Personal information

Name: Betty Lazis  
Major: AEM  
Name of host university: Kasetsart University  
Period/Time of Exchange: Spring 2017  
Address of blog if you had one: n/a

Practical Advice

Visa (did you need one, how did you apply, how long did it take to get the visa)

You need to get an education visa – there is an option between single entry and multiple entry, each one having a different price. I applied through the Thai Consulate in NYC and my visa was ready in 2 business days. Make sure to check the requirements of the consulate you are applying in because each one has a different list of requirements. If you get the single-entry visa, then you must pay each time you re-enter Thailand after leaving the country. With the multiple entry visa you do not have pay upon re-entry but you must leave the country every 90 days or else you are considered overstaying your visa.

Housing (Did your host university arrange housing? If not, how did you find it and was it difficult to arrange? How much did you pay in rent?)

There are dorms available on campus but I chose to live in an off-campus apartment. The school sent me a list of apartment complexes in which KU international students usually stay. I arranged the apartment after arriving in Thailand and coming to look at the apartment. I paid 9,000 THB per month for a studio with half a kitchen; I also had a pool and gym. There were other exchange students who lived on my floor and nearby. This was almost the cheapest option that I found from the recommendations.

Arrival (Immigration, was there an Orientation program, Buddy program?)

The immigration process was not difficult – all you need is the visa in your passport. There was a day of orientation on the Friday before the first day of classes. We were able to get buddies there and had a second chance at another orientation program that the Economics department set up.

Academics

The University (tell us more about the campus, the International Office, Facilities, Social activities)

The campus is relatively big with several facilities such as a gym and pool – we got a tour during orientation. There are several canteens (dining halls) across campus; most people buy lunch and breakfast on campus because it is cheap and convenient. The International Office is helpful with some questions but paperwork takes a very long time, especially visa related paperwork. There are no social activities on campus from what I saw, and if there were then they were not marketed towards exchange students.

Courses (How did you enroll in classes, could you pre-enroll? What classes did you take? How were the classes graded (exams, presentations, assignments)?)

You can enroll in classes during the first two weeks of classes. They give you a piece of paper on which you write down the course code and name, and you need to collect signatures from the professor of each of the classes that you want to take. I was able to take a class in the Faculty of Business as well and this paper signing method of course enroll applied there too. Many classes have more than one professor throughout the semester. There is no pre-enroll and every class on the roster is not offered each semester. The classes that I took had midterms and finals (not every class had both, or either), presentations, and assignments throughout the semester. Attendance was mandatory for some classes but rarely taken.
I took: (1) Thai Conversation in Everyday Life; (2) Strategic Marketing Planning; (3) Economics Research Methods for Entrepreneurship; (4) Agri-enterprise Management Techniques; (5) Health Service Economics

The marketing class was in the Faculty of Business while the others are EEBA classes. You can take both EEBA and BEcon classes easily while I had to get special approval to take the marketing class because it was in another faculty; the approval process was simple and seamless on my end after I informed someone in the EEBA office that I wanted, and needed, to take that class.

**Difference between studying at Cornell and at your host university** (how were the courses organized, how was the level, how approachable were the lecturers)

The organization of the classes was very similar to the way it is at Cornell in that we had homework, assignments, and exams throughout the semester. The difference is that the assignments were all much smaller and there were fewer of them. The courses were easier than they are at Cornell and did not require as much work. Most of the lecturers were especially interested in speaking with the exchange students and offered additional help to anyone that needed it. Some went out of their way to come to campus during additional hours before an exam but mainly they said to email them with questions. Not all professors were quick to email back, if they replied at all. The Economics classes were very much organized around group work and group assignments. A big difference in studying in Thailand is student behavior in a classroom – many came very late (professors did as well), did not show to class at all or talked amongst themselves.

**Life Abroad**

**Language** (Was a language course offered at the university? Did you need the foreign language to manage your daily life or could you communicate in English?)

Yes, there is a Thai language class that is offered. Knowing the foreign language was not mandatory but definitely helped in order to get around and purchase food. Being that the university is not in a touristy area and I did not live in a touristy neighborhood, the locals spoke very little, if any, English. Knowing some basic Thai helped tremendously with ordering food; people in general, especially taxis, treated you better and didn’t try to rip you off as much if you stated what you wanted in Thai instead of English.

**Health and Safety** (What advice do you have for future students regarding their health and safety? What resources were available for you?)

I felt very safe most the time that I was there. In terms of health – there was a free health clinic on campus but I would only recommend going there with basic illnesses such as cold/flu. If you have something serious, I suggest going to an international hospital – it is a lot more expensive (in Thai standards) but the service is much better and they have very new technology. Get all the CDC recommended vaccines in a timely manner before arriving. You can purchase most medicines in Thailand, and probably find them over the counter in a 7/11 so it is not necessary to come with everything.

**Overall exchange experience** (anything you would like future exchange students to know about your study abroad semester)

For EEBA, all of the class related updates are posted on their Facebook page. Make sure to become friends with them right away as classes are often cancelled and make up classes are schedule to replace them.

Download the LINE app – that is what is used in Thailand and some other countries for text message purposes. Make sure to know at least one Thai person in each of your classes to keep you updated and sometimes professors only tell them information or they find things out from their friends. This information is not always passed on to the international students in an official way.

**Additional Tips for future students**

**Packing** (What did you not bring that you wish you had? What items do you recommend not bringing?)

Make sure to bring any kind of cosmetic products that you will need, including sunscreen and lotions. Most of these products are more expensive there and you should be very careful because a majority are whitening. Everything else can be purchased there – only bring a few outfits because it is very cheap to buy everything you need there. You will most likely still be buying lots of clothes and souvenirs there, so it’s better to come with a lot or room left in your suitcase. There are a lot of malls and markets, especially in Bangkok,
where you can buy almost everything that you will need – always bargain at the markets!

**Anything else that students should be aware when studying at your host location**

- **Taxis must always turn on their meters** – they might try quoting you a price but it is inflated. If the taxi doesn’t know the address you want them to go to, offer to navigate them using your Google Maps and show them where to turn with your hands.
- **Carry your home address written in Thai** if you don’t know how to say it in Thai because many taxi/bus drivers do not understand, and cannot read, English.
- **Book your trips within and outside Thailand** once you get there so you can coordinate with others. I highly recommend bringing a hiking backpack that you can travel with for a weekend or even a week or two at a time; you can purchase a cheap knock off there as well. Suitcases are not convenient to roll around and most people bring backpacks.