



LEARNING ABROAD CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

International Development: Entrepreneurship & Sustainable Food Systems

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: THAI 4002

Number of Credits: 4

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 60

Instructor: Mark Ritchie

Course Description

Food systems and sustainability are critical environmental and economic issues in understanding development. This course focuses on two connected issues: food production and agriculturally based entrepreneurship, including but not limited to coffee growing and production, sustainable and organic food production, and related topics. A key part of the course will be understanding the natural interconnectedness between the environment, where crops are cultivated, and the business of selling these crops on a local and/or international scale. The course will examine agricultural commodity production (coffee) from bean to cup, examining the growing, production, selling, and business of coffee as both a local production process, international commodity, and local consumption. We will further explore spaces for innovation in sustainable food production, in particular around community-supported sustainable and organic agriculture, and the role of small-scale production in ensuring the resilience and sustainability of the global food supply.

This course encourages students to think critically about development theories and practices. A majority of examples and reading will be drawn on case studies from Thailand and their links to global development issues. “Development” as a contested value and process will be explored in multiple scales— local, national, and global. Special emphasis will be on the practice of development: What does it mean to actually “do” development in a cross-cultural international setting? We will examine the roles of outsiders and facilitators and how local communities and organizations can be empowered through the development process.

Course Objectives

The objectives of this course are to:

- Understand the challenges and opportunities for entrepreneurs in sustainable food production for both consumption, subsistence, and commercial sale
- Examine in detail one globally traded commodity—coffee—from growing to processing to consumption, traveling to both coffee farms and doing field studies of cafes and coffee production
- Focus on the challenges of small-scale tropical agriculturalists in both lowland and upland settings in Thailand
- Gain an understanding of the ethics, benefits, and challenges of sustainable and organic production, including fair trade and organic certification, and opportunities for small scale production
- Provide an overview of development theories and its practices as well as current trends
- Give students the theoretical and conceptual tools to critically analyze specific development problems, policy programs, and projects as they experience them in their host communities and internship agencies

Methodology

The course will integrate course lectures and readings with group discussions and seminars. Experiential field studies will also be an important component of the course. Guest lecturers will also be invited to share their experiences with students. Keeping up with readings, materials presented in class, and assignments is critical for success during this course.

Required Reading / Materials

- Beyond Fair Trade: How One Small Coffee Company Helped Transform a Hillside Village in Thailand Paperback – November 7, 2015, Mark Pendergrast, Graystone Books.
- Coffee Agroecology: A New Approach to Understanding Agricultural Biodiversity, Ecosystem Services and Sustainable Development, Perfecto and Vanderneer, 2015, Earthscan.
- Uncommon Grounds: The History of Coffee and How It Transformed Our World, Pendergrast, 2010, Basic Books.
- “What is global development?” Rory Horner, Global Development Institute Working Paper Series 2017-020 December 2017.
- “Global South: what does it mean and why use the term?” Aug 8, 2018, Marlea Clarke, Global South: what does it mean and why use the term? | Global South Political Commentaries.
- “Chapter 2 Contesting development in theory and practice,” International Development in a Changing World, Rebecca Hanlin and William Brown, pages 31–48.

