

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EAU CLAIRE

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Study Abroad



**USAC THAILAND
FALL 2019**

Program Guide

TABLE OF CONTENTS

General Information.....	2
The Program	2
The Location	2
The University	2
Spring Calendar	2
Academics	2
Program Prerequisites	3
Registration.....	3
Add/Drop Courses on Site	3
Withdrawing from USAC Courses.....	3
Credits and Course Load	3
Class/Activity Attendance	4
The Academic Program	4
Internships.....	5
Grades.....	5
Grade Reports.....	5
Money Matters	5
Cost Estimate	5
USAC Payments & Refund Policy.....	5
Currency Exchange.....	6
Cost of Living in Thailand.....	6
Cash.....	6
Credit Cards	6
Debit Cards	6
Traveler's Checks	6
USAC Scholarships	6
Freeman-Asia Scholarship.....	7
Health & Safety	7
Immunizations	7

Medical/Mental Health Availability in Chiang Mai.....	7
Water.....	8
Food	8
Malaria	8
Zika Virus	9
AIDS.....	9
Tattoos and Body Piercings	9
Smoking.....	10
Ocean Safety	10
Air Quality.....	10
Dog Bites	10
Three Thai Laws to Know.....	10
Safety in Thailand	11
911 Equivalent in Thailand	12
Required Documents	12
Passport	12
Visa	12
Packing Tips	12
Climate.....	12
Clothing	12
What to Pack.....	13
Appliances	13
Arriving in Thailand	14
Travel Arrangements.....	14
USAC Group Flight	14
Early Arrivals.....	15
Orientation	15
Level of Support	15
Community Involvement.....	15
Tours and Field Studies	15

Volunteering in Chiang Mai.....	16
Getting Involved	16
Things to Do in the Community.....	16
Housing	16
USAC Housing	16
What's Provided for your Room.....	17
Laundry.....	17
Meals.....	18
Communication	18
Telephone	18
Computers and Internet.....	19
Snail Mail/Mailing Address	19
Culture Notes.....	19
Toilet Expectations	19
Kreng Jai	19
Hierarchy	20
Gender Relations in Thailand.....	20
Respect for the Body	21
Raising Your Voice	21
Wearing Shoes.....	21
Royalty and Politics.....	21
Religion.....	22
Dining Experience	22
Animal Life	22
Thailand's Infrastructure.....	23
Doing Without.....	23
Political Change in Thailand	23
Travel While Abroad	24
Local Transportation	24
Travel Outside of Chiang Mai	25

Travel to Tsunami-Affected Areas in Southern Thailand	25
Travel in Politically Turbulent Areas.....	25
Contact Names & Addresses: Thailand	27
Web Resources for Thailand	28

CONGRATULATIONS on being accepted to the UW-Eau Claire study abroad program with University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC) in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Living and studying in a foreign culture is both an exciting and a challenging experience. Past participants of study abroad report that the many advantages of international study include:

Building foreign language skills

Gaining new perspectives on a chosen academic field

Increasing understanding of different cultures

Getting to know oneself

Developing different perspectives on U.S. culture

Achieving self-confidence and independence

Learning skills for the future international job market

It is up to you to determine how you can best benefit from these possible advantages. This is your experience!

This program guide is to be used together with the general Study Abroad Handbook. The handbook has information that is valid for all UW-Eau Claire study abroad programs. This guide will provide you with specific information to assist in your preparation for the Thailand study abroad program. It is designed to complement the study abroad orientation and your individual pre-departure preparations.

Please realize that although this guide was written to help you better prepare for your time abroad, and that all of the information available at the time of printing has been used, it is impossible for any single resource to answer all of your questions. Your peer advisor will email additional information throughout the semester. We also strongly encourage you to contact the study abroad staff, your peer advisor and any Thai students on campus with your specific questions. You should also make use of the additional written and web resources listed towards the end of this guide.

What are YOUR goals for this experience? Common goals of student travelers include advancement in future profession, wish to expand personal and academic horizons, need for a change, wish to challenge oneself with immersion in a new culture.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Program

UW-Eau Claire has partnered with USAC to offer students the opportunity to study the economics, philosophy, politics, religions, culture, and language of Thailand and other South East Asian countries in Chiang Mai, Thailand. This exciting semester program in Thailand will not only be of interest to students in Asian studies but also those interested in globalization, democratization, gender and sexual identity, fine arts, human rights, migration, and economic development. It will allow you to gain a deeper understanding of Thai and Southeast Asian culture.

The Location

Located 700 kilometers north of Bangkok, Chiang Mai is Thailand's fifth largest city with a population of around 1,000,000. Typical of Northern Thai geography, Chiang Mai lies on a large, flat plain surrounded by mountains.

Chiang Mai was founded in 1296 and is one of the oldest continually inhabited settlements in Thailand. It was once the capital of Lanna, an independent Thai kingdom, and has preserved its unique cultural heritage to a marked degree. This includes a regional dialect distinct from the Thai spoken in Bangkok. Within the city's original perimeter, still marked by a moat and fortified gates, are numerous ancient Buddhist temples and other monuments attesting to a distinguished past. Doi Suthep Mountain, topped by one of Thailand's holiest temples, rises 1,676 meters to the west of the city, providing a dramatic backdrop.

The University

The program is located on Chiang Mai University's SuanSak campus, approximately five kilometers west of the city center. Chiang Mai University (CMU) is home to more than 40,000 students and has four campuses. The university is set against the dramatic backdrop of Doi Suthep Mountain and the campus occupies more than 600 acres with a reservoir and beautiful vegetation. The campus offers free electric shuttles for students. The surrounding neighborhood has many coffee shops, stores, banks, and restaurants for easy access.

The newly opened International Centre for Education (ICE) welcomes USAC students.

Spring Calendar

Fall 2019*

Depart U.S.	August 20
Arrival	August 21
Orientation	August 22-24
Classes Start	August 26
Fall Break	October 21-23
Final Exams	December 9-12
Semester Ends	December 12
Move out of housing	December 13

***Dates are subject to change. To see more detailed program dates:**

<http://usac.unr.edu/study-abroad-programs/thailand/chiang-mai/calendars>

ACADEMICS

There is additional information on maintaining program eligibility, as well as topics such as registration, class attendance,

credits and course load, grades, transcripts, and accessing the UW-Eau Claire library while abroad in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Program Prerequisites

To participate in this study abroad program, you must be enrolled full time, be **in good academic, financial, and conduct standing and have the minimum 2.5 GPA required**. See the Study Abroad Handbook for more information on maintain program eligibility.

Registration

As part of the USAC admissions process, you are required to submit a preliminary course registration. You will find the Course and Tour Registration Form in your USAC Gateway account. You will complete this form indicating your course and tour selections along with two alternative courses in case any courses become unavailable. You will submit the completed form directly to USAC.

You will receive your final course schedule during the on-site orientation. Your Resident Director in Thailand will make every effort to avoid class conflicts; however, there may be scheduling conflicts and you may need to adjust your class selection. Please be flexible and prepared for course changes.

Add/Drop Courses on Site

You will have approximately 2 weeks to add/drop/change courses once you arrive on-site in Thailand. For courses that are only a month long, the add/drop/change deadline is usually 3 days after the class begins. Written permission is required from both the Resident Director and instructors in order to add/drop/change a course once it has begun.

