The Global Health Field School in Thailand program in Bangkok, Thailand, is offered by International Academic Programs (IAP) in collaboration with the Global Health Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This IAP Program Handbook supplements the IAP Study Abroad Handbook and provides you with the most up-to-date information available at the time of printing. Changes may occur before your departure or while you are abroad.

Questions about your program abroad (housing, facilities abroad, etc.) as well as questions relating to your relationship with your host institution or academics (e.g. course credit and equivalents, registration deadlines, etc.) should be directed to IAP at UW-Madison.

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Emergency Contact Information
In case of an emergency, call the main IAP number (608) 265-6329 between 8:00am-4:30pm Monday-Friday. After-hours or on weekends call the 24/7 IAP emergency line at (608) 516-9440.

IAP requests that you phone our office or emergency line in the event of an emergency, so that we can contact CISI insurance, UWPD, and any other relevant parties as needed. If you cannot reach IAP and need to contact CISI directly, or would like to contact CISI and IAP concurrently:
Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI)
Emergency Tel Outside U.S. (01) 609-986-1234 (collect calls accepted)
Policy Number: 16 STB09987903

Please note that you should carry your emergency card with you at all times. This card is available to print in your MyStudyAbroad portal.

Embassy Registration
All program participants who are U.S. citizens must register with the U.S. Department of State before departure from the U.S. as this will help in case of a lost passport or other mishap. Please register at https://step.state.gov/step/. If you are not a U.S. citizen, be sure to register with your home country’s embassy or consulate.

U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand
American Citizen Services (ACS)
95 Wireless Road, Bangkok 10330, Thailand
Tel: [66](2) 205-4049 (from US), 02-205-4049 (within Thailand)
Emergency After-Hours Telephone: +66-(2)-205-4000 (from US), 02-205-4000 (within Thailand)
E-mail: acsbkk@state.gov
Web: https://th.usembassy.gov/

Program Dates
Arrival Date in Bangkok: May 20, 2018
Program Start Date (Morning): May 21, 2018
Program End Date (Evening): June 1, 2018
Departure Date from Bangkok: June 2, 2018

You may likely depart the U.S. on May 19 to arrive in Bangkok May 20 and be ready for the start of the program on the morning of May 21. The program will conclude on the evening of Friday, June 1. Lodging is included for the evening of Friday, June 1 and transport to the airport on June 2 will be arranged. You are welcome to travel independently before and/or after the program; please note that you will be responsible for your additional lodging, food, transportation, airport transfers, visa procurement, and any other expenses.

A full course syllabus will be provided by the Program Leaders.

Travel and Arrival Information
Participants make their own travel arrangements for arriving in Thailand by the program start date. It is ideal if participants arrive as a group. Mahidol faculty will pick up Program Leaders and students, so please coordinate your arrival and departure time with the Program Leaders before purchasing your ticket. IAP needs to know your arrival/departure information to arrange airport transportation with your host institution, so please enter your itinerary in your MySA portal.

If you arrive outside the established arrival time you are responsible for arranging your own transportation to the hotel. If your return flight leaves ahead of the scheduled group departure time, information will be provided but you will be responsible for arranging your own transportation to the airport.
Pre-Departure Preparation
Refer to the Pre-Departure Checklist in the IAP Study Abroad Handbook for essential information.

Immigration Documents
Passport
A passport is needed to travel to Thailand and to obtain a visa. Apply immediately for a passport if you do not already have one. Passport information and application forms can be found on the U.S. State Department website (http://travel.state.gov/passport). If you already have your passport, make sure it will be valid for at least 6 months beyond the length of your stay abroad. It is also important to have a photocopy of your passport’s information page to put in your luggage or a place other than where you keep your passport in case of a lost or stolen passport.

Visa
U.S. passport holders are permitted to enter Thailand as tourists for a period of up to 30 days without the need to make a visa application. Detailed information is available at the State Department site for Thailand: http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/thailand.html. Please read this information carefully, especially if you have plans to enter Thailand via land from a neighboring country as greater scrutiny is likely to be involved.

If you plan to stay in Thailand more than 30 days, you must apply for a visa. If you are participating in activities in Thailand before or after the program, this may include you!

Finally, if you are not traveling on a U.S. passport, please consult the Thailand Consulate’s website for information: http://www.thaiconsulatechicago.org/pages-Visa.html. While IAP is happy to provide guidance and appropriate documentation upon request, it is ultimately the student’s responsibility to secure the proper visa.

