



Summer School in Southeast Asia. The New Orientalism: Understanding the paradoxes of mass tourism in Southeast Asia

June 21 to July 4, 2026 Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Professor in charge and organizer: Dominique Caouette, Political Science, UdeM
Co-organizers: Dr. Realisa Masardi and Prof. Pujo Semedi Hargo Yuwono, Department of Anthropology, Gadjah Mada University.

Description

The fourth edition of the Southeast Asia summer school organized as part of the seminar "Political Issues in Southeast Asia (POL6615)" will focus on the rise and consequences of mass tourism in Southeast Asia. Entitled "The New Orientalism: Understanding the Paradoxes of Mass Tourism in Southeast Asia," the off campus program will examine the case of Indonesia in particular. It will be co-organized with the Department of Anthropology at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta from June 22 to July 4, 2026. Rooted in the field of critical tourism studies, the summer school will enable 20 students from Canada and 20 students from Southeast Asia to study the paradoxical effects of mass tourism in Southeast Asia. Through lectures on this issue given by various specialists from the region and a participatory observation stay, students will be encouraged to reflect on the contradictory processes of generating income and cultural discoveries versus the commodification of culture and the fabrication of "authenticity."

Three pre-departure meetings will be organized at UdeM before departure to ensure a shared knowledge base on Southeast Asia, Indonesia, and Yogyakarta. One of these training sessions will emphasize the importance of an ethical approach that is sensitive to cultural differences.



Objective

The objectives of this off-site training course are to understand and analyze the contradictory processes created by the new tourist boom in Southeast Asia, where, to borrow Edward Said's expression, a form of new Orientalism can be observed. This Orientalism manifests itself in ambiguous ways. On the one hand, mass tourism creates wealth and cultural exchange, while on the other we see the commodification of culture, the destruction of local ecosystems, the rise and/or expansion of sex tourism, and the construction of an imagined authenticity. Furthermore, control and concentration of profits remain largely in the hands of large operators, to the detriment of local communities.

By the end of the summer school, students will have acquired a detailed and nuanced understanding of the paradoxes embodied by the rise of mass tourism in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia. In addition, the summer school will have enabled students to develop cross-disciplinary skills in: i) writing and oral presentation; ii) field research methodology; iii) intercultural collaboration; and iv) the ability to reflect on their own position as emerging researchers.

The off-campus summer school will be organized around different learning methods. First, various specialists from the region will present and discuss different theoretical approaches and critical perspectives related to contemporary mass tourism studies. Then, other researchers will share the results of their field research, highlighting the various contradictory processes generated by this form of tourism. After that, participants will work in small teams (made up of two students from Quebec and two from Southeast Asia) on a short research trip in the form of participant observation in the city of Yogyakarta, a major tourist destination renowned for its cultural and ecological heritage. Following this trip, students will present their observations and analyses to other participants and resource persons and produce a research report. Finally, each student will be responsible for writing a journal of observations and personal reflections on their experience and positionality as a Western or Southeast Asian researcher.



Schedule

Day 0 (June 21): Optional activity – Campus tour, group activity, and welcome dinner

Day 1 (June 22): Forum on "Cultural Diplomacy and Creative Enterprises": Day 1 (June 23): Opening remarks: Introduction of participants; Presentation of the syllabus and summer school schedule; Lunch; Session 1: Learning in a multicultural context: challenges, cultural sensitivity, and presentation of the code of ethics and conduct; Session 2: Opening lecture: "The challenges and paradoxes of cultural tourism in Yogyakarta"

Day 2 (June 24): Module 1: Orientalism and the conception of the Asian other: This first module will consist of presentations by guest speakers on cultural approaches inspired by Edward Said's work on Orientalism. The dimensions of reflexivity and positionality will also be addressed.

Day 3-4 (June 25-26): Module 2: Critical studies of tourism. Various specialists in tourism studies will discuss the emergence of mass tourism and the emergence of Southeast Asia as a prime destination. Discussions will focus on the various conceptual tools for understanding and studying the paradoxes of this type of tourism.

Day 5 (June 27): Module 3: Research methodologies applied to the study of tourism: Presentation of the different research methodologies that can be used to analyze cultural tourism and mass tourism.

Day 6 (June 28): Rest day – Sightseeing – observations

Day 7 (June 29): Module 3: Morning: The various research teams will conduct a short pre-field research project. Afternoon: The teams will prepare a short ten-minute presentation on the discoveries and lessons learned from the pre-field research project. Each team will receive feedback from the summer school co organizers and researchers specializing in tourism or cultural studies in Indonesia. Each team will then develop a detailed plan for the research trip, which will take place from the afternoon of June 29 to July 2.



Day 11 (July 3): Module 5. In the morning, each team will prepare a 20-minute presentation (with visual aids) on the results of their research trip. Afternoon: These presentations to all participants will be followed by a discussion with a panel of professors from Gadjah Mada University and a question-and answer session with the other participants.

Day 12 (July 4): Module 5 (continued): Morning: End of research trip presentations; Afternoon: The final session of the summer school will be an opportunity to review and evaluate the experience and the summer school, followed by a short ceremony to award certificates of participation. In the evening, a festive dinner will close the 2026 summer school.

Eligibility

This course welcomes South East Asian graduate students, advanced undergraduates, and young academics with an interest in Mass tourism in South East Asia. A **total of 20 seats** are available for application. Successful candidates will join a group of 20 participants from Canada. Indonesian students are encouraged to apply.

Costs and Benefits

Tuition fees for Asian participants will be waived as well as following travel subsidies:

- 250 CAD for Southeast Asian Students.
- 150 CAD for Indonesian students who are outside Java island.
- 125 CAD for Indonesian students who are based in Java.

However, they are responsible for their accommodation costs during the program. While lunch meals and refreshments during the Summer School will be provided.



Application

To apply for the Summer School, please fill out the application form via the link provided below **by March 30th, 2026**

Application form link: <http://ugm.id/TourismSummerCourse26>