

PROGRAMS, 2025-2026

NẾM THỦ VIỆT NAM: CHƯƠNG TRÌNH, 2025 - 2026

TASTE VIETNAM

AN ADVENTURE IN CRITICAL FOOD STUDIES

WINTER (J-TERM)

DEC 27, 2025 - JAN 17, 2026

3 WEEKS | 2 COURSES

10 CREDITS

SUMMER 2026

MAY 30, 2026 - JUN 27, 2026

4 WEEKS | 3 COURSES

15 CREDITS



AN ADVENTURE
IN CRITICAL 2026
FOOD STUDIES

FIELD VISITS:

Experience rice paddies, floating markets, and seafood docks firsthand.

EXPLORE SUSTAINABLE FOOD FUTURES:

Work with Vietnamese experts on sustainability challenges.

HANDS-ON FIELD RESEARCH:

Practice anthropological methods and publish field notes.

ALL-INCLUSIVE SUPPORT & HOUSING:

Comfortable accommodation, local transport, and 24/7 assistance provided.



REGISTER NOW

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WHY Choose Vietnam

| A Country of Rich History and Culinary Diversity

Vietnam is a land of deep history and vibrant culinary traditions. From ancient rice-growing villages to bustling modern cities, Vietnam has long been shaped by its connection to food. Its centuries-old agricultural roots remain visible today in the daily life of its people, where rice paddies, markets, and communal meals are central to society.

| A Global Culinary Destination

Today, Vietnam ranks among the world's top food destinations. Its flavorful street foods—like phở (noodle soup), bánh mì (baguette sandwich), and gỏi cuốn (fresh spring rolls)—attract visitors from every corner of the globe. From lively food stalls to upscale restaurants, Vietnam offers a culinary journey that spans generations, celebrating both humble family recipes and sophisticated dishes.

By choosing Vietnam for your study abroad journey, you'll uncover the intricate connections between history, food, and society in one of the world's most dynamic and fascinating countries.

| A Country Shaped by History and Change

Throughout its history, Vietnam has been influenced by neighboring cultures and global powers—Chinese dynasties, French colonial rule, and American presence—each leaving a mark on its cuisine and society. Yet, Vietnam's culture remains resilient and distinctive, blending outside influences with local traditions to create a unique identity.

| A Thriving Destination for Experiential Learning

Vietnam's diverse landscapes—from the rice terraces of the North to the Mekong Delta in the South—make it an ideal place for immersive learning. Students will explore vibrant cities, traditional villages, and coastal communities, gaining firsthand insight into Vietnam's rich culture, food systems, and environmental challenges. Whether visiting floating markets, cycling through ancient towns, or preparing local dishes, Vietnam offers a sensory and intellectual adventure for every learner.



WHY Choose GLI

| About Gustolab International

Gustolab International has been actively involved in educating the public about **food systems and sustainability since 2006**, when interest in food studies was still in its infancy. **Since 2017**, students from partner universities have explored Food Studies through the lens of **Vietnam's food culture**.

Gustolab International, headquartered in the United States, offers educational programs **in Vietnam, as well as in Japan, China, and Italy**. Our unique study abroad experience transforms Vietnam into your living laboratory and classroom. Students consistently describe GLI programs as exceptional, both academically and personally. By actively engaging in daily Vietnamese life—exploring neighborhoods, shops, restaurants, and markets—students are fully immersed in an environment that fosters investigation and discovery. Our curriculum is enhanced through fieldwork, special projects, workshops, excursions, and various activities. Students report that navigating unfamiliar territory and adapting to a new international setting cultivates valuable skills, promotes personal growth, broadens their perspectives, and creates future professional opportunities.

In Italy, GLI's Borromini Institute has **12 PhD-level professors and collaborates with 50 universities worldwide**. Every year, between 300 and 400 students from around the world visit Rome for training programs.

| Program Supervisor



Jack D. Harris, Ph.D.,

- Director, Extension Programs & International Development, Gustolab International, LLC
- Professor Emeritus in Sociology, Hobart & William Smith Colleges