Handling Money Abroad
Past students have recommended bringing a debit card and a credit card. Generally, debit cards are convenient for withdrawing money and credit cards can be used for emergencies. Students have found it easy and reliable to use debit cards to withdraw cash at the airport in Bangkok and at banks and shopping centers downtown. Many previous participants have reported spending less money abroad than they anticipated and have said most of the money they spent was for gifts or water. It is also recommended that you try to get small bills when withdrawing money, as it can be difficult to use large bills at shops and stands. Make sure to notify your bank and credit card company that you will be in Thailand so that your account is not flagged for suspicious activity. It’s also helpful to inquire about international withdrawal/transaction fees and limits. Avoid changing currency anywhere other than at an airport or bank (do not change money at stands on the street).

Packing
The items below were suggested by past participants:
Walking shoes
Shoes/sandals that are easy to slip on/off
Hat
Towel (quick-dry material)
Camera
Personal toiletries
Insect repellent with DEET
Sunscreen/lip balm with SPF
Sunglasses
Tissues/toilet paper
Hand sanitizer/wet wipes
Women should bring at least one knee-length or longer skirt
Travel book/guidebook
Thai language phrasebook
Daypack or messenger bag that you can use during daily activities
Personal medications/first aid (ibuprofen, Pepto-Bismol, antacids, allergy medication, antibiotics prescribed by travel clinic for diarrhea, etc.)
Gifts for hosts (t-shirts, WI ballpoint pens, postcards, anything that represents WI or the University)
Detergent for doing laundry in the sink
1 week of clothes (wash for the other weeks)
Quick-dry, lightweight pants and shirts
Umbrella (especially for creating shade from the sun)
Swimsuit
Flip-flops (to be used as slippers in the room)

Electronics
In the past, students have brought phones and cameras that could easily be charged. If you do plan to bring a laptop, please be mindful of keeping it secure. Some renters’ or homeowners’ insurance policies may cover theft while traveling—please confirm before departing the U.S. Note that Thailand’s electricity is 220V at 50Hz; see http://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/world-electricity-guide.html for information on adapters.

The Academic Program

General Information
Dr. Jim Conway and Stephanie Koning will be your Program Leaders and instructors in Thailand. Both have experience leading this program. Students will also hear lectures from Thai faculty and experts.

Course Information
The Thailand Field Course introduces an interdisciplinary group of students to Thai culture and offers the opportunity to learn from experts about infectious disease and public health in Thailand. This 2-credit program provides students a unique community-based field experience. The program is especially designed to allow students to gain an appreciation of Thai culture and how it affects health and health care. Students will study public health and tropical disease with Thai experts, as well as learn how to design and implement village health assessments by participating in a community-based project.

Students will arrive in Bangkok and spend about a week participating in lectures and site visits in and around the city. The program will continue in the rural province where students will be instructed on rural and community health topics by local experts, and learn about the health system at the district, sub-district and village levels. The two-week program will end in Bangkok with final meetings, lectures, and discussions.

Credits
During spring semester, participants are required to take Population Health 644: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Global Health and Disease, Thailand section (1 credit). Students will earn an additional 2 credits (PHS 645) after successful completion of the summer field program.
Grading
Grades will be based on participation, successful completion of the community project, and a reflection paper. The specific grading rubric will be in the syllabus for the program.

Course Equivalent Requests and My Study Abroad
Each course you take abroad must be assigned a UW-Madison “equivalent” course in order for your grades and credits to be recorded on your UW-Madison transcript. Students participating for the two-week portion at Mahidol will earn PHS 645. Nursing students participating for three weeks will request N419. Detailed information on the UW course equivalent process that you will use through your MyStudyAbroad account is available in the IAP Study Abroad Handbook.

Living Abroad
Bangkok is one of the most populous cities in the world with a population of over 8 million; the Bangkok Metropolitan Area, which covers five provinces surrounding the capital province in the central region of Thailand, registers over 14 million. Bangkok is a major economic and financial center of Southeast Asia, and the city’s wealth of cultural sites makes it one of the world’s most popular tourist destinations. The capital is part of the heavily urbanized central and eastern region of Thailand which stretches from Nakhon Ratchasima along Bangkok to the industrialized eastern seaboard.

