

EXPLORING SOCIAL CHANGE AND SOCIAL WORK IN CONTEMPORARY VIETNAM

OVERVIEW

- Credits:** 3 (students enrolled in SW 285/180)
- Time:** July 1 – July 23, 2012
- Location:** Hanoi – Hue – Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam)
- Faculty:** Huong Nguyen and Tuan Tran (School of Social Work)
- Host:** School of Social Work (San Jose State University)
- Cost:** About US\$2900, not including air ticket (ranges between US\$1100 – 1500 depending on how far ahead you buy the ticket)
- Syllabus:** Contact the faculty for a copy of the syllabus with detailed activities of each day.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the three decades since the end of the Vietnam War (1975), Vietnam has gone through fundamental political, economic, and social transformations. Specifically, facing high poverty rate in the 1980s, Vietnam decided to abandon a subsidy economy in favor of the market economy and at the same time opened the door to the Western world. Following the normalization of its relationship with the United States (1995) and further integration into the global world, Vietnam enjoyed rapid economic development. Currently the second fastest developing country in the world (after China), Vietnam is an exciting society where traditions and reforms, the newly imported Western values and the old Confucian beliefs, and the older and younger generations constantly negotiate, define and redefine each other. All this, in addition to the breathtaking landscape and friendly people, makes Vietnam an exciting site to observe the daily working of globalization, change, and history. For those who are concerned with social work, Vietnam is an ideal learning site since social work profession and social work education is still in its infancy in the country.

This course, then, aims at introducing students to contemporary Vietnam: its social change, problems, and the situation of social work, all in the context of globalization and in comparison and contrast to the US and other developing countries. Weaving into the study of these foci, the course will also introduce students to the cultural and ecological diversity of Vietnam.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the trip in Vietnam, the students should:

- Have better understanding of the history and culture of Vietnam and its people, particularly the embedded values that direct Vietnamese people's thoughts and behaviors, so that they can develop culturally competent social work practice skills, interventions and evaluations.
- Have better understanding of the political, economic, and social changes that are taking place in Vietnam and the social problems associated with these changes, so that they can evaluate the effects that such changes and problems have on the lives of marginalized and disenfranchised populations.
- Have better understanding of the social service system and the status of the social work profession in Vietnam – and connect it with the system in the US; so that they can become more culturally sensitive in working with social work clients.

- Have better perspective about the impact of globalization, particularly Americanization, in other parts of the world, thus developing a critical thinking about the interconnection between global and national forces on lives of marginalized and disenfranchised populations.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROGRAM

- Visiting six leading universities in Hanoi, Hue, and Ho Chi Minh City: morning lectures and discussions with Vietnamese faculty and students on social issues and social work.
- Visiting multiple social service agencies in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City to witness social work in action in Vietnam and interact with Vietnamese people.
- One-day tour to Ha Long Bay.
- One-day tour to the Mekong delta (boarding a canoe running along the river, see the floating market, enjoy tropical fruit gardens, ride horse carriages, etc.)
- One-day tour to the Cao Dai Temple and the eastern region of the South.
- In Hanoi: Temple of Literature, museums, night market, water puppet show, Hanoi Opera House, ancient pagodas outside the city, the rural village, and other cultural sites.
- In Hue: the citadel, tombs of previous kings of Vietnam, listening to traditional folk songs on the Perfume river.
- One-day tour to Da Nang City and Lang Co Beach.
- Tour in Ho Chi Minh City: the Independence Palace, Ben Thanh market, China town, etc.
- Visiting and dinner with Vietnamese families (if possible).

ASSIGNMENTS

Students will take the class on a Credit/No Credit basis or grade basis. Assignments for the course include:

Journal (2 x 20 points each)	40 points	A: 90-100
Reflection paper	40 points	B: 80-89
Class participation	20 points	C: 70-79
Total	100 points	D: 60-69
Credit: 80 points and above		F: < 60 points

No Credit: 0-79 points

Journal: Students should keep a daily journal/log during the trip where they take notes of the activities and impressions or critical thoughts that they have about these activities. In particular, students are expected to react to classroom lectures, field visits, discussions, or readings assigned to them. They can combine readings with personal thoughts and reactions. Students will turn in the journal twice during the trip: one in the middle of the trip, and one near the end of the trip.