Withdrawing from USAC Courses

Your Resident Director, in Thailand, will establish a course withdrawal deadline (typically this is about two-thirds of the way into the term). If you must drop a course after the drop deadline, but before the Withdrawal deadline, a grade of "W" will be reported on your USAC grade report. If you abandon a class without officially withdrawing from it, the grade will be reported as an "F."

Credits and Course Load

All students are expected to enroll in a minimum of 12-18 credits each semester. USAC recommends students enroll in 12-15 credits.

Dropping below full-time status may result in loss of financial aid and/or insurance coverage and **must be approved in advance by CIE. Taking more than 18 credits will require you to pay additional tuition.**

The credits you earn abroad are considered UW-Eau Claire resident credits. The classes you take abroad will count towards the total credits needed for graduation, and **grades will be figured into your UW-Eau Claire GPA.**

Class/Activity Attendance

When studying abroad, you are required to follow the attendance policies of your program abroad. In general, you are expected to attend all regularly scheduled classes and field trips unless illness or other unavoidable circumstances make this impossible. Absences must be approved in advance by the instructor and may result in lower grades.

USAC generally allows students one excused absence. Each tardy is considered one half of an absence. If you fail to attend class, this will affect your grade in the course. All exams must be taken as scheduled.

The Academic Program

USAC courses are taught at Chiang Mai University by local and visiting faculty. Professors will provide a syllabus at the beginning of the semester and coursework will generally follow a typical U.S. structure with a combination of exams, projects, essays, and/or homework. Your classmates will be other USAC or international students. Local students are already fluent in Thai and typically their English is not proficient enough to join you in courses taught in English. There will still be plenty of chances for you to interact with local students.

You should plan to be in courses Monday through Friday. You will have plenty of time to explore Thailand on weekends. It is not recommended to plan any weekend travel until after you arrive.

You will be required to wear a uniform on the university campus. For men, the uniform

is a white, button down shirt and black slacks. For women, the uniform is a white, button down shirt and black skirt. The skirt must be knee length and no shorter. The uniforms can be bought onsite for about 200-220 Thai Baht. During orientation, the USAC staff will take you shopping for your uniform.

Even though the program is based on the U.S. system, you will be in an international learning environment, so some things will be different than your usual expectations. For example, some professors may not hold office hours, but instead you need to arrange individual meetings with them. Local faculty will also have an accent when teaching in English and this could be an adjustment.

One of the biggest differences students notice when studying in Thailand is that there is less overall structure in the courses. The Thai culture is generally more relaxed than American culture, and you may feel like there is less organization than what you are used to. Course structure and expectations may not be as clearly stated as they are in the U.S., so more responsibility falls on the student to check in about assignments and due dates. Also, it is more common in Thailand to have different professors present in class, so you may have to adjust to several different presentation styles for one course. Thai professors and classrooms may be more formal than you are used to; it is expected that you behave in a proper and respectful manner with professors at all times. If you have any questions or concerns when in Thailand, do not be afraid to reach out to your Resident Director for more advice.

Internships

USAC offers students the opportunity to enroll in an internship. Students do need to have a 3.0 GPA and be at junior standing by the time of the internship. There is also a refundable \$200 fee if participating in an internship. Placements are really geared towards the participant's interest and past placements have included: local schools, teach English within the community, local non-profits, local magazines, etc. Placement is not guaranteed by USAC but they will do their best to arrange a placement. After you arrive, you will complete the internship application and interview with a potential sponsor site.

Grades

Courses in the program are graded on the U.S. A-F grading scale. The grades reported on your USAC grade report are the same grades that will appear on your UW-Eau Claire transcript; **grades are included in your UW-Eau Claire GPA**. Pass/Fail grades are not allowed.

Grade Reports

At the end of the program, USAC prepares a grade report, which is sent to UW-Eau Claire. USAC will also update the grades on your Gateway account for you to review. Courses, credits, and grades are incorporated into your UW-Eau Claire transcript.

Grade reports are not available until two or three months after the end of the semester. Due to this delay, you will initially receive a grade report with "NR" (not reported) for all courses. The actual courses you took will be reflected on your

record once CIE receives your grade report from USAC.

If you are a senior and are studying abroad at USAC Thailand for your last semester, please note that the different timelines in grade reporting may require you to delay your graduation.

MONEY MATTERS

Information about how payments are made, when they are due, withdrawal/refund deadlines, financial aid, scholarships, budgeting, and how to bring money abroad is in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Cost Estimate

You can find the most current cost estimate for your program, in easily printable format, on the [CIE Thailand webpage](#). Be sure you are looking at the correct term. Remember that the cost estimate includes what you pay to UW-Eau Claire, what you pay to USAC, and what you pay directly to other vendors.

USAC Payments & Refund Policy

If you have any questions about paying your USAC fees, please contact the USAC accounting person listed in your Gateway Account. You can pay with credit card, check, or money order.

In addition to the UW-Eau Claire refund policy outlined in the "Money Matters" section of the Study Abroad Handbook, USAC has its own financial policies related to payment, cancellations, and changes. You can learn more about the withdrawal deadlines and penalties by referring to your copies of the USAC Program Agreement and Program Fee & Options.

Currency Exchange

The currency in Thailand is the Thai Bhat. You can find current exchange rates at <https://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>.

Cost of Living in Thailand

In general, you will find prices for food and local transportation in Chiang Mai to be much cheaper than they are in the U.S. Electronic equipment will be more expensive, and products from the U.S. will be as expensive, if not more so, than they are here at home.

Cash

With cash, it is recommended that you have small bills of baht. Most places won't have change for you, so you will need to have smaller bills. You can break your bigger bills at the 7-11 by the residence halls when you purchase something.

Credit Cards

Visa and MasterCard are the most commonly accepted credit cards abroad; however, do not expect to use them everywhere. Be prepared to have another form of payment ready in case you cannot use your card. Most credit cards charge a fee or percentage for the currency exchange rate. You may want to consider getting a card with no foreign transaction fees. Be sure to notify your credit card company prior to departure of where you will be travelling.

Debit Cards

Debit cards are usually the best option for withdrawing money while abroad. Be sure

you know the 4-digit pin for your card and ask your bank what the withdrawal fees are. You may also want to know your daily limit. Your bank may charge transaction fees for each foreign transaction, so you should try to limit the frequency of your ATM withdrawals. Your bank may have global partners that allow you to withdraw for fewer fees, so take note if any banks are partners with your bank. ATMs are plentiful in Thailand, so you should not have a problem accessing one.

Traveler's Checks

Traveler's checks are increasingly rare and difficult to use. They generally must be cashed at a major bank, although in some countries, post offices also offer this service. You must have your passport with you. Most banks charge a fee for cashing the checks; it can vary widely. Before cashing a check, **ASK** what the fee is.

Make sure you record your check numbers and keep the numbers separate from the checks, in case you need to get them replaced.

USAC Scholarships

USAC offers a variety of scholarships for students. To see more information, visit [USAC's Scholarship website](#). You will have optional scholarship applications applied to your USAC Gateway account when they are open. Students are able to apply for all scholarships they are eligible for and can be awarded more than one scholarship.