Housing
Housing is included for the duration of the program. Students will spend the first portion of the program staying at a hotel (Vic 3) in Bangkok. The program will continue in a rural province where you will spend part of the time at the rural training site with lodging in a local hotel or dormitory and also 2-3 nights in a homestay. In the homestay, students are provided with sleeping materials (bed mat/mattress, sheets/blanket, pillow, drinking water, and toilet paper), but should bring their own towel and toiletries.

Past students have reported that the homestay is very rewarding despite challenging conditions. They recommend students tell their homestay family what they will be doing during the day as the families often want to know what is happening and may worry if they are unaware of students’ whereabouts. Past students also suggest spending as much time with the host families as possible, especially during and after meals. Students have also suggested bringing photos of home to show to their host families.

It is considered polite and traditional to bring gifts for your host family. Students are encouraged to bring small gifts totaling about $25 in value for their homestay families. Items representing the UW and Wisconsin are particularly good for helping to both convey appreciation and share some of our values.

Clothing
Lightweight, loose, breathable clothing is best due to the climate. Female visitors to this part of the world must consider both the culture and the climate when deciding on their wardrobe. Dressing in line with Thai cultural norms if very important to Thai faculty, Thai citizens, and UW faculty. While conforming to the local standards of dress might contradict American values of individual self-expression and equality, adhering to local codes of conduct demonstrates respect for that culture. It is important for us to remember that we are guests in other countries. Shoes are always removed when entering homes and temples, and in many other buildings as well. Though we may not fully understand the reasons for particular dress standards or other local customs, it is our responsibility to be courteous guests and well represent our University and our country.

Skirts must be knee length or longer. Shoulders must be covered. Short sleeves are acceptable, but tank tops, shirts with low-cut necklines, and shorts higher than knee length are not acceptable while on the
program. When visiting temples or palaces, long skirts or slacks (not shorts) should be worn. There is often a dress code for entrance to sites of religious and cultural significance, and you won’t want to miss out on those experiences due to inappropriate attire.

Safety
Crimes such as pick-pocketing, purse snatching, and thefts are common. Pick-pocketing and the theft of purses and bags is common on public transportation. Past participants suggest keeping belongings close, being aware of surroundings, being very cautious, and walking together in groups.

Students may want to carry cash and passports in lightweight zipper pouches that can be worn under clothing. Passports can be kept in plastic sandwich bags to avoid getting wet in unexpected rain storms or profuse sweating, especially when we are in the village.

The single most commonplace threat to good health for visitors and residents in Thailand is traffic. Concepts of appropriate use of motor vehicles in Thailand are very different from those of the U.S. This different attitude, combined with traffic flow being reversed (vehicles drive on left side of the road) in comparison to that of the U.S., makes the roadways a source of real danger. Seatbelts are found in only a few cars and usually not in busses, and overcrowding of vehicles is common. Although official statistics are not available, it is common knowledge that the rates of serious injury and death due to traffic accidents are extremely high. For a University of Michigan 2014 transportation study that provides a rank of countries by number of fatalities, visit http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/102731. Students should be aware of traffic concerns and should not ride motorcycles, although there are many motorcycle taxis in Bangkok.

Additionally, low-hanging electrical wires are commonly seen in the urban areas and also pose a potential threat to safety. Be mindful of your surroundings and watchful as you walk.

Health Insurance
All IAP study abroad participants are enrolled in supplemental health insurance through CISI. This insurance is included in your program fee, and information on the policy, as well as ID cards, is located in your MyStudyAbroad account. If you are traveling before or after your official program dates, please contact CISI directly, once you are emailed enrollment information from CISI (just a few weeks before the start of your program) to extend your coverage with CISI directly. See the IAP Study Abroad Handbook for additional information on this insurance plan.

Health
It’s recommended to visit a travel clinic or consult with a healthcare provider well-versed in travel medicine to plan for your time abroad. University Health Services (UHS) has a travel clinic that provides health services including immunizations and prescriptions for empiric antibiotics. Information about the travel clinic and how to make an appointment is here: https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/medical/travel/. The UHS travel clinic does book out and some immunizations must be done at particular times, so don’t delay making an appointment. Some countries require certain vaccines to enter.

If you are not covered by UHS care, please consult with your insurance company to see what clinics or healthcare providers with travel medicine specialties are covered. There are a number of travel clinics in Madison including: Dean http://www.deancare.com/medical-services/travel-medicine/ and UW Health http://www.uwhealth.org/travel-vaccinations/locations-and-maps/10381.

