultural expectations may have interfered with interpretation, to use their observation skills to pick up on other
clues as to what may be happening, and to reserve judgment while remaining tolerant of ambiguity until they reach understanding.

Learning a second culture not only affords students an understanding of the new culture derived from first-hand experience, it, at the same, time gives them an awareness of their own culture that they never have had before. With familiar surroundings and friends taken away, students are led to examine not only their culture, but themselves as well. One student participating in an intensive study abroad program wrote, “I'm learning to enjoy being with myself, independent and alone from lifelong cultural props. It's great!”

Such awareness of one's own culture and self ultimately allows students to live more responsibly as members of the global community.

**THAI CULTURE**

Learning about Thai culture is a life-long endeavor, and you will be able to begin this process during your time in Thailand. The orientation sessions in Thailand will give you the tools to learn about Thai culture—and a weekly seminar will help you to use these tools and reflect on what you are learning.

The following is a brief overview of some important topics and issues that are part of Thai culture that you should begin to think about before coming. Some questions to ask yourself as you read the following sections include. How does this fit with my own values? What problems might this cause for me? Why might Thais hold these values? What other questions does this raise?

**FACE**

The concept of 'face' is a most important cultural value in Thai society. Keeping one’s ‘face’ is equivalent to keeping one’s self respect and dignity intact. Not only are Thais concerned about maintaining ‘face’ themselves, they are also concerned about other people’s ‘face.’ Thais will go to great pains to ensure that, so far as possible, you do not ‘lose face.’ This means they will rarely confront you even when you have offended them. Confrontation, therefore, must be done with great care when interacting with Thais.

**KRENG JAI**

“Kreng Jai” is a deeply embedded, almost instinctive cultural behavior that is similar to the English meaning of CONSIDERATION. The concept extends beyond being simply considerate in social interactions; however, Kreng Jai often involves a subtle deference to a person of authority. Thai cultural behaviors avoid immediate personal conflict with another in order to keep either party from ‘losing face.’ This may mean that you find
yourself doing something you really don’t want to do to please another person or to keep them from ‘losing face.’ Some examples of this type of behavior include:

- Complying with others’ wishes or requests.
- Reluctance to disturb or interrupt others.
- Restraint of one’s show of displeasure or anger, so as not to cause discomfort to others.
- Avoidance of asserting one’s opinions or needs (i.e. deferring to others instead).
- Reluctance to ask questions when one has not understood someone.
- Avoidance of causing others to lose face or to be embarrassed.
- Reluctance to give instructive communications to superiors (by rank) or to peers who are older or who have worked longer.
- Avoid making corrections of another’s mistakes, particularly if he/she is more senior.
- Reluctance to evaluate colleagues’ or superiors’ performance.
- When giving opinions, choosing what is an obvious disadvantageous position, as a measure of self-restraint.
- Avoiding the demand for one’s right.

**HEIRARCHY**

Thailand is a hierarchical society. The idea that “all people are created equal” is a Western idea—not a Thai one (although this is changing to some extent). This is pervasive and is quite difficult for Westerners to adapt to. Women are not equal to men, poor people are not equal to rich people, younger people are not equal to older people, ethnic minorities are not equal to the ethnic majority, etc. This results in what a Westerner might consider “discrimination”—but also provides status and respect to older people, etc. Although this worldview is being challenged by some in Thai society, it is something you should be aware of as you prepare to live in Thailand.

**ROYALTY, POLITICS, AND RELIGION**

The Royal Family is held in highest regard. Speaking or acting against the Royal Family can result in deportation or jail. Pictures of the Royal Family must be treated with respect, and are usually hung very high, above one’s head. Do not step on a coin or paper money as this is disrespectful of the King (his picture is on both).
Be sensitive when speaking about politics. Keep criticisms to yourself—even in English, as many Thais will understand what you are saying.

Buddhism is the state-sanctioned religion of Thailand, and is held in very high regard. A woman may not touch a monk or give anything directly to him. It is illegal to climb, sit on or deface any image of the Buddha—or any national monument. Other religions, including animism, Islam, Christianity are practiced in Thailand. You should be respectful at all religious events or places.