USAC also offers an alliance scholarship just for UWEC students on one of their specialty programs. This application will be applied to your BlugoldsAbroad account in

September for spring students and in March for Summer/Fall/Academic Year students. Your UWEC Study Abroad Coordinator, Jenna, will email you when it is available. The number of awards will vary by term. Amounts will vary between \$250 - \$500.

Freeman-Asia Scholarship

This scholarship is supported by the Freeman Foundation and the Institute of International Education. Students studying for a semester can receive up to \$5,000 and those studying for an academic year can receive up to \$7,000.

To apply, students need to be a US citizen, demonstrate financial need, be accepted to a program based in Asia, have a GPA of at least 2.8, have at least one semester left at UWEC after their study abroad program and have little to no experience in the country they plan to study in.

To learn more and to see when the application opens:

Eligibility:

<https://www.iie.org/Programs/Freeman-Asia/Eligibility>

Deadlines:

<https://www.iie.org/Programs/Freeman-Asia/Apply>

HEALTH & SAFETY

Additional information on these issues, as well as on CISI insurance, is included in the Health Issues and Safety Abroad sections of your Study Abroad Handbook.

Immunizations

You should review the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website for information on

vaccinations. Only the government of a particular country can mandate requirements, and because such requirements often discourage tourism, governments are reluctant to establish them. However, CDC vaccination recommendations should be taken very seriously. Since many of the recommendations depend on the type of travel you anticipate doing, or the length of time you are staying, you need to consult a doctor to determine what's best for your individual situation.

In addition to having all routine immunizations up-to-date, you can find the current CDC recommendations for Thailand here:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/thailand.aspx>

UW-Eau Claire's Student Health Services offers immunizations (IG, tetanus, Hepatitis B, etc.) and health education on international travel. Contact Student Health Services at (715) 836-5360.

Medical/Mental Health Availability in Chiang Mai

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

but it could be more difficult to reach these places.

In the past, CISI has been able to identify English speaking therapists in Chiang Mai. If you need to see a therapist while abroad, please contact your study abroad coordinator, Jenna, kroschjm@uwec.edu and she will work with CISI to help identify English speaking therapists for when you're abroad. If you arrive at Chiang Mai and then decide you'd like to see a therapist, you can contact either Jenna in the CIE or the USAC resident director.

As a student with USAC, your Resident Director is there to assist you in obtaining medical/mental health assistance.

Water

The tap water in Chiang Mai meets World Health Organization standards for safe drinking. **However, it is not recommended that you drink the water; everyone still drinks bottled water as people do not trust the plumbing, especially in the old city.** You may also wish to use bottled water for brushing your teeth. Tap water is drinkable, if you really want to, but you should boil it first.

Food

Generally, food in Chiang Mai is safe. You should be sure to eat hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Fresh fruit is available cut up and is generally safe. If in doubt, buy fruit that is not yet peeled. There are an enormous number of tasty snacks available on campus and in front of the university. While most food is safe, use your judgment – is the vendor's cart clean? Do they have the food kept cold until it is cooked, etc.?

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

Malaria

Generally speaking, malaria is not a problem in the city (Chiang Mai or Bangkok) or in rural areas close to the city. There is some risk of malaria in remote areas, such as highland villages where you may be traveling. (Malaria is more of a risk in border areas where the program does not travel.) Most malaria in Northern Thailand is resistant to anti-malarial medicines. This makes treatment of malaria more difficult, and for this reason the Malaria Center in Chiang Mai recommends against taking anti-malarial medicine, since it is contributing to the emergence of drug-resistant malaria strains. They recommend instead being careful to prevent mosquito bites by using a mosquito net and/or DEET repellent.

You should discuss your malaria prevention strategy with your doctor.

The decision about what you will do about malaria is one you must make yourself. Neither the CIE nor USAC can make this decision for you. If you decide to take anti-malaria medication, follow the instructions from your physician carefully. **Remember that malaria is rarely acquired if you've**

taken the proper precautions. The best way to avoid malaria is to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes!

To minimize mosquito bites:

- Cover up with clothing. Wear garments with a high neckline (or a bandana around the neck), long sleeves, and long pants.
- Use a DEET-containing insect repellent (such as Off Deep Woods) on exposed skin AND permethrin, an insecticide, on clothing.
- Avoid shiny jewelry and perfumed cosmetics, as they attract mosquitos.
- Remain indoors at dusk or after dark.
- When travelling on your own, choose accommodations with tidy grounds and air conditioning or with windows having well-fitting screens. Use mosquito-netting elsewhere. Most accommodations may supply these, so having your own may not be necessary.
- Check that bed netting has no holes or rips. Tuck netting under your mattress.
- Avoid local preventatives. Many are unproven, such as mosquito coils or Avon Skin-So-Soft. While these are popular folklore insect repellents in the U.S., they perform poorly in scientific studies.

If you become ill:

Early treatment is essential if you do contract malaria. Consider any flu-like illness with fever in a malarial area to be malaria until proven otherwise.

Common symptoms of malaria include fever and chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches, and dizziness. **See a physician promptly!** Delay in seeking medical care

and delay in diagnosis increases the chances of complications. Malaria can occur as early as six days after being bitten by an infected mosquito to several months after exposure. Inform your physician of recent travel if you have flu-like symptoms after returning home.

Zika Virus

The [CDC](#) does warn that there is a risk for the Zika virus in Thailand. The Zika infection, in pregnant women, can cause serious birth defects so the CDC does not recommend travel to Thailand for women who are pregnant. All travelers should strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites. If you have concerns over this, please consult with your doctor.

AIDS

AIDS has reached epidemic proportions in Thailand, which posts one of the highest infection rates in Asia. **HIV infection rates among prostitutes in Chiang Mai have been estimated at over 80%.** The risk of heterosexual transmission (from men as well as from women who are not prostitutes) in Thailand is also quite high. IV drug use provides another vector for transmission. Please be warned and be prepared to take all precautions necessary to avoid exposure to the HIV virus. Abstinence, both in terms of sex and drugs, is definitely the most secure prevention.

Tattoos and Body Piercings

Past visitors to Thailand have indicated that tattoos and body piercings are available and cheaper than in the U.S. However, providers may not have the same health practices that are required in the U.S. As a result, getting a tattoo and/or piercing with

an unsterilized or improperly sterilized needle can expose you to a number of diseases such as **HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B, C, and D.**

Smoking

Smoking is unusual in Thai culture and in public it is illegal. If you are caught smoking in public, you may be fined 2,000 Thai Bhat.

Ocean Safety

Thailand is known for its beaches, so you may find yourself enjoying those while abroad. There are potential risks that come with swimming in oceans or engaging in other water activities. Currents and aquatic life may be hazardous, and warnings/signs may be different than what you are used to, or there may not be warnings posted. Strong undertows or rip tides can occur anywhere. If you plan on swimming, always look for posting about the frequency of rip tides or dangerous wildlife and avoid beaches or swimming areas that do not have lifeguards on duty. Research the dangers of riptides and how to navigate them should you find yourself in a precarious situation.

Air Quality

The air quality can vary from season to season. March and April tend to have the lowest air quality due to local practices of crop burning to prepare for next season's harvest. Talk to your doctor to discuss what precautions you should take if you have sensitive lungs due to asthma or allergies. The U.S. Department of State has suggested wearing a disposable mask on days when the air pollution is at its worst.

