The Global Health program in Bangkok, Thailand, is offered by International Academic Programs (IAP) 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 and advice available at the time of printing. Changes may occur before your departure or while you are abroad.

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

This program handbook contains the following information:

- Contact Information
- UW-Madison Contact
- 2014 Program Dates
- Preparation before Leaving
- Travel and Arrival Information
- The Academic Program
- Living Abroad
- Student Testimonials
Contact Information

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Emergency Contact Information
In case of an emergency, call the main IAP number (608) 265-6329 between 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Monday-Friday; after-hours or on weekends call the IAP staff on call at (608) 516-9440.

Embassy Registration
All program participants who are U.S. citizens must register at the U.S. Embassy before departure from
the US, as this will help in case of a lost passport or other mishap. You can register on-line at
https://travelregistration.state.gov. If you are not a U.S. citizen, register at 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 E-mail: acsbkk@state.gov
Web: http://bangkok.usembassy.gov/
2014 Program Dates

Arrive in Bangkok: May 19, 2014
Depart Bangkok: May 31, 2014

Dates are tentative. You will be notified by your instructor, and in MyStudyAbroad, when dates are set. You may need to depart May 17 or 18 to be in Bangkok by May 19. You are welcome to travel after the program; however, you will be responsible for your additional lodging, food, transportation, airport transfers, and visa procurement and expenses.

A full course syllabus will be provided by the Resident Director.

Preparation before Leaving

Refer to the Pre-Departure Checklist on pages four and five of the IAP Study Abroad Handbook for essential information.

Immigration Documents

Passport
A passport is needed to travel to Thailand and to obtain your 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 face 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
Most students will qualify for a tourist visa that you will secure upon entry of Thailand. The US is included in the exemption rule which permits tourists to enter Thailand for a period of up to 30 days without the need to make a visa application.

US citizens can receive a 30 day visa if one enters Thailand from a non-neighboring country (ie fly from the US).

Visitors receive a 15 day only visa they are entering Thailand by land from a neighboring country (e.g. someone travels to Cambodia for fun first). If you are entering from a neighboring country, you must apply for a visa in advance.

If a person stays as a tourist for more than the 30 days, then one must apply for a visa. If you are participating in activities in Thailand before or after the program, this may include you!

As the program is less than 30 days, many are likely to take advantage of the exemption rule. Please note, if you are not traveling on a US passport, consult the visa information and Thai website (http://www.thaiconsulate.us) in the Visa tab of your My Study Abroad account.

It is the student’s responsibility to secure the proper visa.
Handling Money Abroad
Past students have recommended bringing a debit card and a credit card. Debit cards are convenient for taking out money and credit cards can be used for emergencies. Students have found it extremely easy and reliable to use debit cards at the airport in Bangkok and at any gas station and shopping center downtown. Many students have reported spending less money abroad than they anticipated and have said most of the money spent was for gifts or water. It is also recommended that you try to get small bills when taking out money, as it can be difficult to use large bills.

Packing
The items below were suggested by past participants:
Walking shoes
Hat
Towel
Camera
Personal Toiletries
Insect repellent with DEET
Sunscreen/ lip balm
Sunglasses
Tissues
Toilet Paper and or wet wipes
Hand Sanitizer/ Wipes
Women should bring at least one knee-length or longer skirts
Water bottle
Travel book/ Guidebook
Phrase book
Backpack or messenger bag that you can use during the day
Personal medications (ibuprofen, pepto bismol, cold medication, allergy medication, Imodium (laporamide) etc)
Gifts for hosts (books about WI, T-shirts that say WI, WI ball point pens, WI specialty foods, postcards, anything that represents WI or the University works well)
Powder laundry detergent for doing laundry in the sink
1 week of clothes (wash for the other weeks)
Quick dry and light weight pants and shirts’
1 shirt for going out
Umbrella (especially for creating shade from the sun)
Swimsuit
Flip Flops (to be used as slippers in the room, not worn outside)

Electronics
In the past students have brought phones, mp3 players and cameras that could easily be charged. This seemed to work well for them. If you do plan to bring a laptop, please be mindful of keeping it secure. Some renters’ or home owners’ insurance policies may cover theft while traveling—please confirm before departing the US.

Travel and Arrival Information
Participants will need to make their own travel arrangements for arriving in Thailand by the course start date. It is best to arrive at the same time as the faculty members. Mahidol faculty will pick up faculty and students once and make one return trip to the airport. So please coordinate your arrival and departure time with faculty before obtaining your ticket.
If you arrive after the established arrival time you are responsible for arranging your own transportation to the hotel.

If your return flight leaves ahead of the scheduled departure time, you will be responsible for arranging your own transportation to the airport.

**The Academic Program**

**General Information**
A faculty member from UW-Madison will serve as Resident Director in Thailand. 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 them the opportunity to learn from experts about infectious disease and public health in Thailand. This 2-credit program is offered in the summer from late May to early June and 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 hear lectures on Rural Health Training and Research from the faculty of Mahidol University. Program participants will visit local communities, participate in home stays, learn about health issues in rural Thailand by interacting with village health workers, health care providers and members of the community. The program will end in Bangkok with final meetings, lectures, and discussions.

**Credits**
During the prior spring semester participants are required to take Population Health 640: Foundations in Global Health Practice: Thailand section (1 credit). Students will earn an additional 2 credits (PHS 645) after successful completion of the summer field program.

