

Topics in World Politics 790:369:01
Rutgers in Thailand: Summer Tsunami Rebuilding Program

Prof. D. Michael Shafer
Center for Global Security and Democracy
Don Curry, Field Coordinator
Elexis Silverman, Field Coordinator

Hickman 311, 932-9358
mshafer@rci.rutgers.edu
donjcurry@yahoo.com
elexisilver@hotmail.com

Project emergency cell phone: 011-664-858-4462

All of you are familiar with the terrible images of the destruction wrought by the tsunami and all of you are aware of the massive outpouring of aid from around the world to help the devastated communities. Today the worst of the mess has been cleaned up and the tourists are beginning to return to the hotels of Phuket, bringing badly needed jobs and money back to the island and the communities of the nearby coast. But seventy five miles north beyond the fringes of the tourism industry, the poor fishing villages are still in ruins and desperately in need of help. Rebuilding the physical infrastructure of the coast will take another year or two, constructing viable economic alternatives for the majority will take much longer and dealing with the psychological trauma of losing 10,000+ family members, friends and neighbors in an instant may take decades.

This course engages you directly in Thailand's healing process and offers you a unique experiential learning opportunity. Over the course of two months you will combine classroom lectures by academic experts and senior government officials with your own close observation of the tsunami-affected zone, active data collection as part of a major scientific survey project, and hands-on engagement with NGOs, kids and families.

Course Requirements

There are (types) of assignments for this course, as well as two performance components to your grade:

- Attendance: You are required to be present (on time) for both class and work Monday through Friday. Failure to attend and/or lateness to three work days/classes will cost you one grade. (Being late by more than one half hour is the equivalent of failure to attend). The Field Coordinators will take attendance.
- Site Supervisor Evaluation: At the end of the project, your site supervisor will be asked to provide an assessment of your performance on the job. This assessment will be taken into account in your final grade.
- Daily observation log: Monday through Friday you will submit an observation log to the Field Coordinators in which you record what you did on site and your observations about the project and related issues. Approximate length: 200-250 words. **NB:** We are looking for intelligent, reflective observation and it is the quality, not the quantity of your observations that will be graded. **AND** note: logs will be sent to Professor Shafer weekly, so those that are not done will not be graded at all.
- Research paper: By the first day of fall classes, you will submit to Professor Shafer a 15 page paper (not including photos, data, maps, graphics) in which you describe and analyze the project on which you worked and its place in the post-tsunami context.
- Public presentation: In mid-September, each of you will be responsible for making a 5

minute presentation of your paper to an evening program about Rutgers in Thailand at the Rutgers Students Center. This presentation might involve a PowerPoint, slides, video, handouts, etc. and must also include a poster presentation of your main findings (which may also feature photos, etc.).

Grading

- Daily observation logs: 40%
- Research paper: 30%
- Public presentation: 30%

Class Schedule

NB: After the first week all dates are tentative depending upon scheduling of both professor's visits and opportunities that present themselves for special field trips and project requirements. All classes will occur, but when exactly will just depend.

Monday June 20

Tsunami zone orientation: This all day guided tour of the tsunami affected areas will provide you with the observational basis from which to understand the materials presented in all of the other seminars. You will, for example, study naval maps to understand the varying water depths and bottom forms and their impacts on the energy with which the wave struck. You will study the pre-tsunami condition of the mangroves and beach forests as a result of human development and the resulting consequences of different patterns of development on the depth of the wave's penetration, the extent of damage and the residual effects. You will observe the type, location and rate of reconstruction. Professor: Dr. Charlchai Tanavud, Faculty of Natural Resources