Dog Bites

Dog bites are common in Thailand. If a dog bites you, let the USAC staff know IMMEDIATELY. A rabies vaccination must be administered within a few days of the bite, so it is imperative that you check with a doctor.

Three Thai Laws to Know

1) Thai laws relating to drug usage or sale are far stricter than those in the U.S., and they are enforced! The penalties for carrying or using illegal drugs (including marijuana) in Thailand are extremely harsh, even for small amounts. To be sentenced as a "dealer" you need not actually be selling the drug, since it is determined only by the amount of the drug you possess, an amount which is very small. **Penalties include death, life imprisonment, or long prison terms.** There is NOTHING the CIE, USAC or the U.S. government can do if you are found in violation of Thai laws.

Remember, it is ILLEGAL to possess, sell, or distribute drugs in Thailand. One penalty for possessing, selling or drug trafficking in Thailand is execution. If any student is caught with illegal drugs while in the program, they will immediately be expelled without recourse.

2) Prostitution is illegal in Thailand. This law is obviously not as strictly enforced by Thai authorities as the drug laws are, but it is the law, nevertheless. **Any student known to have visited a prostitute will be canceled from the program and sent home immediately.** Also, HIV infection rates among prostitutes in Chiang Mai have been estimated at over 80%. Not only is

soliciting a prostitute illegal, it can also be deadly.

3) Criticizing the royal family is against the law. (See [Culture Notes, Royalty and Politics](#) in this guide.) Lèse majesté laws make it a crime to insult or criticize the King, Queen, and Heir apparent to the throne and Thailand has some of the strictest laws in the world. Those convicted can face anywhere from 3-15 years in prison. The Royal Family is deeply respected by the Thai people and are seen as symbols of Thai identity.

Safety in Thailand

Information on crime, road safety, drug penalties, and terrorist activity in Thailand can be found in the [State Department Consular Information Sheet](#). Safety in-and-around Chiang Mai will be discussed during orientation in Thailand.

One main thing to remember about safety in Thailand is that **they drive on the other side of the road, so LOOK RIGHT!!** before crossing the street.

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

If you have to return home alone late for whatever reason, **take a tuk-tuk (3-wheeled taxi) or a see-law (a pick-up taxi)**. While you won't want to rely on tuk-

tuks as your sole source of transportation every day, they are your best option at night and are not overly expensive.

The greatest risk you face in Thailand is that of transportation-related injury, particularly as a result of driving or riding motorcycles. **Therefore, students are not allowed to drive or ride on a motorcycle while participating in the program.** Any student known to have driven or ridden on a motorcycle will be canceled from the program and sent home immediately. Not only is motorcycle travel dangerous, many of the shared helmets available to passengers of motorcycle taxis (in particular in Bangkok) are infected with head lice. Not wearing a helmet is illegal. USAC will make you sign an agreement stating you will not drive or ride on a motorbike. Should you still decide to, you will be responsible for all consequences.

Thailand is known for its markets, but this is also a place where theft is most common. It is very important to watch for tourist traps. Many merchandisers will try to solicit you and ask extremely high prices for their product, so be aware of this and don't be afraid to say no if someone is trying to solicit you.

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

911 Equivalent in Thailand

If you are in an emergency situation in Thailand, you will need to know how to reach the local police, fire, or ambulance services. The local equivalent to the 911 emergency line **in Thailand is 191 for police and ambulance; 199 for fire.** We suggest you save these numbers in your cell phone in case you need to use them quickly.

The U.S. State Department also provides a list of [911 numbers abroad](#). Please note that in some countries there are different numbers for fire, police, and ambulance. Plan ahead and research numbers before you go.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Passport

General passport information is found in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Visa

A visa is official permission to temporarily reside in another country and is granted by the government of that country. The CIE will post basic information about the current visa options for U.S. citizens for study in Thailand to the Learning Content section of your online study abroad account during the semester prior to departure. USAC will also post visa information to your Gateway account. You cannot apply for your visa until 90 days from the program start. **It is your responsibility to keep up-to-date about student visa requirements for Thailand, and if required, to apply for and receive a visa from the Thailand consulate or embassy in a timely manner.** Please read the "Visa" section of your Study

Abroad Handbook for more information about what you should do to keep up-to-date on visa requirements.

PACKING TIPS

In addition to the general packing information in your Study Abroad Handbook, you should know the following about Chiang Mai.

Climate

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

During the cool season, the maximum temperatures are comfortable; nights and early morning are cool in the city, cold in the countryside, and possibly freezing in the mountains (ice is reported from time to time at the Doi Inthanon). Though you'll probably find it great when you walk around the city, you'll really feel the cold when the air turns crisp and it's not uncommon to need a jacket, gloves and scarf (before noon or after 6 PM). Otherwise the sky is blue, without clouds. The good thing is you don't need to turn on the air conditioning for sleeping.

Clothing

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

During class: You are **REQUIRED** to dress in the same "uniform" that is worn by all

Thai university students. All Thai university students wear a standard outfit. For women, this is a **short-sleeved white blouse** that buttons up the front, with a collar (not a T-shirt) and a **plain black skirt**. Women must wear skirts (mid-length or long), not slacks. Sleeveless blouses and very short skirts are NOT acceptable. Men should wear a **collared short-sleeved white shirt** (not a T-shirt) and **black trousers** (no jeans), as well as a dark necktie. For both men and women, **shoes with backs, closed-toed or closed-heel shoes** are required. Sandals without backs, flip-flops, Tevas, or Birkenstocks are **not** acceptable for university classes.

This is the required dress for all classes, including orientation sessions. Since you will be in class five days/week, you should prepare accordingly. USAC will take you shopping during orientation to purchase a uniform if you do not already have those items. Sizes can be different in Thailand and larger sizes may be hard to find and more expensive. The largest size found was a 2XL in Thailand which is equivalent to a size Large in the US.

Foreign students who dress in the university outfit in Thailand have found that they are immediately identified as university students, not tourists, and that most people speak to them in Thai first instead of attempting English (or not speaking to

them at all). Dressing this way is not only culturally appropriate, but it works to a student's advantage. (It is also cheaper, as local taxis will charge you the local rate, rather than the tourist rate!)

Visiting a temple: If you visit a temple (which you most definitely will at some point) you cannot wear shorts, leggings, sleeveless shirts/dresses (unless you have a sweater or shawl to cover you), see-through clothing, cleavage showing, backless/cutout shirts. You must have your shoulders and midriff covered. Your socks cannot have holes or tears in them and you will need to take your shoes off. Knee length or longer skirts/dresses, pants, slacks, light weight pants, are recommended.

What to Pack

Your peer advisor will give a suggested packing list at your second group meeting later in the semester prior to departure.

USAC will also post a suggested packing list to your Gateway account.

Please keep in mind that leggings and/or yoga pants are considered "hot pants" in Thailand and are not appropriate to wear. Students are encouraged to wear looser pants when out in public.

Appliances

The standard electric current in Thailand is 220 volts. If you plan to bring a hair dryer, razor, etc., with you from the U.S., **you will need to buy a voltage converter and plug**

adapter and bring it with you. The other option, of course, is to buy the necessary appliances after you arrive.