**THAI BUDDHISM**

The primary, and semi-official religion of the kingdom is Theravada Buddhism. (Thailand is not “legally” a Buddhist country, but in practice the government and the Buddhist Sangha are intertwined.) It does not hold uncompromisingly to the teachings of Guatama, but also embraces a wide spectrum of animism. There are close to 30,000 temples and more than 200,000 monks in the kingdom. It is generally expected that a male child will spend at least 3 months in the temple as a novice; he is not considered “ripe,” or treated with true respect until he has done so. Most men enter the priesthood to repay their parents by obtaining merit for them. Merit is made by doing good, giving offerings to the priesthood and temple, and by obeying the Dharma. You will notice spirit houses throughout the kingdom. These are part of the Thai animistic belief that good spirits need to be respected and evil ones placated with offerings.

**MONKS**

Monks are considered holy and you have to show them respect. Women cannot touch monks. Women must never sit down by a monk nor hand anything directly to him. If a monk gets on a bus and desires to take a seat next to a woman, the woman must vacate her seat and stand up, or find another seat.

**TEMPLES**

All Buddha images, large or small, in good or bad condition, are regarded as sacred objects. Do not climb up on one to take a photograph or do anything that would show disrespect to Buddhism and indirectly to the Thai people. Showing disrespect to Buddhism, temples or images can result in a prison sentence or expulsion from the country.

**OTHER RELIGIONS**

There are sizable numbers of adherents to other religions in Thailand, mostly animist, Muslim, and Christian. Much of Thai
“Buddhism” is in actual practice animist, and many tribal people practice animism, which is not “spirit worship” but rather “propitiation” — keeping the spirits happy, or from getting angry. Large portions of Southern Thailand are Muslim, and even in Chiang Mai there is a large Muslim community. Christians in Thailand are a minority among ethnic Thais, but large numbers of tribal people, such as the Karen, are Christian.

RESPECT FOR THE BODY

The head is the highest and most sacred part of the body. Therefore, you should not touch another person's head or shoulders. For similar reasons, you should not reach over people's heads to get things. The feet are considered “lower” and less clean than the rest of the body. Therefore, never point at a person or object with your feet, step over someone, or carry your shoes at a high level (e.g. you should never tie your shoes to the outside of your backpack). How you dress reflects your respect for others. People will judge you by your appearance, as clothing can signify particular occupations and social status.

THE THAI SMILE

To the foreigner who is unfamiliar with Thai culture, it may seem that the Thais are always smiling. Smiles have a variety of meanings in Thai society. To point out a few, smiles indicate the following: to indicate amusement; to excuse and grant pardon for minor offenses; to thank someone for a small service; to avoid comment on issues; or to show embarrassment. Smile when you greet people or if people smile at you. When foreigners refuse to smile, the Thais are not sure how to interact with them.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Expect to be lost a lot of the time! Nevertheless, you are going to experience all sorts of wonderful things during your study abroad experience. Whether you get involved in a sport, try to learn Northern Thai, or just hang out with Thai friends, you have an immensely rich and rewarding experience to anticipate with pleasure.

However, everyone has bad days once in awhile, and some people will experience them more than others. It is normal to feel like you just want to go home. Everyone has felt that way at some point in her or his travels. Students who have been on study abroad in the past offer the following advice:

- First of all, be prepared to have unhappy days and know that they will pass.
- Talk to others in your group, perhaps with someone who's having a good day but who can relate to your feelings.
Try doing something that will involve you in the present; simply doing something can work wonders. For example, if you have nothing to do one Saturday and are feeling homesick or miserable, give yourself a task that will help you get to know the local culture better, like going to a local museum, searching for a specific item in the market, asking a new Thai friend to do something, etc. Immerse yourself and keep busy.

Sometimes, though, you might find that you need to be away from people and/or the local culture for a while, so you might choose to hole up with a book or listen to music that will provide a temporary but relaxing escape.

Cook, read a book, write letters, write in your journal—something to distract you or help you spill out your feelings. Celebrate something!

Lastly, be patient with yourself and others. There will be times when you feel you are the only one who is miserable and having a bad day -- you're not!

You'll learn that everyone has his or her own way of coping in a different culture and that what might help some people some of the time, won't help everyone all of the time. But this learning process, coming to really know yourself in a way you haven't before, is part of the adventure.

KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE U.S.