- “From International to Global Development: New Geographies of 21st Century Development,” Rory Horner and David Hulme, *Development and Change* 0(0): 1–32. DOI: 10.1111/dech.12379.
- “Preface and Introduction” to *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*, Wolfgang Sachs, Zed Books, 2010.
- “What is sustainable development?” Jennifer Elliott, *An Introduction to Sustainable Development* 3rd Ed. Routledge 2006.
- Boonperm, Jirawan; Haughton, Jonathan; Khandker, Shahidur R. (2013). “Does the Village Fund matter in Thailand? Evaluating the impact on incomes and spending (Report)” in *Journal of Asian Economics*, April, Vol. 25, p. 3(14).
- Pfeiffer, Jeanine M. and Voeks, Robert A. (2008) “Biological invasions and biocultural diversity: Linking ecological and cultural systems,” *Environmental Conservation* 35(04): 281–293, Foundation for Environmental Conservation.
- NATSUDA, Kaoru, Et al. (2011). “One Village One Product-Rural Development Strategy in Asia: the Case of OTOP in Thailand” RCAPS Working Paper No. 11-3.
- Tiranutti, V. “Pro-Poor Tourism: How Fair Trade Tours Can Contribute to Poverty Alleviation in the GMS Countries” *ITD Monitor* 9.
- Choenkwan, Sukanlaya, Fox, Jefferson Metz and Rambo, A. Terry. (2014) “Agriculture in the Mountains of Northeastern Thailand: Current Situation and Prospects for Development” *Mountain Research and Development* 34(2):95-106, <https://bioone.org/journals/mountain-research-and-development/volume-34/issue-2/MRD-JOURNAL-D-13-00121.1/Agriculture-in-the-Mountainsof-Northeastern-Thailand--Current-Situation/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-13-00121.1.full>.
- Oversea Development Institute. (2008) “Pro-poor growth and development: Linking economic growth and poverty reduction” Briefing Paper 33.
- Coleman, Brett E. (2006) “Microfinance in Northeast Thailand: Who benefits and how much?” in *World Development*, Vol.34(9), pp. 1612-1638.
- “People’s Bank will need to offer more than money. (microcredit must be supported by education, training),” (Brief Article) *Bangkok PAGE 1 Post*, April 17, 2001, p. BKPO16185424.
- Haile, HirutBekele; Bock, Bettina; Folmer, Henk (2012).“Microfinance and female empowerment: Do institutions matter?” in *Women’s Studies International Forum*, Vol. 35(4), pp. 256-265.
- International Labour Office. “Entrepreneurship, Skills Development, Finance” https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_policy/documents/publication/wcms_210463.pdf
- *The Economist*. “Micro Finance in Thailand: the biggest microlender of them all” January 1, 2013.
- Puntarivivat, Tavivat. “Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu and Dhammic Socialism,” *The Chulalongkorn Journal of Buddhist Studies*, Vol. 2 No. 2, 2003.
- Hewison, Kevin. (1999) “Localism in Thailand: a study of globalisation and its discontents” Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation (CSGR), University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL, United-Kingdom.
- Kelly Bird, Kelly Hattel, Eiichi Sasaki, and Luxmon Attapich. “Poverty, Income Inequality, and Microfinance in Thailand,” *Southeast Asia Working Paper Series*, No. 6 | November 2011, Asia Development Bank.

- Sriboonchitta, Songsak and Wiboonpongse, Aree.2006. "Efficiency of Rural Micro and Community Enterprises in the Upper North of Thailand"

In addition, the following books will be excerpted:

- Phongpaichit, Pasuk and Baker, Chris (2017). Unequal Thailand: Aspects of Income, Wealth and Power. NUS Press, Singapore.
- Baxter, Will eds. et al. (2016) A Call To Action: Thailand and the Sustainable Development Goals. Editions Didier Millet, Bangkok.

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Attendance and class participation	10%
Unit essays (5% each)	40%
Field studies	25%
Final presentation	25%
Overall grade	100%

Assessment Details

Attendance & Class Participation

Students are expected to be active and engaged during the classes, which means asking questions, completing the readings beforehand, and participating in class activities. Due to the intensive nature of the MSID classroom phase, attendance is required, and skipping class is discouraged. Missing a significant number of classes will result in a grade reduction. This is worth 10% of the grade.

Weekly Essays

Each weekly essay focuses on a group of related issues, seminars, readings, and field studies. At the end of each week, students will write a short essay (2–3 pages) about the content from that week. The essays should follow the following rubric:

- Which particular issue/seminar/reading did you find particularly interesting during this unit and why?
- How does this issue relate to the larger topic of this theme?
- How does this issue relate to the broader issues of international development?
- What questions does this raise for you related to this theme that would like to explore further? Each essay is worth 5%, for a total of 40% of the grade. Essays are due on the Monday following the week, with the final unit 8 essay due on the final Friday.

Field Studies

Each course will have a number of short field studies as well as a larger, weeklong extended field study. In addition to the weekly essay, students will be expected to be engaged and active learners during the field studies. This means asking questions, being an active and engaged member of the group, completing assignments specific to the field study, and following all cultural, safety, and related guidelines for the field study. This is worth 25% of the grade.

Final Presentation

The final presentation is a 10-minute presentation of a topic of students' choice related to the theme of the course. Students should be working to collect information and material for the presentation during the entire course, using field studies, independent research, and course readings and seminars. The final presentation should include and will be assessed on the following rubric:

- What is the issue that you are interested in?
- How is this related to the theme of your course?
- How is this related to the broader issues in international development?
- What did you learn during your research on this topic?
- What further questions did this project raise for you?

This is worth 25% of the grade.

This is due on the last day for the course, the final Friday of Unit 8.