ARRIVING IN THAILAND

Travel Arrangements

It is your responsibility to make and pay for travel arrangements to Thailand. Airline tickets are not included in your USAC program fees. An optional group flight is available for this program by a travel agency recommended by USAC. If you choose not to book the group flight, you will need to book your own flight and arrive prior to the mandatory orientation. If you arrive before or at the same time as the group flight, it may be possible to join the group transportation, depending on availability.

USAC Group Flight

Benefits to booking with the optional group flight:

- Flexible tickets that are refundable and changeable for a fee
- Select the group return date or select your own date for the same price
- Frosch Student Travel can help book connecting flights to merge with the group flight departure cities for a reasonable amount.
- Flexible payment plan (pay a deposit to hold your seat, then pay the balance 2 weeks prior to departure)
- Airport pick-up in Thailand (there is no USAC staff to chaperone the flight, but group flight participants will be met at the airport by USAC staff, unless you arrive late).

USAC will be in contact with you and information will be on your USAC Gateway account on how to sign up for the group flight.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Most first-time travelers to Thailand will enter the Kingdom via Bangkok Suvarnabhumi International Airport (BKK). Don Mueang (DMK), the old Bangkok airport, also operates a number of domestic flights. Please check to be sure that your connecting flight from Bangkok to Chiang Mai leaves from BKK (and not DMK) when making your airline reservations from Bangkok to Chiang Mai. Otherwise, you will have to take a shuttle or taxi across town to DMK airport. From Bangkok, there are daily (and multiple) train, bus and airline departures.

Thai Airways and Bangkok Airways have the most frequent and on-time flights between Bangkok and Chiang Mai, but several discount airlines also fly between Bangkok and Chiang Mai (Air Asia flies to Chiang Mai from BKK; however, please note that NokAir and Orient Thai Airlines fly to Chiang Mai from Bangkok's domestic airport (DMK) which is not the same as the international airport and located clear across the city). Arrivals in Bangkok on US carriers generally involve a short overnight stay. There are also direct flights into Chiang Mai from Seoul on Korean Airlines, from Singapore on Silk Air and from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Air Asia. For more information on Bangkok airports, please visit:

Suvarnabhumi International Airport (BKK):

<https://www.bangkokairportonline.com/>.

Don Mueang Airport (DMK—domestic)

<https://www.donmueangairport.com/>

You may wish to purchase travel or trip cancellation insurance when you purchase your ticket. Discuss your options with your travel agent and be sure you know exactly what the policy covers. (For example, most policies specifically exclude travel disruption due to acts of war.)

Early Arrivals

USAC strongly discourages students from arriving early. If you decide to arrive early, you will need to find separate accommodations, should not expect to have much or any assistance upon arrival, and should be prepared to deal with any issues on your own.

Orientation

You will have a two-day orientation program upon arrival in Chiang Mai. The orientation will introduce you to Chiang Mai University and its services, as well as to Chiang Mai in general. With the help of university students who will be your "Thai buddies," you will learn how to use public transportation, buy your school uniform and cell phone, learn where to eat and how to exchange money, and learn about safety issues to be aware of, etc. You will also finalize course registration at orientation. There is a \$200 penalty for not attending the entire orientation.

There will be a welcome dinner for you during your orientation. This is often a traditional northern style Khan Tok.

Level of Support

USAC provides a resident director and staff to assist students with the transition to Thailand. They will also be coordinating various excursions and activities throughout the semester. If any questions or concerns arise, over anything, you are strongly encouraged to reach out to the onsite staff. It could be anything from how to say something in Thai to needing to go to the doctor. The USAC staff is there to assist you so please use them as a resource.

If you will need any disability accommodations when abroad, it is important to complete your USAC Disability and Health Accommodation Request Form on your USAC Gateway account. While USAC cannot guarantee services, they will do their best to accommodate your needs. By completing that form, USAC will be in contact with you regarding services they can/cannot provide.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Tours and Field Studies

During orientation, USAC will provide a city tour for all students. This will give you the opportunity to familiarize yourself with Chiang Mai.

USAC also provides all students with a half-day field trip to Doi Suthep and Bhubing Palace. Bhubing Palace is the royal winter residence in Chiang Mai where the royal family stays during seasonal visits. Wat Phra That Doi Suthep is located 9 miles outside of Chiang Mai and it is sacred to many Thai people. (Field trips included in your USAC fees may vary from semester to semester).

USAC will arrange an OPTIONAL Trekking tour that is a three-day adventure trek. You will hike, ride elephants, swim in waterfalls, ride bamboo rafts, and stay in a local homestay. This tour has no academic component and the student pays the additional cost to participate. This trek is physically demanding. USAC also offers a Hill Tribe Peoples & Cultures field study course that allows students an opportunity to supplement academic lectures about various hill tribe communities with regular field trips outside and within Chiang Mai Province. There is a supplemental fee for this field study that students are responsible for.

Volunteering in Chiang Mai

There are opportunities for students to volunteer in the local community at local orphanages, primary schools, schools for the blind and hearing impaired, teaching English to monks, etc. More information about volunteering will be provided at orientation on-site in Chiang Mai. If you would like for your volunteer experiences to count towards service learning, you will need to arrange that with the UW-Eau Claire Center for Service Learning (svlearn@uwec.edu).

If you are interested in an internship, see the Academics section above.

Getting Involved

There are numerous clubs on campus that USAC students are invited to partake in. Joining these clubs offers you another way to meet local Thai students.

There is a gym located on campus that students will have access to. Basketball,

volleyball, badminton, tennis, and ping-pong are some of the most popular games students play. There is also a popular park near campus that offers paved trails and outdoor exercise equipment.

Things to Do in the Community

Nimman Haemin Street is a popular area of Chiang Mai. There are plenty of restaurants and shops available and many students spend their evening here.

The night market is a sprawling tourist market with a carnival like atmosphere. You will be able to find trinkets and handmade crafts from wood, soap, honey, silver and silk. The markets can be very crowded so be sure to take care of your personal belongings.

Every Sunday night, a famous street in the city lights up with local vendors selling their crafts and food. Students enjoy exploring this weekly market and trying the food.

Thai people love to have a good time with friends and family but smoking and drinking in public is not as widely accepted as what you may be used to.

HOUSING

USAC Housing

USAC will arrange for you to live in the Uniloft Dormitory with other USAC students. You will pay your housing fees directly to USAC as they will be billed on your Gateway account. The apartments are within walking distance to campus and convenient to Chiang Mai airport. The apartments are fully furnished double rooms with air conditioning, hot and cold

water, small refrigerator, and high-speed Internet. You will also have access to a fitness center, swimming pool, various convenience stores, washers and dryers (although the dryers don't work well, so air drying is encouraged) and restaurants. The complex also has a front desk and 24-hour security services.

You will be given your housing assignment when you arrive.

Students staying for the academic year will be allowed to stay in their USAC housing between semesters. If you decide to stay in your housing, you will pay one month's rent directly to USAC. If you are in a shared room and your roommate leaves, you will be responsible for paying the single room rate for that month.

Please note that smoking laws are different in other countries. While every effort will be made to accommodate your preferences, it depends on availability and is not guaranteed.