Tuesday June 21

Project survey orientation: The preschools of the Andaman coast lie in a bureaucratic no man's land and as a result have received essentially no attention from either government or international or nongovernmental organizations except where these agencies have engaged in wholesale village relocation. Consequently very little is known about the true nature of the problem. Your job this summer will be to conduct the first systematic and comprehensive survey of tsunami damage to the preschools of the six provinces that comprise the Andaman coast of Thailand. This half day seminar will begin with a briefing on the role that the preschools played in the lives of the poor and the consequences for redevelopment of the lack of preschool facilities for the children of the poor. In the second half of the seminar, you will review the survey instrument itself and learn about survey technique—and the peculiarities of survey research in Thailand. Professor: Dr. Amporn Sormprasit, Director of the PSU Preschools Project

Wed. & Thursday June 22-23

Trial runs with the survey: You will spend just three hours conducting a single survey and then return to base camp to discuss the experience and your data with Dr. Amporn

Thursday June 30

The science of tsunamis: This all day class will be spent (we hope) on the PSU lab ship learning about the geophysics, seismology, oceanography and marine science of the tsunami. You will learn about how tsunamis occur, their energy, speed and impact, their consequences for Thailand's magnificent coral reef system and the fisheries dependent upon it. Professor: Dr. Penjai Sompongchaiyakul, Associate Dean for Academic and Research, Faculty of Environmental Management

Thursday July 7

The tsunami's impact on the marine and coastal ecosystem: This half day class will be taught in the field and will examine the impact of the tsunami on the complex interactions of sea and shore--the nutrient cycle that connects rainfall, human activities from farming to construction and tourism, ground water, the beach forest and mangroves to the offshore waters, sediments, spawning grounds, fish and bird populations and back to people. Professor: Dr. Noparat Bamroongruga, Director, Wetland Research Center

Thursday July 21

Damage and response - the Government of Thailand confronts national disaster: This all day class will take place in two parts. In the morning, you will have a seminar with the Dean of Management Sciences who will explain the working of the Thai government at the national, regional and local levels, provide an overview of the extent of the loss of life, destruction of public facilities and infrastructure, disruption of services and damage to private property, and review the government's response both to the immediate emergency and to the demands of recovery. In the afternoon, you will meet with at least one of the provincial governors, members of governors' staffs, and other public officials to hear from them about the government's response and plans for the future. Professor: Dr. Bussabong Chaijaroenwatana, Dean, Faculty of Management Sciences; Public officials: TBA

Thursday July 28

International assistance and managing the international donors: International aid has played a critical part in the relief and recovery effort and will be essential in the future, but the presence of large numbers of foreign agencies with agendas that are not always identical to the national agenda also pose serious issues of sovereignty and management. In the first half of this all day class, you will have a seminar with a professor of public administration who will introduce you to the many donors who have played a role in Thailand, review the amounts and types of aid they have provided, assess their relations with the GoT and discuss the long-term relationship that will have to be maintained. In the afternoon, you will meet with Thai government officials responsible for managing the international donor agencies and with representatives of the aid agencies themselves such as USAID, UNDP, Save the Children and others. Professor: To be coordinated by Dr. Bussabong Chaijaroenwatana, Dean, Faculty of Management Sciences; NGO participants: TBA

Thursday August 4

Enduring psychological legacy: As you will well know by this time from your work, those most affected by the tsunami are the children and perhaps the most daunting challenge confronting Thailand is that of healing the psychological wounds of tens of thousands of young survivors. As the only psychiatric nursing program in Thailand and the first team of nurses to arrive on December 26, the PSU Faculty of Nursing team is leading the way in a unique,

unprecedented effort to develop protocols for dealing with "mass casualties" of a psychological kind and to intervene now in order to try to save Thailand from the huge human, social and economic costs of dealing with widespread PTSD for decades into the future. In this half day seminar, you will meet with members of the Faculty of Nursing research team to get a crash course in childhood PTSD and then to hear about their initial findings. Presentation coordinator: TBA

Thursday August 11

Research project wrap up: Final review of your findings with Dr. Amporn and her team, planning for how the data will be written up and presented at Rutgers, suggestions about additional questions for further research and policy proposals that follow from your data.