



Research in Thailand

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: THAI 4201

Number of Credits: 4

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 60

Instructor: On-Site Faculty

Course Description

In this course, the MSID student will learn about various research concepts and practices; make decisions involved in research, including selecting a topic and title for their study, developing statements of problems, and choosing ethical research questions and appropriate research design; learn about issues related to research ethics; and develop their skills in choosing data collection instruments and analysis of the data they collect for their research. The course does this by introducing various topics in the research cycle and providing a forum in which students can share with one another their research experience at each stage of the process. Through the course students will develop, defend, and challenge their own values and beliefs.

Research projects in this course are ideally projects that fit with the development agency's goals and activities; therefore, the student's research interests must blend with what is realistically happening at the development agency. Students must have approved proposals before proceeding onto their research sites to allow them to collect necessary data and complete data analysis before heading back to Chiang Mai at the end of the six-week field period. It is likely that students will participate in field activities, meetings, and other forms of engagement that will be indirectly related to and could inform their research projects.

This course also includes an optional 10 hours of Thai language instruction as needed.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, the students will be able to:

- Demonstrate basic knowledge of the research process and research ethics

- Develop skills associated with research such as problem-solving, decision-making, communication, and analytical reasoning
- Gain expertise in a particular topic within their field of study
- Acquire intercultural sensitivity and a more complex understanding of the local context
- Determine and use the most appropriate data collection tools and techniques
- Effectively analyze data comparatively and thematically
- Communicate findings, individually and collectively, to different types of audiences

Methodology

The goals of this course are to provide the students with an opportunity to take what they have learned about international development and apply it to a research question they are interested in. The emphasis is direct engagement with the research topic through a placement with an organization involved in international development. Students will be guided in their research topic selection through their meetings with the MSID instructors, as well as current issues in Thailand. Ongoing mentorship during the course is a key component, with regular communication with the MSID instructors and on-site organizational supervisors.

During the on-site portion of the course, MSID faculty are available through email and in-person meetings with the students, both during the faculty site visit as well as meetings at ISDSI.

During the classroom phase of the course, students will meet with the faculty member to finalize their placement and research options. The classroom phase will include a series of seminars with focus on the practical as well as theoretical issues involved in conducting fieldwork in a developing country. This course offers students an opportunity to engage in research that is relevant to the needs of communities and/or civic organizations. Course content will include both establishing rapport in the field, qualitative fieldwork methods, and sampling and structured field research, as well as the appropriate use of quantitative methods. The research methodology module offered during the classroom phase includes students' presentations, discussions, and critiques on each other's work under the guidance of MSID instructors.

During the classroom phase and before their placement, students will write a proposal about their project and their specific focus. This will be 2–3 pages long and due at the end of the first week of the research phase.

Research involves a placement with a local organization and living in a local community. During the field placement, students are expected to learn under the guidance of both their agency supervisor and MSID faculty. Most of the learning during this phase is experientially based, independent, and individualized. Students will keep a field notebook describing their experiences and research, participate in organization and community activities as appropriate, and write a final paper. The research placement may include research outside the host organization and community to answer the questions being explored by the student.

The evaluation of the student's performance in this course is based on attendance and participation in the research methodology module classes, class assignments/presentations,

attendance and performance of research work at the agency, the supervisor's evaluation, and the final report.

Required Reading / Materials

Students are expected to conduct independent research and read materials related to their agency and/or research project. Additional readings may be assigned during the course to help prepare students for the field portion of the course.

- Delcore, Henry D. (2003) "Nongovernmental Organizations and the Work of Memory in Northern Thailand," in *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 30: (1), 61-84 pp.
- Denzin N K and Lincoln, Y S (2008). "Introduction, the Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research," *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, London: Sage Publication. Pp: 1-19.
- Miller, Wesley (1990). "Internship, the Liberal Arts, and Participant Observation," in *Teaching Sociology*, Vol. 18: (1), 78-82 pp.
- Mompoti, Tlamele and Prinsen, Gerard (2000). "Ethnicity and Participatory Development Methods in Botswana: Some Participants are to be Seen and Not Heard," in *Development in Practice*, Vol 10: (5), 625-637 pp.
- Plews-Ogan, Erin et al. (2017) "Polyculture, autonomy and community: the pursuit of sustainability in a northern Thai farming village," in *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability*, Vol. 15: (4), 418- 431 pp.
- Zinn, Maxine Baca (1979) "Field Research in Minority Communities: Ethical, Methodological, and Political of Observation by an Insider," in *Social Problems*, Vol. 27: (2), 209-219 pp.