Remember, when assessing the quality of the facilities available to you in Chiang Mai, you need to use Thai, not U.S., standards. Although USAC does its best to make sure all apartments are up to Thai standards, they may not have the same comforts as your U.S. housing.

What's Provided for your Room

You will have a double apartment with en-suite toilet and shower. A bed, desk, chair, air conditioning, refrigerator, one TV and overhead light are provided. Bed sheets, pillows, and blankets are provided. **Towels are not provided.** You may wish to bring

towels with you or purchase once on site. Your linens will be washed once every two months for no charge. If you would like additional cleanings, you can request those for 100 Thai Baht per cleaning.

The bathrooms generally have western-style toilets. Please note that outside of your accommodations, you may find non-flushing toilets, meaning toilets are flushed with a bucket of water. **You will need to provide your own toilet paper as well.**

Note that you are going to a tropical region. Walls are thinner (they don't need insulation) and insects are larger (they live year-round!) than they are in the Midwest. Cockroaches are common, as are other large insects. This part of life often requires some adjustment for students from colder climates! If you find large insects within your apartment, it doesn't necessarily mean your apartment is dirty, it is just a reality to living in a tropical environment.

Laundry

There is laundry on the ground floor that has coin-operated washing machines. It is also inexpensive to arrange a monthly laundry service. Students interested in this can contact the launderette directly to arrange this service, which is around 400-500 Thai Baht for 90 pieces of clothing/bedding/etc. Hanging your clothes to dry is the norm in Thailand. There is no access to dryers.

You should be aware that outside the university laundry is still done mostly by hand and clothes are line dried in Thailand,

although washing machines are becoming more common. Plan ahead when departing on your field trips.

MEALS

You will be responsible for your meals. Meals are very affordable and there are a number of restaurants and noodle shops near the campus catering to the student population. Food expenses are one of the cheapest parts of living in Thailand. Lunches served on campus in the cafeteria are around 60 cents.

The Uniloft Dormitory has a central, shared self-service kitchen that you can use. In addition, there is a coffee shop, convenience store and restaurant within the Uniloft complex.

Most locals don't like to cook but instead like to snack. Thailand is known for food being available 24 hours a day. Locals usually eat many little meals throughout the day. Thai food can also be spicier than what you are used to, so be careful when you are first discovering the new flavors.

If you are desperate for Western fast food, there are places such as KFC, Pizza Hut, McDonald's, etc., but don't be surprised if the prices are higher.

If you participate in the optional field trips, most meals are included.

COMMUNICATION

Information on accessing/forwarding your UW-Eau Claire email address, which you need to check while abroad, is in your Study Abroad Handbook.

Telephone

Students are HIGHLY encouraged to use a local Thai mobile phone network. SIM cards are cheap (usually 50-100 Baht) and sometimes the Chiang Mai International Airport even distributes free SIM cards at the baggage claim areas. There are three major mobile phone networks in Thailand: AIS, DTAC and True Move. AIS tends to have the strongest coverage, especially in rural areas of Thailand. True Move offers an "International SIM" with low prices for making overseas calls. All three networks have competitive prices and offer equal coverage in Chiang Mai. Customers can choose from various calling plans and all three networks offer pre-paid "Top Up" plans that do not require a contract. This allows you to "pay as you go" by topping up your phone with calling credit that can be purchased at any 7-11 or other such convenience store.

Your Thai Buddy will help you buy a phone during orientation, but basic mobile phones can be purchased all over Chiang Mai and range from as low as around 800 Baht to over 20,000 Baht if you want a smart phone like the newest iPhone. The ground floor of the Big C Extra department store is a good place to buy mobile phones and SIM cards.

If you want to use your mobile phone from your home country, be sure to check that it is not "locked" so that you can use it with a SIM card in Thailand.

Purchasing a basic phone in Thailand is easy, cheap, and, if you don't damage it, you can then sell it back for a discounted price when you leave.

Computers and Internet

Two usernames for Wi-Fi connection are provided for each room. Students can also use the free Wi-Fi in the study room. All university buildings and facilities have Wi-Fi. There is a computer lab near the USAC office that students have access to; it is open from 8:30am – 4:30pm and printing costs one Thai Baht per page. Internet speeds may be slower than what you are used to, so be patient.

Snail Mail/Mailing Address

Snail mail between the U.S. and Thailand generally takes 7-10 days (or more!). When you need to receive or send something in a hurry, you can use express mail (DHL) or a fax at a private telecommunications center (there are some near the university). Packages that are sent through airmail take approximately the same amount of time as letters to arrive. Be advised, however, that the package will probably be opened, and its contents examined by customs.

You are strongly encouraged to NOT ship personal items in packages. However, if you choose to have any personal items or gifts shipped, you must label the box "Used personal items—No commercial value" so you will not be taxed as if you are importing goods to be sold for a profit in Thailand.

CULTURE NOTES

Toilet Expectations

In Thailand you will find primarily eastern style toilets (more commonly known as squat toilets). You may find some places, like large shopping malls, that have western style toilets. It is also not common for toilet paper to be provided in public restrooms,

so you will want to carry travel-sized packets of tissues or toilet paper.

Kreng Jai

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

Some examples of this type of behavior include:

- Compliance to others' wishes or requests
- Reluctance to disturb or interrupt others
- Restraint with one's show of displeasure or anger (so not to cause discomfort to others)
- Avoidance of asserting one's own opinions or needs (i.e., deferring to others instead)
- Reluctance to ask questions when one has not understood someone
- Avoidance of causing others to lose face or to be embarrassed
- Reluctance to give instructive communications to superiors (by rank) or to peers who are older or have worked longer
- Avoidance of making corrections of another's mistakes, particularly if s/he is more senior

- Reluctance to evaluate colleagues' or superiors' performance
- When giving opinions, choosing what is an obviously disadvantaged position, as a measure of self-restraint
- Avoidance of the demand for one's right

This concept translates into some **specific classroom behavior** unfamiliar to U.S. students:

Thai **students stand up** when their teacher enters the room. This is a sign of respect, and your teachers will appreciate it if you follow this custom. Students are expected to pay full respect to their professors inside and outside the classroom. Professors are seen as a second parent to Thai students and regarded with high respect.

When you greet an Ajaan (teacher), either in or outside of class **you greet them with a "wai"**: you put your palms together, finger tips at about chin or mouth level (praying position). There is a social hierarchy in the wai and when you greet someone above you on that hierarchy, you nod your head to show respect.

Thai are fond of saying "mai pen rai" which means, "it's okay, no problem." It represents their easygoing demeanor and positive attitude. They are quick to forgive little mistakes, like dropping something or bumping into someone.

Hierarchy

Thailand is a hierarchical society. The idea that "all people are created equal" is a Western idea, not a Thai one (although this

is changing to some extent). This is pervasive and is quite difficult for many Westerners to accept. Women are not equal to men, poor people are not equal to rich people, younger people are not equal to older people, ethnic minorities are not equal to the ethnic majority, etc. This results in what Westerners might consider "discrimination," but it also provides status and respect to older people, etc. Although this worldview is being challenged by some in Thai society, it is something you should be aware of as you prepare to live in Thailand.

Thai people will ask you directly about your age, social status, education and religion. It is not considered rude or imposing, they are just simply trying to learn how to address you. Thai language has several levels of formality according to your social status and age. When Thai ask these questions, they are only trying to understand your social standing, so do not be offended.