Some people have had the embarrassing experience of learning that people abroad seem to know more about U.S. history and politics than they themselves do. You can expect to be asked your opinion about current events and U.S. politics. You can also expect to hear the opinions of others, and not all of them will be complimentary of the U.S. Should such a situation arise, the best advice is to remain respectful, even when disagreeing, and to resist the temptation to criticize Thailand, as you are a guest. Also, don't feel as if you have to defend U.S. policy. By the same token, don't feel that you have to be overly critical of the US, either. Start keeping abreast of current events and continue to do so while you're in Chiang Mai.

SPEAKING THAI

Probably all of you are feeling language anxiety -- relax! It will be okay when you walk off the plane and don't understand anything that is said to you. Everyone who has been abroad where another language is spoken has lived through that experience. There are, however, some opportunities to practice your Thai here before you go. Rent Thai movies if you can find them, listen to Thai music, and practice the language with someone. (Try asking at a
Thai restaurant—most Thai people would love to help out someone who is going to learn about their culture!

**GENDER RELATIONS IN THAILAND**

You'll most likely observe different gender dynamics in Thailand, and what seems like discrimination to a Western person. At the same time, Thailand is undergoing a tremendous amount of change, so gender dynamics are in a great deal of flux. Asking about these things with your Thai friends can bring on heated (and fun) discussions as they try and figure things out as well.

Depending on the context, relationships between young men and women (even those in college) can be more formal than here in the U.S. Public displays of affection, even holding hands between the sexes are frowned upon—but are becoming more common by the more “daring” young people.

Western women are stereotyped as being "easy," so you should be wary of Thai men who approach you. For men, be aware that there are many preconceptions about why Western men come to Thailand. In fact, a lot of Western men do come to Thailand on so-called “sex tours” and being seen alone with a Thai woman—even if she is from the university—will make many Thai people assume she is a prostitute. It is always better to go out in groups, to avoid embarrassment for all concerned, and to save face for your female friends.

**SEXUAL HEALTH**

Issues of sexuality can be complex in your own cultural environment, and much more so in one with which you are less familiar. While living in a culture that is not your own, it is more challenging to evaluate situations and to assess risks for emotional distress, disease, and assault as a result of intentional or non-intentional sexual contact. Sexually transmitted diseases are prevalent everywhere in the world, and the HIV virus can lead to death. We strongly recommend that students educate themselves on safe sex practices, pack condoms from the U.S. when they are traveling abroad, and be cautious about their sexual activity while abroad. For further information regarding HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, please consult with Kalamazoo College’s Health Center or your physician.

Learning about Thai culture with regard to acceptable and safe sexual behavior, is one of your responsibilities as you prepare for and experience study abroad. It is also very important that participants understand the local norms and cultural patterns of relationships between genders. What are the local dating patterns? Is it the custom for females to have male friends (or vice versa) or is that considered unusual? If you accept a drink or some other “gift”, are you tacitly consenting to sexual activity? If you invite a member of the opposite gender into your living space, is it culturally and/or legally
acceptable for him/her to expect intimate contact? Is the legal definition of “consent” different from the definition in the U.S.? -- Most of the time, it is different.

At a minimum, you must be aware that some behaviors that may be culturally and legally acceptable, and seemingly safe, at home may not be in Thailand – and vice versa. Certain behaviors will also communicate different messages in Thailand than they do in the U.S. Dr. Ritchie and other program staff members will give you guidelines to the local cultural norms for relationships between genders and laws regarding this issue.
THE UNITED STATES

YOUR RETURN FLIGHT BACK TO THE U.S.

If, while in country, you should wish to change your return date, you must do so yourself with the airline or through a travel agent. If you are contemplating making a change, you should check with the airline about how much time in advance you need to make that change.

As you are preparing to leave, please remember the following:

- Do not take back items made of animal hides or any agricultural products; you will not be able to pass through U.S. customs.

- Make sure you have your exit card (you filled half of this out when you entered the country and it was probably stapled into your passport).

- Don’t forget to set aside some U.S. cash for the trip home, including at least 500 baht for the airport tax for international flights.

- Remember to write your host family(ies) a thank you letter once you return to the U.S.