Course Content

Unit 1

Cross-Cultural Learning Workshop

- The purpose of this workshop is to provide students with a practical and experiential understanding of what it means to be culturally competent and able to be “culture learners” during the semester. Each session will be based on handouts, short videos, interactive discussions, and exercises to help students better understand their own culture as well as Thai culture.
- Readings for this week will be handed out in class.
 - Seminar 1: What is culture and fundamentals of culture: We tend to assume that our culture is just “the way things are” when, in fact, many cultural ideas and practices can be quite different. This session will give us some tools and understanding of what constitutes culture, and how we might use cultural analysis to understand and compare our own cultures with our new host culture in Thailand.
 - Seminar 2: Comparing Thai and American cultures; acting cross-culturally: This session will use a compare/contrast framework to look at some of the key differences between how American culture broadly defined, and how Thai culture think about how the world works, including hierarchy, patron-client relationships, and the presentation of self. We will also examine how this plays out in day-today interactions, and how students can learn to respect Thai culture and when and how to act appropriately.
 - Seminar 3: Cultural adjustment and culture shock: Adjusting to a new culture is not always easy and usually involves quite a bit of adjustment. This session will look at ways to help navigate some of the challenges of learning about and living in a culture that may look superficially similar to our home culture, but which is very different in some fundamental and challenging ways.
 - Seminar 4: Building resilience; stress and coping: Our goal is that students are able to thrive in the challenges of cross-cultural learning and living. This session will discuss how to navigate the inherent stress of cross-cultural living, as well as what positive and health coping strategies students can use to become more resilient.
 - Seminar 5: Living in Thailand: Host families, food, and transportation: This session highlights some practical aspects about living in Thailand that can help students adapt to daily life. We will focus specifically on host families, living in community, the role of food in Thai culture, and how to get around in Chiang Mai and elsewhere.

Unit 2

Introduction to International Development

- Seminar 1: Introduction to international development: What is the field of “international development”? What are some of the key issues and concerns?
- Seminar 2: Sustainable development: What do we mean by “sustainability” or “sustainable development”? How can we live within the Earth’s biocapacity?
- Seminar 3: Approaches to development: This seminar examines four approaches to development, with particular attention given to how different approaches can each be used on the same problem.
- Seminar 4: Facilitating development: How does one “do” international development? We will examine two case studies of outsiders facilitating development and discuss what lessons we can learn about facilitating development in general, and for the internship phase of the MSID program in particular.
- Readings
 - “What is global development?” Rory Horner, Global Development Institute Working Paper Series 2017-020 December 2017.
 - “Global South: what does it mean and why use the term?” Aug 8, 2018, Marlea Clarke, Global South: what does it mean and why use the term? | Global South Political Commentaries.
 - “Chapter 2 Contesting development in theory and practice,” International Development in a Changing World, Rebecca Hanlin and William Brown, pages 31–48.
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 - “Preface and Introduction” to The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power, Wolfgang Sachs, Zed Books, 2010.
 - “What is sustainable development?” Jennifer Elliott, An Introduction to Sustainable Development 3rd Ed. Routledge 2006.
- Assignment
 - Essay for Unit 1 is due this week.

Unit 3

Introduction to Sustainable Agriculture

- Agroecology as a people’s movement
- Integrative and regenerative agriculture
- Carbon sequestration and agricultural production
- Small scale versus large scale production
- Readings

- The Soil Will Save Us: How Scientists, Farmers, and Foodies are Healing the Soil to Save the Planet, Kristin Ohlson, Rodale, 2014.
- Gliessman, S. 2007. Agroecology: The Ecology of Sustainable Food Systems, 2nd ed. CRC Press, Chapter 1: The Need for Sustainable Food Production Systems, Chapter 2: The Agroecosystem Concept.
- Assignment
 - Essay for Unit 2 is due this week.

Unit 4

Extended Village Field Study

- Students will embark on a five-day village field study in a rural community outside Chiang Mai City, staying with a host family.
- They will engage in hands-on learning and teaching directly with local community members and leaders
- The goal of the village study is to understand rural development, the challenges, the best practices, the local culture, the differences between rural and urban development, and how government policies support development in this village
- For this course, students must pay particular attention to two specific questions during this field study:
 - What food systems are present in this community? What crops are being grown, what are the gardens, orchards, and animals being raised? Are they integrated? How?
 - What production systems do you see? Are inputs primarily local or non-local? What about outputs/products/etc? Are food systems primarily local or do they integrate nonlocal inputs and outputs?
- Activities may change, depending on the availability and needs of local community members, but will likely include the following:
 - Village mapping: Learn about how the village is organized and how this affects their community management and housing, as well as how they adapt to the environment, observing the environments and resources of the community such as schools, local hospital or clinic, meeting hall, temple or church, and farms.
 - Local food in Northern Thailand: Become familiar with various edible plants and how the surrounding environment provides the nutritional needs of the local community.
 - Community-based tourism (CBT): Learn about culture and community resource management, how they developed CBT, and how they proposed a blueprint for CBT management that is appropriate for their culture.
 - Learn about traditional cultural practices such as weaving, natural dye, bamboo weaving and cultural preservation practices, and sustainable development.
 - Participate in a service activity with the community school as a hands-on project building relationships with the community.
 - Take a half-day hike to learn about the natural resource management of the community.

- Village meetings: Learn how to collect data through asking questions related to the course and their areas of interest.
- Assignment
 - Essay for Unit 3 is due this week.