Gender Relations in Thailand

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

Depending on the context, relationships between young men and women (even those in college) are more formal than here in the U.S. Public displays of affection, even holding hands, are frowned upon, but are

becoming more common by more "daring" young people. However, it is common to see people of the same sex holding hands as a sign of friendship.

Western women are stereotyped as being "easy," so you should be wary of Thai men who approach you. For men, be aware that there are many preconceptions about why Western men come to Thailand. In fact, a lot of Western men do come to Thailand on so-called "sex tours," and if you are alone with a Thai woman, even if she is from the university, it will make many Thai people assume she is a prostitute. This can cause considerable damage to her reputation, and her reputation is very important to her standing in society. It is always better to go out in groups to avoid embarrassment for all concerned.

Shaking hands with a friend or someone younger than you is becoming more common in Thai culture; however, shaking hands with an elder is never acceptable.

Respect for the Body

The head is the highest and most sacred part of the body. Therefore, you should not touch another person's head or shoulders, even if the person is a child. For similar reasons, you should not reach over people's heads to get things.

The feet are considered "lower" and less clean than the rest of the body. Never point at a person, a temple, monks, the Buddha, or objects with your feet, step over someone, put your feet up on coffee tables, other furniture, or carry your shoes at a high level (e.g., you should never tie your shoes to the outside of your backpack). When in

a temple, sit so that the soles of your feet point away from the altar.

Raising Your Voice

Thais are generally more soft-spoken and mild-mannered which often makes it easy for foreigners to be detected. When you are in public, you should keep your voice down and stay calm if you are in an argument. Raising your voice will cause you to lose face with others around you.

Wearing Shoes

Sandals are the most popular foot wear in Thailand because you will be taking your shoes off a lot. When entering homes, temples, some shops, some restaurants, etc. you may need to take your shoes off. The easiest way to determine if you need to remove your shoes is whether or not there is a large pile of shoes outside the door.

Royalty and Politics

The Royal Family is held in the highest regard. Speaking or acting against the Royal Family can result in deportation or jail. Pictures of the Royal Family must be treated with respect, and they are usually hung very high. Do not step on a coin or paper money, as this is disrespectful to the King (his picture is on both). Be sensitive when speaking about politics. Keep criticisms to yourself.

The Royal Anthem is played before the start of movies at the cinema, as well as before live music or performances. As soon as the anthem is started, people stand respectfully and foreigners are asked to follow along with this tradition.

Religion

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

Dining Experience

A common stereotype of Asia is that lots of people are vegetarians. While Thais do not eat large quantities of meat, they do add meat to almost all dishes (mostly pork, chicken, and seafood). Even stir-fried vegetables usually contain small pieces of meat. Some restaurants will prepare dishes without meat upon request.

Being flexible in your diet is a sign of acceptance and appreciation to your Thai hosts. Eating is more than just filling your stomach. In Thailand, sharing food is a social event. Refusing to try new foods or join in with others may be misunderstood or considered anti-social. Joining in is a way of "being with Thais."

Thai food always comes in shared dishes; be sure to take small amounts of each dish so there is enough to go around. Eating is a time to socialize, so take your time!

You will be given a fork and spoon unless you order a noodle dish, then you will receive chopsticks. Knives are extremely rare because your food will already be cut up. It is customary to hold your fork in your right hand and your spoon in your left. Don't put

the fork in your mouth, especially since you are going to be sharing dishes.

In most restaurants and households, you are NOT expected to eat everything on your plate. It may insult the chef and make it seem that you were not fed enough. It can also be a signal to bring more food. To avoid this, just leave a little food on your plate.

Tips are usually included in the bill, but if you prefer, you can leave 10% tip for good service. A nice tip is 20 Thai Bhat (under \$1US). There are no extra fees for eating in or taking out.

If you have dietary restrictions for religious (e.g., you do not eat pork) or medical reasons, Thai people may not fully understand, but will accept your explanation. Here is a good blog post that explains further about being a vegan/vegetarian/food allergies/etc. while in Thailand:

<http://www.paperplanesblog.com/dealing-with-dietary-restrictions-in-thailand/>

Animal Life

The tropics are also full of animal life that will be new to you. Many houses have ants and spiders in them, mosquitoes can be bothersome, small lizards live inside most buildings on the walls, and cockroaches can be found even in the most luxurious homes. In rural areas, you may encounter such things as mice, rats, lizards, and snakes, but usually they stay out of your way!

Elephants have always played a role in Thai history and are often a bucket list item for many visitors to Thailand. If you are

interested in interacting with elephants either in riding, a sanctuary or elsewhere, be sure to do your research on the company you are using. There are many view points on whether or not riding elephants is ethical so it is important to understand the questions being asked and make an informed decision. If you are unsure which company may be the best, talk with the on-site staff as they may have recommendations for you. If you do engage with elephants, always remember they are large animals and can spook easily. Be extremely careful when around them.

Thailand's Infrastructure

Thailand's infrastructure is not as developed as that of the United States. This is evident in a lack of infrastructure in some sectors or what appears as "uneven" development of infrastructure in others. Controls on pollution and pesticide are not as strong (or are not enforced), nor are policies on environmental protection. Stray dogs live on the streets and in and around market places.

Not every street has sidewalks and some streets have partially constructed ones. The wide range of choices you are used to regarding your food, reading material, recreation, and choices of medical care will not be available. Keep in mind, though, that it will be your experience of these kinds of conditions and others that will contribute to your understanding of the context in which the struggle for sustainable development is taking place.

Doing Without

In addition to adjusting to the conditions mentioned above, there are things you will have to give up to live in Thailand, and this may be difficult at first. Eventually, though, you may realize that you don't necessarily "need" what you thought you did. Not everyone misses the same things and different people react differently to the sacrifices they must make. For some people, not having their own car may prove frustrating since possibilities for travel will be limited. For others, it might be the unavailability of certain foods, or not being able to maintain a vegetarian diet.

Political Change in Thailand

On September 19, 2006, Thailand experienced a bloodless coup. A military group seized control of the Thai government and declared martial law. Business, stores, parks, hotels, and resorts were not affected and remained open. Many Thais were, in fact, in favor of the coup, giving water and flowers to soldiers. One UW-Eau Claire student studying in Thailand during the coup indicated that the university was closed one day and then things returned to normal. In October 2006, the group appointed a civilian Prime Minister and National Assembly as first steps in a planned return to a democratically elected government.

On December 31, 2006, bombs exploded at six different locations throughout Bangkok, including Bangkok's Victory Monument, various police traffic control booths, and in the parking lot of a shopping mall. These bombs killed three Thai citizens and injured over two dozen additional Thai citizens. Shortly after midnight on January 1, 2007,

two additional bombs exploded near the World Trade Center shopping mall on Rama 1 Road in Bangkok's main shopping district. Six foreign tourists and an unknown number of Thai citizens were injured in these bombings.

The bombings were limited to Bangkok. Chiang Mai and the popular beach resorts did not experience any bombings. It is not clear who was behind the bombings – Muslim separatists in the South or supporters of the prime minister ousted by the coup.

Since these bombings, there have been no further bombings in Bangkok. However, it is always advisable to exercise caution by paying attention to the local news, avoiding any large public gatherings, and exercising discretion when moving about Bangkok.