RETURNING HOME

Contrary to popular opinion, returning home from an extended time abroad can be as stressful and difficult (if not more so) than adjusting to living in the new culture. You will find that you have changed in significant ways. You will also find that your family and friends have changed as well. Life has gone on without you and you will find that you don’t know what people are talking about, because you weren’t around for that event. We encourage you to use the same techniques that you employed while adapting to life in Thailand, to readapt to life in the US. Be patient with yourself. Give yourself some time to adjust.

READJUSTMENT

Going home is usually a very exciting prospect. Most students look forward to seeing family and friends they have missed, eating food they haven’t had for so long and enjoying activities that may not have been possible during study abroad.

Remember that returning home is also a transition very similar to your arrival in Chiang Mai. Just like your arrival, you can expect to feel frustration, anxiety and confusion at home,
on your campus and with your friends. Craig Storti puts it this way in *The Art of Crossing Cultures*:

“The problem is this word home. It suggests a place and a life all set up and waiting for us; all we have to do is “move-in.” But home isn’t a place we merely inhabit; it’s a lifestyle we construct (wherever we go), a pattern of routines, habits and behaviors associated with certain people, places and objects—all confined to a limited area or neighborhood. We can certainly construct a home back in our own culture—just as we did abroad—but there won’t be one waiting for us when we arrive…In other words, no one goes home; rather we return to our native country and in due course we create a home.”

At the foundation of this transition is the task of determining what to do with the changes that have occurred while you were away and the changes that have taken place within you as a result of your time in Thailand. Life for your family, friends and teachers probably will not be the same as when you departed, but you were not there to adjust gradually to those changes with them. And they have not been able to get used to the things that are different about you.

Hardly anyone avoids the discomfort of this period of growth, but the good news is you will eventually find a way to include your new ideas, skills and outlook in your life back in the U.S. Here are a few questions to consider before your return. Your answers may help you recognize the changes that have occurred during your sojourn.

☐ What have I learned about Thailand’s culture that I did not know previously? In what ways has this changed my view of Thailand?

☐ By being abroad and able to compare my culture with a different culture, what have I learned about the history, values and traditions that make up my home culture?

☐ While I was away, what significant events have occurred in my country, my family, in my hometown, among my friends and on campus?

☐ How have my personal values changed because of my study abroad experience?

☐ In what ways have my stereotypes or biases changed?

☐ What new skills have I developed (e.g. adaptation skills, second language proficiency, sensitivity, etc) and how might I maintain them?

☐ How can I express these changes to my friends, family and teachers?

☐ What might I do to continue to deepen my understanding of Thailand?
All of the staff members of the Center for International Programs have also experienced the challenge of “reverse culture shock.” We encourage you to talk with one of us or with someone in the College Counseling Center if you are having problems readjusting or if you just need to talk. In addition, the CIP and the College provide many opportunities for students to continue and/or share their study abroad experience through activities and functions on campus.

We especially welcome your input on this program guidebook. We hope that you will want to help us update it for the following year’s group.

WHEN YOU'RE HOME . . . YOUR HEALTH

Among the first things we recommend that you do when you return home is to schedule an appointment to see your physician for a checkup, especially if you are not feeling well when you return from abroad. Talk with your doctor about having tests such as TB, blood, urine, and stool run. Some students have experienced illness after their return. Unfortunately, you’re not home free when you step off the plane! Just like you had to do in Thailand, you’ll have to re-adjust to the food, water, and different microbes. Your system will need time to restabilize itself.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES

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ADVICE FROM PAST-PARTICIPANTS
RECOMMENDED THINGS TO DO

“Clubs in Thailand aren’t like we might think of clubs - if you go early enough, it’s a nice place to go for dinner. Also, live bands play often, and depending on how you feel about Thai pop music, this could be a good or bad thing. Basically, just check out the area around Niemanhaemin and Kad Suan Kaew, those are pretty popular places to go.”

“As for restaurants, there’s pretty much everything you can imagine around. Your best bet is to make friends with some Thai people our age and ask them for suggestions.”

“Check out some of the old wats around town”

“The best sports in Thailand are rock climbing and mountain biking if you are in the north, and sea kayaking and diving if you are in the south (the program takes you to both locations). Although you will be busy with the program, some people find a lot of time to rock climb and mountain bike. There is also Muay Thai boxing and a lot of local weightlifting facilities, so you can weight train and take boxing lessons if you want.”