**Grading**
Participants are not allowed to take this course for pass/fail credit.

**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. Detailed information on the UW course equivalent process that you will use through your My Study Abroad account is available in the IAP Study Abroad Handbook.

**Living Abroad**
Bangkok is the 22nd most populous city in the world. Bangkok province or the areas bounded by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), has a registered population nearing 6 million people, and the Bangkok Metropolitan Area, which covers five provinces surrounding the capital province in the central region of Thailand registers a little over 10 million. However, like many large cities, the city has seen a great flux of immigrants who are not listed in the city's administration. The population is therefore much more realistically in the range of 15-20 million.
Bangkok is a magnet for foreigners escaping turmoil in their homeland or simply for business. It has long been the gateway to Asia for foreign interests seeking new markets. The city is a major economic and financial center of Southeast Asia and has one of the fastest rates in the world for construction of high-rise buildings. 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 triangle of 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 in Bangkok. The program will continue in a rural provence where they will spend part of the time at the rural training site dormitory and also participate in home stays.

Past students have reported that the home stay is very rewarding. They have recommended that students tell their home stay family about 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 have also suggested spending as much time with the host families as possible- especially during meal times and afterwards. Students have also suggested bringing photos of home to show to host families.

**Clothing**

Light, 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. Dressing in a culturally congruent way, shows respect for Thai hosts. 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. Though we may not fully understand the reasons for particular dress standards or other local customs, it is our responsibility to 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. Tank tops, clothing that shows cleavage, and shorts higher than knee length are not acceptable while a part of the course. When visiting temples or palaces, long skirts or slacks (not shorts) should be worn.

**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 light weight 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.

Low-hanging electrical wires are commonly seen in the urban areas and also pose a potential threat to safety.
**Health Insurance**
All IAP study abroad participants are signed up for supplemental health insurance through CISI. This insurance is included in your program fee. You will receive information on the policy, as well as ID cards, through your MyStudyAbroad account. Please read the IAP Study Abroad Handbook for additional information on this insurance plan.

**Health**
It is very important that you consult with a healthcare provider well-versed in travel medicine or travel clinic to plan for your time abroad. University Health Services (UHS) has a travel clinic that provides health services for those planning foreign travel, including vaccines and immunizations. Information about the travel clinic and how to make an appointment can be found online at [http://www.uhs.wisc.edu/services/medical/travel-clinic/](http://www.uhs.wisc.edu/services/medical/travel-clinic/). The UHS travel clinic does book out in advance (sometimes as much as six weeks), and some immunizations must be done at particular times. Please make an appointment as soon as possible with the UHS travel clinic. Some countries require particular 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:

To learn more about travelers' health, please visit the CDC website: [http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx](http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx). You can view vaccine recommendations from the same page, scrolling down to the vaccinations link. On the top of the Vaccinations page, there is a link for specific country recommendations.

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 that are available in any restaurant. 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. The vast majority of urban Thai do this as a matter of course and you should follow suit. Avoid uncooked vegetables that cannot be peeled. Avoid playing with stray dogs, and you will not have to worry about rabies. Eat only thoroughly cooked food, and wear shoes when you walk out of doors and you will not have to worry about most sources of parasitic infection. Wash your hands before you eat or cook, and you will limit your exposure to infection. None of these precautions is much different from sensible practices in the U.S.

**HIV/AIDS**
It is commonly reported that the rate of HIV/AIDS infection in Thailand is very high, especially among sex workers. These reports are true, but the implication that the problem is worse in Thailand than it is in other countries of the region does not seem to be correct, since other countries seem purposely to under report the dimensions of the problem.
The situation in Thailand is a very serious one, and its true dimensions may not be known for many years. But Thai authorities have acknowledged the seriousness of the threat to public health and are taking steps to address that problem.

**Malaria and Dengue Fever**

According to the most recent findings of the US Center 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 repellant 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, through the day, until dusk, thus the risk may be higher in urban areas.

The single most commonplace threat to good health for most 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 (drive on left side of the road) in comparison to that of the U.S., makes the roadways a source of real danger. Seat belts are found in only a few cars and not at all in busses, and overcrowding vehicles is all too 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. Students should be aware of traffic concerns and should not ride motorcycles, as there many motorcycle taxis in Bangkok.

**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, 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. For example, to call to Madison from Thailand dial: 001-1-608-telephone 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.timeanddate.com/worldclock/dialing.html](http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/dialing.html)). Some of above steps can vary if you are using a calling card.

Skype: Skype is a free, downloadable software application that allows users to make live video and voice calls over the internet. Skype users can also add money to their account and can then use the service to call land lines and cell phones internationally at very low rates. Additionally, Skype also provides an instant messaging function as well as file sharing.
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.

Preparations before Leaving

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 blouse 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 iPods, cell phones, laptops, etc.). Leave anything you don’t absolutely need (like iPods, cell phones, laptops, etc.) at home. You can e-mail your loved ones at internet cafes and the rural dorms, and use Skype (online phone calling).

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 dressy 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 swim suit (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 loved the labor and delivery clinical day the best. I found it very interesting and I learned a lot.

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 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 phrase book (or stick close to someone who has one!) 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 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 no where close to being safe. Crossing the street was one of my biggest fears while in Thailand.