At the end of 2013 and the beginning of 2014, Thailand experienced another period of unrest, which resulted in the prime minister being removed. The Thai people saw the prime minister as highly corrupt and damaging to Thai democracy. On May 20, 2014, the Royal Thai Army declared martial law throughout Thailand, followed by a coup two days later, which removed the government and placed Prayuth Chan-ocha as the acting prime minister.

Under martial law, there is a nationwide ban on political gatherings, restrictions on media and a nighttime curfew. The curfew was lifted in June 2014 but it could always be reinstated. U.S. citizens may also notice a higher military presence (see the Consular information sheet at the end of this handbook for more information).

While protests have settled down, Thai people still worry there may be backlash from the former prime minister's following. While Chiang Mai was not the center for the recent protests, if you travel to Bangkok or other areas of Thailand, you are encouraged to avoid any political rallies or protests and stay up-to-date on the local happenings.

TRAVEL WHILE ABROAD

Before or after the program, you may want to take advantage of being in Thailand and travel around a bit. **You should not plan any weekend travel until you receive your schedule, as trips and activities are frequently planned on the weekend.**

Local Transportation

Tuk-tuks are motorized rickshaws, a three-wheeled motorcycle that are used for taxis. Riding in a tuk-tuk is a great way to see the city. Tuk-tuks are not metered so be sure to negotiate a price before entering. This can be very difficult if the driver doesn't speak English, so be sure to have the address written in Thai. Tuk tuks are also more utilized by tourists, so the overall price might be more expensive.

The most popular type of taxi is called "Song Taew" or "Red Taxi." They are available throughout the city and at the airport, bus, and train stations. You must negotiate a price before you ride. When hailing a taxi, it is important that you are on the correct side of the street. This shows the driver that you know where you are going and avoids them having to make a U-turn. Ask a local for directions before entering a cab; it can save you time and money.

Don't let a cab driver take you on a "scenic route," otherwise your cab ride will be much longer and more expensive than necessary. If the driver recommends a "better place" than the one that you wish to go to or if they pretend to not know where the main bus station or other famous sites are located, just get out and find another taxi. This is not unusual and it can happen to locals as well as foreigners.

Please remember that while enrolled in the program, you are not permitted to drive motorcycles, cars, or trucks. If you are seen driving a vehicle while a student on the program, your transcript will be withheld or you will be expelled.

Travel Outside of Chiang Mai

The program schedule is very busy, and required activities are often planned for evenings or weekends. If you wish to do extended travel (more than a weekend or two) outside of Chiang Mai, you will need to plan this either before or after the program.

Travel to Tsunami-Affected Areas in Southern Thailand

The southwestern coast of Thailand, or the Andaman Coast, was heavily damaged and experienced a great loss of life from the tsunami waves that struck Thailand and other areas of Southeast Asia on December 26, 2004. According the U.S. Department of State, the following areas of Thailand were affected: Phuket, Phi Island, Krabi, and Phang Nga. In general, most of the tourist hotels and destinations in this area have re-opened and returned to normal. If you would like to visit the tsunami-affected area, you should research the current conditions to see if the local infrastructure

has been restored enough to meet your needs. Most likely it has, but there may be some areas that still show effects from the tsunami.

Travel in Politically Turbulent Areas

Choose with care the routes on which you travel. Some border areas are dangerous. See the "Safety and Security" section of the [Consular Information Sheet](#).

Thai Border Crossing

Border closing and re-openings occur frequently, so if you are planning to enter/exit Thailand please do your research as you may not be able to re-enter Thailand in the event of a border closing. If you decide to cross into another country, you will also need to make sure you have the proper documents needed to enter that country and to re-enter Thailand.

In the past, there has been violence at some border crossings and while this cannot be predicted, we encourage you to do your research and determine what the best way to cross is. The official USAC program does not cross any borders. If you choose to cross the border, it is at your own risk.

Violence in Southern Thailand Area (near Malaysia)

The U.S. Department of State recommends that U.S. citizens avoid nonessential travel to the far south of Thailand: Narathiwat, Pattani, Yala, and Songkhla provinces, including the town of Hat Yai. This area has experienced almost daily incidents of criminally and politically motivated violence, including incidents attributed to armed local separatist/extremist groups. The U.S.

Embassy prohibits its personnel from traveling to the far south of Thailand.

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

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

- First, remember that it's probably not aimed at you and that as an international visitor, the situation does not welcome your participation.
- Lay low and stay inside.
- Contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate or other diplomatic representation (British, Canadian, French, etc.). Follow their instructions.

CONTACT NAMES & ADDRESSES: THAILAND

GENERAL UW-EAU CLAIRE & CISI CONTACT INFORMATION IS IN YOUR STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK.

USAC Chiang Mai

Resident Director: Chaidarun Tippawan (Jum)
2nd Floor, PSB 1203
Faculty of Political Science & Public Admin
Chiang Mai University
Chiang Mai, Thailand, 50200
Tel: (66) 81-620-6609
Email: chaidarun.tippawan@usac.edu

USAC Central Office (US)

Sydney Davis
Sydney.davis@usac.edu
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 North Virginia St.
Reno, NV 89557
1-775-682-5893

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Center for International Education

Jenna Krosch
Study Abroad Coordinator
kroschjm@uwec.edu

3 Schofield Hall
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
Eau Claire, WI 54702
Phone: (715) 836-4411
Fax: (715) 836-4948

Thai Consulate in the U.S.

Consulate General of Thailand
700 North Rush Street
Chicago, IL 60611
Phone: (312) 664-3129
Fax: (312) 664-3230
Thai Consulate:
<http://www.thaiconsulatechicago.org/>

U.S. Consulate in Thailand

Consulate General of the United States
387 Wichayanond Road
Chiang Mai 50300
THAILAND
Telephone (from inside Thailand) 053-107-777
Telephone (from outside Thailand) 66-053-107-777

Fax (from inside Thailand) 66-53 252-633,
Fax (from outside Thailand) 66 53 252-633

After-Hours Duty Phone only to be use in
emergencies:

011 (66) 81-881-1878 (US)
66-81-881-1878 in Thailand

Email: acschn@state.gov
<http://bangkok.usembassy.gov>

Note: If calling from within Thailand, drop "66" and
add a 0 at the beginning of the number, e.g. 053-
851-478

WEB RESOURCES FOR THAILAND

City
Lonely Planet: https://www.lonelyplanet.com/thailand/chiang-mai-province/chiang-mai
Visit Chiang Mai: http://www.visitchiangmai.com.au
Culture
The Bangkok Post: http://www.bangkokpost.com/
Hmong Studies Journal: http://www.hmongstudies.org/
Paper Planes Blog: http://www.paperplanesblog.com/blog/
Learn to Speak Thai: http://www.thai-language.com OR http://www.iwillteachyoulanguage.com/learn-to-speak-thai/
Country
The Lonely Planet-Chiang Mai: http://www.lonelyplanet.com/thailand
Gary Yia Lee Website: http://www.garyyiale.com
Nomadic Matt Travel Blog: http://www.nomadicmatt.com/travel-guides/thailand-travel-tips/

UW-EAU CLAIRE



CENTER FOR
INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION

Updated 12/13/18 jmk