

Ignatian learning in Emerging Southeast Asia: Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand

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Solidarity is learned through “contact” rather than through “concepts.”
Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., *Santa Clara University, 2000*

The purpose of this presentation is (1) to introduce and to discuss a course that requires travel to and empathic field study in Southeast Asia – typically, Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand – and (2) to invite faculty and students from various Jesuit Business Schools to participate in the course.

The course, MARK 561, “Comparative Marketing and Consumer Behavior in Emerging Southeast Asia,” was conceived from and remains deeply intertwined with 35 years of my field research in devastated, recovering and emerging economies. The prototype was first offered at Columbia University in 1994; since 2010, the course has been offered at Loyola University Chicago’s Quinlan School of Business, sometimes collaboratively with other institutions. The field study is usually 10-14 days in January, but has been administered in March and May as well.

The primary objectives of MARK 561, are: (1) to introduce students to the interactive concepts of marketing, political economy, and culture; and their dynamic interactions with consumer behavior, (2) to enable students to understand cultural, political, legal and economic issues and appropriate business practices at corporate, national, transnational and global levels, (3) to provide insights on effective marketing and management decision making in unfamiliar or cross-cultural settings, particularly with respect to distinct Southeast Asian contexts and consumption dynamics in them, (4) to give students unique experiences with cultural immersion in some of the most compelling emerging markets in the world, (5) to inspire students to use their business toolkits to constructively engage the people, communities, and countries in devastated/distressed/emerging Southeast Asia, as well as distressed and underserved people/communities in their home country. These objectives will be achieved largely via *Immersion, Engagement, Discernment, Reflection, and Transformation*.

As readers might conclude from the preceding paragraph, MARK 561 draws heavily from Jesuit values – as evinced, for example, in *Laudato Si’* and *Fratelli Tutti* – and is intended to actualize Ignatian Pedagogy. The course presents tangible, empathic and constructive engagement with people, cultures and related histories, places, governments, businesses and ecologies about which most students are unaware and thus do not understand or appreciate. Moreover, students (and many faculty) accordingly do not understand both the opportunities and

obligations to constructively engage the region and its people in ways that enhance understanding and cooperation, and ultimately effect sustainable peace, prosperity and well-being.

The course is officially offered as part of the Marketing Curriculum for graduate students in the Quinlan School of Business, however, it is also popular among students with concentrations in Management, Operations and Supply Chains, Information Systems, Finance, and International Business. Students from other Colleges and Schools of Loyola University Chicago – e.g., Stritch School of Medicine, College of Arts and Sciences (Political Science) have also been permitted to enroll. Recently, a few exemplary undergraduate students have been permitted to participate via MARK 365 , “Supervised Independent Study,” and following an application and successful interview.

It is hoped that students and faculty from other Jesuit Business Schools will want to explore ways to participate in what has proven to be a truly transformative and life-shaping course/experience.

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