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Course

Modules & Learning Objectives

Course Title	Critical Food Studies: Food Systems in Vietnam -5 Credits	Culinary Vietnam -5 Credits	The Sociology of Vietnam: Conflict, Contradiction & Change (Only in Summer Program) -5 Credits
Core Topics	Explore agriculture, aquaculture, processing, and sustainability in Vietnam's food systems. Waste management. Environmental issues: climate change, overfishing, aging farmers	Regional cuisines shaped by geography, history, and economy . Vietnamese agriculture, food processing , and cooking traditions. Vietnamese food vocabulary and sensory description skills	Vietnam's history, culture, and social dynamics. Impacts of colonialism , war, and globalization Social issues: gender, ethnicity, urbanization and ideology Conflict, consensus, and pathways to social change
Hands-on Activities	Visits to villages, markets, farms, and food producers. Talks with local experts on food and sustainability	Cooking classes focused on Northern staples, Central seafood, and Mekong cuisine. Visits to rice farms, markets, tea plantations and food villages.	Discussions with locals about history and current issues. Analysis of colonial sites, museums, and war memorials. Ethnographic observation of daily life and traditions
Students will learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand Critical Food Studies and apply it to Vietnam's food systems• Analyze food through sustainability and cultural identity lenses• Connect food, geography, and culture• Develop skills in fieldwork and critical analysis• Explore future sustainable food practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare a variety of Vietnamese regional dishes• Understand food's links to geography, culture and history• Gain skills in tasting, food preparation, and cultural food analysis• Use Vietnamese terms to describe flavors and ingredients	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyse Vietnam's social history and modern transformations• Examine issues like inequality, cultural identity and social justice• Understand the balance between tradition and modernity• Develop skills in critical thinking, observation, and cross-cultural analysis



Field Studies & Signature Activities

This program offers immersive experiences that connect Vietnam's rich historical heritage, vibrant food culture, and sustainable innovations. Students will gain firsthand knowledge through guided field visits, cultural workshops, and hands-on culinary activities.

| Essential Destinations (Traditional & Modern Perspectives)

🏯 **My Son Sanctuary** — Explore this **UNESCO World Heritage site**, an ancient Hindu temple complex that reflects Vietnam's spiritual and architectural history.

🎨 **Tam Thanh Mural Village** — Visit this coastal fishing village known for its community mural project, showcasing local life, folklore, and art.

🌊 **Mekong River Delta** — Journey through the **floating markets**, aquaculture farms, and river communities of the Mekong Delta, where you'll observe how geography shapes food systems and daily life.

| Cultural & Culinary Experiences (Hands-on Learning)

🍴 **Northern Vietnamese Staples Cooking Class** — Learn to prepare classic northern dishes, focusing on noodle soups, rice-based meals, and fresh herbs.

🍲 **Mekong Dinner Cooking Class** — Craft a full-course dinner using traditional recipes and ingredients sourced from Mekong markets.

🚲 **Cycling Tour in Hoi An & Mekong Delta** — Pedal through ancient towns, rice fields, and riverside villages to experience daily life and regional agriculture.

🎣 **Fishing & Farming in Cam Thanh & Tra Que Villages** — Join local farmers and fishers for hands-on activities like planting vegetables, fishing with traditional nets, and learning about eco-friendly farming techniques.



Application Information & Timeline

This program offers immersive experiences that blend **Vietnam's rich history, vibrant food culture** and **sustainable innovation**. Students will gain firsthand insights through **guided field visits, cooking workshops** and **cultural activities**.

| Eligibility:

Undergraduate and graduate students are required to have a minimum GPA of 2.5 and maintain a good academic and social standing at their home university.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us.

| Enrollment Fee:

Winter (J-Term) 2025-26

Early Enrollment: \$4,250 USD

Regular Enrollment: \$4,750 USD

Summer 2026

Early Enrollment: \$5,250 USD

Regular Enrollment Fee: \$5,750 USD

| Application Deadlines:

Winter (J-Term) 2025-26

Early Application Discount: September 1, 2025

Regular Application: November 3, 2025

Summer 2026

Early Application Discount: February 2, 2026

Regular Application: April 6, 2026

| Program Fees Include:

- Local accommodations
- Special program lunches and dinners
- Course materials and guided field visits
- Local transportation for study trips

| Credits :

Students can earn university credits upon completion of all course obligations by passing the final assessment. It is recommended that you consult your university advisor to discuss studying abroad and to ensure you receive full academic credit, either directly from them or through transfer credits.

Transfer credit transcripts are available through Portland State University for a transcript fee of \$600.

All participants are awarded an official Certificate of Attendance.

| Program Cancellation :

Failure to recruit a sufficient number of students will result in the cancellation of the program.