To learn more about travelers’ health, please visit the CDC website:
Participants will not need to take many extra health precautions while living in Thailand, other than being aware of the different environment and following common sense. For example, the tropical sun is very hot compared to what we are used to in the U.S., so it is necessary to be cautious of sunburn and to keep up one’s fluid intake as the body adjusts to the higher average temperatures.

Should you become dehydrated you will need to replenish your body’s supply of salts and one way to do so is to drink citrus fruit drinks. Such drinks are very popular with the Thai at least in part because they are good for hot-climate living, and so in this case conforming to local tastes is a good way to stay healthy. Stick to drinking bottled water, not untreated tap water, and avoid ice cubes. Additionally, avoid uncooked vegetables that cannot be peeled. Avoid contact with stray dogs, and you will not have to worry about rabies. Eat only thoroughly cooked food, and wear shoes when you walk outdoors. Wash your hands before you eat or cook, and you will limit your exposure to infection.

Stray/street dogs are also common in Thailand. Use caution around these animals and avoid approaching or petting them as they do not receive the same level of veterinary care as dogs in the U.S.

**HIV/AIDS**

It is commonly reported that the rate of HIV/AIDS infection in Thailand is high, especially among sex workers. The CDC notes that travelers are generally at low risk for HIV unless they participate in risky behaviors, such as sex with unfamiliar partners or injection drug use. Some developing countries may not adequately screen their blood supplies, and travelers could become infected by a blood transfusion. For more information on HIV, please visit: [http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/)

**Malaria and Dengue Fever**

According to the most recent findings of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, there is little if any malaria to be found in urban Thailand, and even very little in rural areas, with the exception of the deeply forested border areas touching on Burma, Cambodia, and Laos. The CDC advises that travelers going to Thailand are not at risk for contracting malaria unless plans specifically call for entering a malarial area. If you plan to travel to malarial areas, please speak with your health care provider about appropriate preventive medication. Additional precautions that are useful for those who will enter such areas include using insect repellent at dawn and dusk, which are the feeding times for the mosquito that carries malaria, wearing long pants and long-sleeve shirts, and sleeping in treated mosquito nets. Even though malaria is not much of a problem, Dengue Fever is more common and is also a mosquito-borne illness. Therefore, mosquito repellent is important. The mosquitoes that transmit dengue viruses are found in and immediately around buildings and bite from dawn, throughout the day, until dusk, thus the risk may be higher in urban areas.

**Communication**

When making calls, keep in mind time zone differences ([www.timeanddate.com/worldclock](http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock)). To make an international call to the United States, you may need to dial the access code for the country from which you are calling plus the United States country code (always “1”) followed by the appropriate U.S. area code and local number. To call internationally from the United States, dial “011”, the country code, city access code (if necessary) and the phone number. Country and city codes can be found online: [www.howtocallabroad.com](http://www.howtocallabroad.com).

There are a number of internet cafes where you can check email, and Skype is also readily available in most internet cafes. The hotels in Bangkok generally have wifi available, so you can use messaging,
Skype, WhatsApp, Google calling, etc. from hotels, although wifi access is significantly more variable in the outlying areas. Make sure to set realistic expectations with family/friends regarding communication with you during your time in more rural areas.

**Student Testimonials**

The testimonials below are from past participants; they reflect various students’ experiences and are included to provide different perspectives. IAP does not endorse any specific view expressed in this section.

**Pre-Departure Preparations**

You should bring laundry detergent- powder is best to carry- so you can wash your clothes in the sink. You will sweat a lot and not have access to a washer/dryer (most likely). Bring as many quick-dry clothes as possible.

Bring a lightweight long sleeve shirt that you can toss in your purse/bag during the day. It will come in handy when you’re touring and too hot to wear it for walking around, but need to cover up when going inside a temple.

**PLAN ON SWEATING A LOT 😊**

Going to see a travel specialist at your clinic or at UHS is really invaluable. You learn how to be safe so that you can enjoy your time while away, instead of worrying about getting sick.

Pack light, because you will not want to lug a heavy suitcase around for two weeks. Women - bring skirts and a pair of pants (not jeans), a good pair of sandals for walking, and shirts that cover your shoulders. Men - no shorts, but sandals are ok.

You can bring Baht with you if you want, but there are ATMs all over, including in the Bangkok airport, so an ATM card is all you need.