“One thing I absolutely recommend after living in the city is to walk up to the temple on the mountain, Doi Suthep. It is a few hours walk from the apartments, but the transition from city, to mountain, to gorgeous temple through the ‘off the beaten track’ paths is beautiful.”

“I was in fairly good shape before I went abroad and that training certainly made the hiking very enjoyable. The physical requirements aren’t too intense, but the more endurance you have the more you can focus on the other aspects of the expeditions.”

“I didn’t do any training and I was ok, although it is definitely physically challenging. I might recommend running a bit beforehand but it’s not a big deal; it’s just that sometimes it can be hard getting up those hills or swimming across the current. There were a few times when I doubted I would be able to finish, though I always did.”

“In Chiang Mai, I would recommend visiting one of the many reggae bars downtown.”

“Doi Suthep, the tallest mountain in Chiang Mai, is a bit touristy but a beautiful hike, and has an awesome temple at the top.”

“One of my favorite places to go in the city was the Sunday market, which they have every Sunday and consists of blocks full of people and food. All the local artists sell their goods at the Sunday market, so you basically go to eat, hang out with friends, and shop for clothes and local crafts.”

“Students should make sure to bring casual city clothes that they would feel comfortable going out at night in. When my group went, ISDSI suggested a very minimalistic city wardrobe. I found this
advice misguided, since we do spend a LOT of time in the city too. It would’ve been nice to have more regular clothing. And it’s hard to find Western-sized clothing once you get there.”

“For girls, either try out a Diva cup or bring a 6-month supply of plastic-applicator tampons. In Thailand, I could only ever find the O.B. self-insertion tampons, and even those are hard to come by. For comfort’s sake, I’d recommend either of those first options.”

“I would recommend to all students that they read through some cheesy Thailand tourist books before they leave the States. This will allow them to get an idea of the popular or recommended sights to see. I did not do this, and felt a bit out of the loop when other students talked about places they wanted to visit. Christmas holiday is three weeks, so there is plenty of time for independent travel. By that point, students’ language abilities should be fairly strong, so traveling anywhere in the country is a possibility.”

**LIVING IN THAILAND:**

**CULTURE AND HOMESTAY**

“Living in a home stay can be a fantastic learning experience, because you’re just suddenly immersed within Thai culture. But it can also be frustrating if you don’t really know what’s going on or speak the language or anything like that. So be sure to bring a phrase book, and just be patient and have a sense of humor about things.” Dan Mitler K’10

“In town, during classes, we would go hang out with Thai friends and go check out different places to see and things to do.”

“The more conservative and traditional Thais follow many traditions, which you may experience in a host family. Thai students our age are more ‘westernized’ generally, but also still religious and tend to follow Thai Buddhism or whatever other religion their family may practice fairly strictly.”

“Sports - the main sport that’s different from what you’d see around here is called Dakraw, and it’s basically like hacky sack with a whiffle ball.”

“Be careful where you point your feet, and the
social hierarchy in Thailand is far more pronounced than it is in America, so be respectful but also don’t take anything too seriously.”

“One awesome holiday is Loi Gratung, which is a river celebration. Everyone carves and decorates little boats out of the shells of coconuts, puts candles in the center, and sails them down the river.”

“Transportation is wild, because you are always relying on tuk tuks and rhot dangs. Tuk tuks (three wheeled motorcycles) are fun, but more expensive. Rote dangs (pickup trucks with benches and covered roofs in the back) are more economical.”

“Many of the cities are surrounded by mountains, so even if you are in a developed area mountains and rice fields aren’t far away.”

“It does rain a lot.”

“Don’t touch people on the head. Don’t point your feet at others. Don’t wear sleeveless shirts or short skirts. Pretend that underwear does not exist.”

“Be prepared to sleep on mats on the floor or on beds that are way hard. This is something that all students have to adjust to; most homes do not have cozy cushy beds.”

COURSES AND ICRP

“ISDSI is very different than K. Aside from the fact that there are only 40 students or so, the focus is on experiential education, not the formal lecture and textbook based education way too many classes use at K. There are times when the academics at ISDSI can be tough though.”

“Sea kayaking and skin diving are both a part of the program, so you will be doing those either way.”

“I want to reiterate how huge it is to learn a language to the point where daily communication and independent navigation is possible. I am ever-grateful to ISDSI for the language instruction I received. In six months I went from knowing no Thai whatsoever to receiving an ”Advanced” placement on my final Thai test.”