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Reading List

Critical Food Studies: Food Systems in Vietnam

- Annear & Harris, "Contemporary Vietnamese Cuisine."
- Belasco, Warren. 2008. Food: The Key Concepts. Oxford: Berg.
- Bell, David, and Gill Valentine. 1997. Consuming Geographies: We Are What We Eat. New York: Routledge.
- Counihan and van Esterik, eds, Food and Culture (selected chapters)
- Peters, Erica J. 2012. Appetites and Aspirations in Vietnam: Food and Drink in the Long Nineteenth Century. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Pottier, Johan. 1999. Anthropology of Food: The Social Dynamics of Food Security. Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Vu, Hong Lien, 2016. Rice and Baguette: A History of Food in Vietnam. London, UK: Reaktion Books Ltd.

Culinary Vietnam

- Avieli, Nir. 2005. "Vietnamese New Year Rice Cakes: Iconic Festive Dishes and Contested National Identity." Ethnology 44(2): 167-187.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 2013. "Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste." In, Food and Culture: A Reader, Third Edition. C.M. Counihan and P.v. Esterik, eds. New York: Routledge.
- Clair, Robin P., et. al. 2011. "Engaging Cultural Narratives of the Ethnic Restaurant: Discursive Practices of Hybridity, Authenticity, and Commoditization." In, Studies in Symbolic Interaction, Volume 37: Studies in Symbolic Interaction. N.K. Denzin, ed. Pp. 135-161.
- Heldke, Lisa. 2005. "But is it Authentic? Culinary Travel and the Search for the 'Genuine'"
- Hoyer, Daniel. 2009. Culinary Vietnam. Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith.
- Jensen, Rolf, Donald M. Jr. Peppard, and Vũ Thị Minh Thăng. 2013. Women on the Move: Hanoi's Migrant Roving Street Vendors. Hanoi: Women's Publishing House.
- Mintz, Sidney, and Christine M. Du Bois. 2002. "The Anthropology of Food and Eating." Annual Review of Anthropology 31:99-119.
- Peters, Erica J. 2010. "Defusing Phở: Soup Stories and Ethnic Erasures, 1919-2009." Contemporary French and Francophone Studies 14(2):159-167.
- Trinh Diem, Vy. 2011. Taste Vietnam: The Morning Glory Cookbook. Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam: Phuong Dong Publishing House.
- Sutton, David. 2010. "Food and the Senses." Annual Review of Anthropology 39:209-23.
- Vandenberghe, Tom and Thys, Luke. 2010. Hanoi Street Food: Cooking and Traveling in Vietnam. Belgium: Lannoo.



Reading List

The sociology of Vietnam: Conflict, Contradiction, and Change

- Overview of Historic and Cultural Patterns: Neil Jamieson, Understanding Vietnam
- The American War and Post-War Recovery: Bao Ninh, The Sorrow of War (novel)
- Andrew Pham, The Eaves of Heaven: A Life in Three Wars
- Contemporary Assessments: Bill Hayton, Vietnam: Rising Dragon

Course Outline

- 1. Historical and Cultural Patterns of Conflict and Contradiction
- 2. From Colonialism, to Communism, to Capitalism
 - a. The French Colonial Experience
 - b. The American War & Its Aftermath
 - c. The Post-War Communist Society
 - d. Toward a Market Economy
- 3. Contemporary Assessments: Conflict, Contradiction, and Change
 - a. Sources of Conflict and Contradiction
 - b. Using Political Ideology and Autocracy Conceal Conflict and Contradiction
 - c. Sources of Change: Conflict and Consensus
 - d. Where are the Strains for Change and Which Way Will Vietnam Go?
- 4. Is There A Cultural Basis for Consensus and Change?
 - a. Can Vietnam Bridge Ethnic and Cultural Differences?
 - b. Will Men Relinquish Male Privilege?
- 5. Is there a Political Basis for Consensus and Change?
 - a. Can the Party Abandon the Fictions of Consensus?
 - b. Will Vietnam Become a More Open Society?
- 6. Is there an Economic Basis for Consensus and Change?
 - a. Regional Economies - North and South
 - b. Rural and Urban
 - c. What about China?
 - d. Living with Conflict in a Dynamic Society: Chances for Success and Failure



APPLY NOW TO SECURE YOUR SPOT!

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