If you can, do some research on what you most want to see while in Bangkok.

If you are like me, you will worry about having anything expensive with you (like cell phones, laptops, camera equipment, etc.). Leave anything you don't absolutely need at home. You can email your loved ones at internet cafes and use Skype.

I had trouble deciding WHAT CLOTHES to bring, since we were planning so many different activities. Thai dress is much more conservative and more formal than in the US, and it is really important to dress modestly during ALL activities. This got difficult because it was so humid and hot, so I wish I had brought more lightweight, loose clothing to wear. During the time spent at the University in Bangkok, I wore long skirts or dress pants (although it was too hot for pants at times) and loose blouses, covering at least my upper arms. Most women wore heels in the city, but I found that with classes mixed with touring, I was more comfortable in flats. Flip flops were never really formal enough. When we went to the rural training center, the dress was still formal, and I continued wearing my skirts and flats with blouses. During the home-stay, where there was no air conditioning or running water, I wore capris or skirts and t-shirts. For the trip to the national forest, I packed a swimsuit (for the waterfalls!), hiking capris, a thin shirt/tank top (acceptable for the wilderness), SUNGLASSES, and hiking/tennis shoes.

**Travel and Arrival Information**
It was really important to pack lightly, since we stayed so many different places. Lots of people used standard luggage with wheels, and that made traveling much easier. Others, including myself, used hiking backpacks, which I found was really easy and convenient, although it got really hot at times.

While it takes a while to get there, the people and city itself will knock your socks off. The travel time is completely worthwhile. Try to get as much rest as you can on the trip there so you can take advantage of all your time in Thailand instead of suffering from jet lag!

Traveling with the group is easiest but may be more expensive than planning your own route; also several people chose to stay longer and explore other areas of Thailand and SE Asia. Be prepared for intense heat, humidity, and maybe some rain.

**Academic Program**
The public health system in Thailand is truly impressive and they are very proud of their system. They want to discuss their perspectives and hear yours. Everyone at Mahidol is so excited about what they do and want to teach you AND learn from you. The lessons you learn will be applicable no matter what your field of work.

Have in your mind a few specific areas of public health (especially related to Thailand) that interest you, so that you have questions you can ask at many different sites. If you have time, research the Thai public health system a little more in depth than what was presented in class.

I very much appreciated how much preparation was done by Mahidol University. The lectures and packed schedule were great and they treated us with great respect.

**Living Abroad**
Take everything all in and just enjoy being somewhere completely different from home. It's amazing how being taken out of your culture makes you much more aware of how much your culture influences everything about your life. Take that new perspective and try to understand the Thai people and how their culture influences them in endless ways.

The language barrier was a little difficult at times. Learn the most basic phrases and have those down, and then just say them even if you don't feel confident. The host country will respect you so much for trying.

The information presented was very insightful. The people/faculty are so hospitable. I really feel that working in an interdisciplinary setting helps give me an understanding of each role.

I participated in this program because I am interested in doing research in foreign countries later on in my career and I had never been to Asia so I wanted to experience this area of the world. So far, I feel as if I am gaining a good perspective and understanding of the Thai culture.

Some of the most rewarding experiences of my stay were...home stay in a rural village; chance to experience urban and rural Thai culture; inside view into healthcare system; friendliness of our hosts and Thai people; learning about different interdisciplinary approaches to healthcare and prevention. The field visit/family stay was by far the most valuable part of my experience...being in Mahidol, meeting Thai researchers, educators, and the interactions with students and faculty on the program.
Bring a Thai phrasebook, which will be especially useful for the homestay. Attempt to use Thai words - most people are not offended by your ignorance and will want to help you.

Go with the flow, and if someone on the program asks if you want to go somewhere or do something, do it!

Try new things, including food.

It’s a little difficult to be a vegetarian in Thailand, especially in the rural areas, so be prepared to eat a lot of rice and steamed veggies. Learn how to say you are a vegetarian, and name the meats you don’t eat.

Overall, Thailand felt pretty safe. The people there were friendly and were willing to help if you were in need. However, the traffic there was nowhere close to being safe. Crossing the street was one of my biggest fears while in Thailand.

Regarding cultural differences: Everything was just small, maybe forgetting to take my shoes off. Just make a genuine effort to respect and learn the culture, and apologize when you make mistakes. You will make mistakes, but it is okay - just have humility and try your hardest.