“Between the four or five courses we took, I believe we got quite a broad, as well as fairly deep, understanding of the culture and people of Thailand.”

“The four hours of intensive Thai language class everyday is challenging but it is surprising how quickly the words embed themselves in daily conversation. The class is taught with no English, so we use a lot of pictures along with Thai words that we already know in order to learn new words. This learning scheme does not relate Thai to English – but directly to life. It is context dependent; I do not think of the word in English and then the word in Thai – If I am with a Thai friend I think of the Thai word, if I am with an English speaking friend I think of the English word.”
FOOD

“Thai food is really good, so try everything and see what you like the best. I really liked the Khao Soi and the Khao Pad Gheng Kiew Wan Gai.”

“Thai food is delicious. You should definitely try the Pun Pun restaurant at Wat Suan Dok and traditional Northern Thai foods throughout Chiang Mai.”

“The food in Thailand is excellent! Sticky rice goes great with everything and tea leaf salad is a Burmese delicacy. Exploring the city and finding random little hole in the wall restaurants is an adventure that I went on nearly every day. There is so much to do and explore in Chiang Mai!”

“The food is totally unique, and there’s lots of street food that is amazing. Curries, fresh fruit, coconut, and spicy food are some of the specialties.”

“I would recommend the roti, which is made by frying dough and adding banana, chocolate, condensed milk and egg. They are a street food and it’s fun to watch the people flip the dough. I also recommend Burmese food, such as their tea leaf salad.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY

You will want to take a guidebook with you—perhaps one from the “Let’s Go” series, “Lonely Planet” series or a Rough Guide.

http://allabroad.us/resources.php - Contains resources to help find funding opportunities, information about making study abroad support career development, reasons to study abroad, information to support diversity in study abroad, and information about discrimination abroad.

http://www.diversityabroad.com/ - “...connects talented diverse and underrepresented students and graduates to international education and career opportunities that prepares them for leadership in an interconnected world.”

http://www.purdue.edu/cie/learning/global/toolkit/ - includes 8 modules designed to help students learn about cultural worldview frameworks, intercultural openness, intercultural empathy, and cultural self-awareness.

https://travellatina.org and @TravelLatina on Instagram


https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go/lgbt.html - U.S. Government’s resource guide for travelers who identify as LGBTQ

https://baniamor.com/ - Bani Amor
Blogs, interviews, and posts that revolve around identity, place and the colonial nature of travel culture; Has a series of interviews with travelers of color and an article listing travelers of color to follow

http://matadornetwork.com/bnt/7-things-latino-travelers-understand/ - Luis Guillermo
7 Things Only Latina Travelers Understand

http://www.browngirlsfly.com/ - “A Melanin-Infused Perspective on Travel”


http://www.expatica.com/nl/moving-to/Moving-home-Reverse-culture-shock_104957.html - Article on Reverse Culture Shock

http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural_etiquette/cultural_etiquette.htm - Cultural etiquette by country

https://www.gooverseas.com/blog/6-things-wish-knew-studying-abroad-african-american - “6 Things I Wish I Knew Studying Abroad as an African American

Books


http://globaled.us/safeti/v1n22000ed_voicing_concern_about_discrimination_abroad.asp

Various. *Diversity Issues in Study Abroad*,
https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/special-programs/international-study/student-resources/while-abroad/diversity-while-abroad
Collection of quotes from study abroad participants from Brown University who are from historically disenfranchised communities.


**LGBTQ RESOURCES**
http://overseas.iu.edu/living/glbt.shtml - NAFSA’s Rainbow Special Interest Group’s website. Includes numerous web links and a bibliography.


https://www.outrightinternational.org/ - The Outright Action International is an association of individuals and organizations dedicated to building a free and peaceful world, respect for individual rights and liberties, and an open and competitive economic system based on voluntary exchange and free trade. They currently have members and representatives in over 100 countries.

http://studyabroad.isp.msu.edu/forms/glbt.html - Covers some of the issues a LGBTQ student may wish to research before departure.

http://www.lonelyplanet.com/thorntree/index.jspa - Includes both general travel information and a special discussion section (Thorn Tree Forum) for LGBTQ travelers.