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
Class participation	10%
Paper Proposal	10%
Work performance assessment	15%
Daily field notes	20%
Draft of paper	10%
Presentation in final seminar	10%
Final paper	25%
Overall grade	100%

Assessment Details

Attendance & Class Participation

Students are expected to come to every class having completed all required readings and able to contribute to the discussions, questions, critiques, and analysis and express ideas about the topics. They are expected to actively participate in the field studies by engaging in a meaningful conversation with the organization representatives.

Description Of Assignments

Proposal: All students will write a 2- to 3-page proposal detailing their proposed final paper, including a review of relevant literature and a discussion of their primary question and proposed methodology.

Class participation: Students are active participants in the course, both in the classroom and outside. This includes discussing the readings, asking questions, and being an informed and active member of the class.

Agency supervisor assessment: The supervisor from the host development organization will assess students' overall work performance. This will include interpersonal relationships, adaptability, and ability to work within the organization. The purpose of the work performance assessment is to provide the student feedback on their ability to work with and function in a cross-cultural setting and organization.

Daily field notes should have two parts: Daily Entries and Interpretive Entries. Students must clearly label all materials.

Daily entries will consist of two parts: a “time log” and “descriptive entries.” The “time log” is a brief description of what happened (Date-Time-Location-Activity). The “descriptive entries” are a record of informal conversations/interviews, observations, and site descriptions from the field experiences. Students’ descriptive observations will enable them to provide the illustrative detail that gives human interest and credibility to their interpretations. Each daily entry should be at least 1 page.

Interpretive entries should begin to identify patterns that give meaning, order and predictability to your particular cultural scene. These entries will serve as a first attempt to analyze the study and can be used in the final essay. Students are expected to have at least five interpretive entries. Each interpretive entry should be 2 pages.

Draft of final paper: Students will submit a draft of their final paper to the instructors halfway through the research phase.

Final presentation: This seminar is conducted at the end of the semester. This provides an opportunity for students to share experiences from their research site.

Final paper (20 pages): The final paper must be organized with an introduction to the topic of the paper, a section reviewing relevant literature, a discussion of research methods, findings, and a conclusion. The research paper is primarily focused on a specific topic but is still grounded in a placement with an organization involved in international development. The research paper will include a section focused on how this topic is important in the field of international development and how the student placement plays a role in it. In addition, the methodology section will detail how the student studied the topic both in the organization and in outside research.

Course Content

Unit 1

- Introduction to course
 - Course expectation
 - Course schedule and activities
- Introduction to field research
 - Types of research (qualitative, quantitative, basic, and applied research)
 - Methods for writing a proposal, theory and practice

Unit 2

- The research cycle
 - Selecting a topic
 - Choosing a title for your research project
 - Formulating the research question/problem
 - Selecting an appropriate design for your research
- Research proposal review

Unit 3

- Introduction to field study and community field work
 - How to collect data
 - Formulating the field work question/problems
 - Data analysis and interpretation
 - Assignments for the village field study

Unit 4

- Extended village field study (practice exercise)

Unit 5

- Sharing experience and discussion of field study and community field work

Unit 6

- Finalized the placements
 - Roles and responsibilities at the placement
 - Meeting with the internship placement

Unit 7

- Work culture in Thailand
 - How to work with the local organization
 - Stakeholder analysis at the workplace
 - Gender
- Present research proposal with the faculty member
- Meeting with the internship placement (continued)

Unit 8

- Internship preparedness and review
 - Research placement
 - Timeline and assignments
 - Health and safety
 - Dress code
 - Gear check

Unit 9

- Break

Unit 10

- Research placement orientation
- Get familiar with host agency
- Revise research proposal with the host organization
- Finalized roles and responsibilities
- Journal writing
- Peer internship meeting and email update

Unit 11

- Review data collection methods
- Begin data collection
- Journal writing
- Peer internship meeting and email update

Unit 12

- Continue field work
- Internship midcourse meeting
 - Experience exchange at the placement
 - Progress of the research project

- Feedback and suggestion from faculty
- Journal writing
- Peer internship meeting and email update

Unit 13

- Complete data collection and begin data editing and cleaning
- Site visit from MSID faculty member
- Journal writing
- Peer internship meeting and email update
- Compile first draft or final paper

Unit 14

- Site visit from MSID faculty member
- Journal writing
- Peer internship meeting and email update
- Draft final paper due

Unit 15

- Journal writing
- Peer internship meeting and email update
- Revise final paper and feedback from supervisor/MSID faculty

Unit 16

- Final week seminar
 - Prepare final paper and presentation
 - Paper presentation
 - Wrap up course

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](#).