Reflection paper: At the end of the trip, each student will write a reflection paper (8-10 pages, double-spaced) in which they can choose to critically analyze (1) a particular issue in social work, social policies, or social problems that they learn through the trip, or (2) cultural lessons they learn through the trip. In the paper, students are expected to use academic sources to support their arguments and should not rely only on personal experiences. Students will submit this paper within two weeks after the last day of the trip. Papers must conform to APA standards, 5th edition, for writing, citation, and documentation.

Participation: Attending lectures, field trips, site visits, group discussion, wrap-up meetings at the end of the day, etc. Make an effort to be a helpful member of the group, so that everyone has a pleasant and rich cultural experience in a foreign country.

Eligibility Requirements

The course is open for graduate and undergraduate students at SJSU and other universities as well. If you want to bring family members or friends, talk to the faculty.

No prior knowledge of Vietnamese language is required.

Accommodation, Local Transportation, Safety, Visas, and Disabilities

Vietnam is a relatively safe and friendly country. However, students are still required to buy basic health insurance before departure. Once in Vietnam, they will stay in safe hotels (most likely 3-star hotels) and will be instructed about local food, traffic, rules, and rituals. They will also be instructed on how to interact with local people and conduct their own explorations during free hours. In addition, the Embassy and Consulates of the US are located in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City and can provide additional assistance if needed.

Except for students who have Vietnamese citizenship, all other students will need a visa to enter Vietnam. They can directly apply for a visa through the General Consulates of Vietnam in San Francisco (or Washington D.C.) or work with travel agencies who can apply for them with a fee (some travel agencies will waive visa fees if you buy air ticket from them). Obtaining a visa to enter Vietnam is generally not difficult, especially when the purpose of entrance is educational.

The faculty can also help you with obtaining visa. Please talk to the faculty if you need help.

Students will arrange their own travel to Hanoi, Vietnam. Once the group meet in Hanoi, the activities during the trip will be conducted in a group, led by the faculty.

Disabilities:

If you have questions about traveling to Vietnam or need course adaptations and/or special accommodations because of a disability, please talk to the faculty. Refer also the following website on traveling abroad for people with disabilities:

<http://www.miusa.org/ncde/goingabroad>

Costs

Estimated cost per student is US\$2900. This cost includes tuition, program fees, hotel, meals, transportation within Vietnam, and excursion fees within Vietnam. The cost does NOT include air ticket between the US and Vietnam nor personal expenses of the students (i.e. if you want to go out on your own, personal shopping, etc.). Note that the cost might change, depending on local conditions at the time of the trip (for example: inflation rate, unexpected weather conditions that push up transportation costs inside the country)

About air ticket: Air fare changes and goes up in the summer. The earlier you book the ticket, the better. If you need more information, please contact the faculty.

Application Information

1. **Deadline:** We accept application around the year. However, we encourage students to make early plan and talk to the faculty as soon as possible. Planning for an abroad trip often takes time.

Early deadline (preferred): December 15, 2011.

Final deadline: March 1, 2012

If you miss the deadline, talk to the faculty. We might still be able to accommodate applications at last minutes.

2. **Application procedures:**

The Faculty-Led Program Application found at:

(http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/studyabroad/forms/flp_student_application.pdf)

You can fill in the application online, save the document as “LastName.FirstName.Country” (i.e. Smith.John.Vietnam) and email it to the following emails with “FLP Student Application” as the subject line: huong.nguyen@sjsu.edu, tranvtu@yahoo.com, kati.bell@sjsu.edu.

Contact Information

If you have any questions, please contact the faculty at:

Huong Nguyen, PhD

Research Assistant Professor

School of Social Work

San Jose State University

One Washington Square

San Jose, CA 95192

Email: huong.nguyen@sjsu.edu

Phone: (408) 924-5811

Fax: 408-924-5892

Office: WSQ 217H

Tuan Tran, MSW, LCSW

Adjunct Faculty

School of Social Work

San Jose State University

One Washington Square

San Jose, CA 95192

Email: tranvtu@yahoo.com

Office: WSQ 217P

More information on the program

Check out a blog post of Stan Olszewski about the trip to Vietnam in summer 2011:

<http://blogs.sjsu.edu/today/2011/students-finds-inspiration-during-vietnam-social-work-trip/>

Also some video clips of the summer-2011 group:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gkj2x9zsrk&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INdYWCDTbs8&feature=youtu.be&hd=1>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRGVQoBiinI&feature=related>