Unit 5

Agriculture Production in Varied Ecosystems

- Key issues in small scale tropical agriculture
- Lowland smallholder organic production
- Upland agriculture
- Agro-industry in Northern Thailand
- Challenges for sustainable food production
- Readings
 - Gliessman, S. 2007. *Agroecology: The Ecology of Sustainable Food Systems*, 2nd ed. CRC Press (Chapter 1: The Need for Sustainable Food Production Systems; Chapter 2: The Agroecosystem Concept).
 - Oehen, Bernadette, and Angelika Hilbeck, eds., *Feeding the People: Agroecology for Nourishing the World and Transforming the Agri-Food System*. IFOAM EU Group, Brussels, Belgium, 2015 (Transform? Or Conform and Adjust; Introduction; Chapter 1: Nourishing The World: The Role of Smallholders and Value Chains; Chapter 2: PostIndustrial Agriculture: Competing Proposals for the Transformation of Agriculture; Chapter 3: Reclaiming Food Systems: Local Food Systems and access to Markets Linked to Territories; Chapter 6: The Role of Livestock in Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems; Chapter 8: Smallholders, Urban Farmers and Neo-Ruralism)
- Ferguson, Rafter, "Why We Can't Separate Justice and Sustainability in the Food System," Union of Concerned Scientists, September 20, 2019.
- Assignment
 - Essay for Unit 4 is due this week.

Unit 6

Thai Commodities

- Coffee, tea, and chocolate as global commodities
- Small holder challenges for coffee, tea, and cacao production
- Field study of a coffee farm and a tea farm
- Agroecology, coffee production, and forest-friendly tea
- Coffee and human rights: gender, marginalization, and farm workers
- Readings
 - *Coffee Agroecology: A New Approach to Understanding Agricultural Biodiversity, Ecosystem Services and Sustainable Development*, Perfecto and Vanderneer, 2015,

- Earthscan. ○ Uncommon Grounds: The History of Coffee and How It Transformed Our World, Pendergrast, 2010, Basic Books.
 - “The Role of Trees in Agroecology and Sustainable Agriculture in the Tropics,” R. Leakey, Annual Review of Phytopathology, 2014.
 - Coffee Agroecology, “A biodiverse cup of coffee: coffee agroforests as repositories of tropical biodiversity,” pp. 12-54.
 - “Gender Equality and Coffee: Minimizing the Gender Gap in Agriculture,” SCA White Paper, 2018.
 - “Farmworkers & Coffee: The Case for Inclusion,” SCA White Paper, 2018.
- Assignment
 - Essay for Unit 5 is due this week.

Unit 7

Coffee as a Commodity

- Coffee as a business: Global supply chains, cafes, consumers, and farmers
- What makes a coffee shop work? The business of coffee
- Field study of cafes and roasteries in Chiang Mai
- Practicum—roasting, grinding, brewing, and preparing coffee
- Beyond fair trade: Key challenges in a sustainable and equitable coffee
- Readings
 - “The Blueprint for Coffee in a Changing Climate” SCAA, ND.
 - “Climate Change and Coffee: Acting Globally and Locally,” SCA White Paper, 2018
 - “Building a Sustainable Coffee Sector Using Market-Based Approaches: The Role of Multistakeholder Cooperation,” Jason Potts, UNCTD/IISD, ND.
 - “Green Guide: Essential and Practical Tips for a Lower Impact Cafe: Energy Use / Water / Waste Reduction and Recycling” SCAA, 2013.
 - “Understanding the Triple Bottom Line: The top 5 business benefits of sustainable practices,” SCAA, ND.
 - The World Atlas of Coffee, “Part Two: From Bean to Cup,” pp. 48-117, James Hoffmann, Firefly Books, 2018.
- Assignment
 - Essay for Unit 6 is due this week.

Unit 8

Final Class Seminars

- The role of innovation in sustainable food systems
- The role of small-scale producers in a large scale world
- Critical issues in sustainable food production
- Key issues in agricultural commodity production
- Submit final assignments and presentations for grading.

- Readings
 - Halperna, B. et. al., “Putting all foods on the same table: Achieving sustainable food systems requires full accounting,” PNAS, September 2019.
 - Mayer, Allegra, “The potential of agricultural land management to contribute to lower global surface temperatures,” Science Advances, 2018: 4.
 - “Biodiversity Conservation in Coffee: Transforming productive practices in the coffee sector by increasing market demand for certified sustainable coffee,” Rainforest Alliance, 2015.
 - “Standards and Sustainability in the Coffee Sector: A Global Value Chain Approach,” Stefano Ponte, UNCTD/IISD, 2004.
- Assignment
 - Essay for Unit 7 due on Monday and essay for Unit 8 due on Friday
 - Final presentations

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).