



# SYMONEKEO S. THOMAS

LECTURER & CONSULTANT

DOCTOR OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

P.H.D. ~ INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL TOURISM

## CONTACT



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236 Morningside Dr., Corte Madera, CA 94925

## EDUCATION

### Doctor of International Affairs

Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS)  
Washington, D.C., USA  
2023 – 2025

### PhD in International Cultural Tourism

Rikkyo University, Tokyo, Japan  
2010 – 2013

### Master of Arts in International Relations

Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan  
2007 – 2009

### Bachelor of Arts in International Relations

Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam  
Hanoi, Vietnam  
1999 – 2003

## SKILLS

// PROFESSIONAL

- Ethnographic Research Method
- Qualitative and Quantitative Research
- Research & Analysis
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Communication & Collaboration
- Fieldwork and Data Collection Management
- Editorial skills

## PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Experienced educator and researcher with 18+ years in higher education, specializing in international relations, international cultural tourism, and climate change. Developed innovative curricula in international institutions while conducting pedagogically-informed research. Also brings 8+ years as an international development specialist, with doctoral expertise in climate adaptation finance, extensive Mekong region fieldwork, and proven success managing complex research projects for major organizations like the World Bank and JICS.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### Lecturer and Researcher

National University of Laos | Vientiane, Laos

Vientiane, Laos 2006-2020

Lectured on International Relations, Human Relations, International Cultural Tourism and Ecotourism. I also supervised more than 20 theses for undergraduate and graduate students, conducted numerous research projects, and published several papers.

The key results improvement and achievements include:

- **Curriculum Development:** Successfully designed and implemented comprehensive course modules on International Cultural Tourism and International Relations.
- **Student Mentorship:** Supervised over 30 undergraduate and graduate theses, guiding students to conduct impactful research that contributed to their academic growth and professional development, with thesis topics focused on cultural tourism, ecotourism, politics, sociology and human resources management.
- **Industry Collaboration:** Established strong partnerships with prominent organizations such as the World Bank Group, Natural Heritage Institute, Swisscontact, and Japan International Cooperation Agency, resulting in collaborative projects that advanced research and practical applications within the field of tourism and international development and climate change.
- **Expert Consultation:** Actively contributed as a consultant on various international projects, providing expertise in cultural tourism and sustainable practices, leading to enhanced project outcomes and informed policy recommendations. Raised awareness about the socio-economic benefits available to communities and minorities in Lao PDR. Promoted the importance of youth, women, and labor unions in local communities, advocating for their rights to access societal benefits.
- **Public Speaking and Engagement:** Delivered numerous lectures and presentations at conferences and seminars, raising awareness and promoting discussions on key trends and challenges in international cultural tourism and ecotourism. Additionally, highlighted the vital roles of communities and minorities in Lao PDR in enhancing socio-economic benefits to elevate their living standards.
- **Research Contributions:** Authored several papers and articles in the fields of International Relations and Ecotourism, public health, human rights and gender equality, contributing to the academic discourse and positioning the institution as a leader in tourism research and education.
- **Program Evaluation:** Played a crucial role in assessing and enhancing tourism-related programs, focusing on the socio-economic status of communities through the exploration of ordinance clearance, gender roles, and women's empowerment. Ensured that these programs met current industry standards and academic rigor, ultimately leading to improved student satisfaction and better learning outcomes.



# SYMONEKEO S. THOMAS

## LECTURER & CONSULTANT

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE *(Continued)*

#### Education

- **Doctor of International Affairs (DIA), Johns Hopkins University SAIS, Washington, DC, (Aug. 2023-May 2025)**
  - Thesis: Learning from Experience to Improve Climate Adaptation under the UNFCCC: A Case Study of the Mekong Delta
  - Focus areas: International Development, Climate Change, Climate Adaptation Finance, Energy Transition and Justice
- **PhD in Tourism, Rikkyo University, Tokyo, Japan, (2010-2013)**
  - Dissertation: Ethnographic Study of Heritage and Tourism in Luang Prabang, Laos
- **MA in International Relations, Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan, (2007-2009)**
  - Thesis: Tourism Promotion Policy Comparison: Luang Prabang vs Kyoto
- **BA in International Relations, Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, Hanoi, Vietnam, (1999-2003)**
  - Focused on International Relations and International Economy.

#### Professional Experience (relevant to teaching, curriculum, and equity)

- **University of California, Berkeley — Member, Tourism Studies Working Group (2019-2025)**
  - Presented research on international cultural tourism; collaborative scholarship across interdisciplinary teams.
- **National University of Laos — Lecturer, Faculty of Social Sciences; Deputy Director of Research (2006-2020)**
  - Taught International Relations, International Cultural Tourism, Ecotourism, guided research, and curriculum development in Tourism and International Relations.
- **Visiting Lecturer, Soutsaka Institute of Technology (Lao PDR) (2013-2018)**
  - Lectured on Lao PDR Politics, English, and International Business, and supported curriculum alignment with industry needs.
- **World Bank Group, World Bank/External Projects — Consultant and Researcher (2017-2018)**
  - Data collection, analysis for civil registration projects; informed policy-relevant teaching materials.
- **Other Research scholar/Adjunct Roles — Mahidol University; Sejong University, (2014-2015)**

#### Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Personal background informs commitment to equitable access and support for historically underrepresented and marginalized students
- Experience with multilingual instruction, culturally responsive teaching, and inclusive assessment design .

#### CERTIFICATES

- **2018:** "Seminar on China Issue Experts for B&R Countries" sponsored by the Ministry of Commerce, People's Republic of China.
- **2016:** "Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems (Basic Level of the Self-Paced format)," granted by the open learning campus of the World Bank Group.
- **2016:** Accredited as trainer/teacher on Social-Cultural and Environmental Impact Assessment for the Faculty of Social Sciences, National University of Laos. Supported by the PICE-LENS2-006- The World Bank project in Lao PDR.
- **2016:** Received a certificate as an ASEAN Master Trainer and ASEAN Master Assessor for Tourism Operation Division, supported by ASEAN AUSTRALIA Development Cooperation Program.
- **2006:** Accredited as a cultural heritage specialist and guide for the Mekong sub-region by the UNESCO office in Bangkok, Thailand.

## SKILLS

### // TECHNICAL

- Microsoft Office suites
- SPSS Program
- Conjointly Program
- QGIS

## LANGUAGES

### // PROFESSIONAL

- Lao (native): Fluent
- English: Very Good
- Vietnamese: Very Good
- Thai: Very Good
- Japanese: Elementary

## AWARDS

BA scholarship  
Government Aid Scholarship  
Vietnam  
1998-2003

Master's degree Scholarship  
JDS (Japanese Grant Aid for Human  
Resources Development Scholarship  
Government of Japan  
2007-2009

PH.D. Degree Scholarship  
Mohamed Yunus Scholarship  
Bangladesh  
2010-2013

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### International Business Certificate Program

San Francisco State University, USA  
Date: 2019 -2019

### Study Micro-economics and Macro-economics

College of Marin, USA  
Date: 2021 -2022



# SYMONKEO S. THOMAS

## LECTURER & CONSULTANT

### PUBLICATIONS OF JOURNALS PAPERS

- 1) Thomas, S. (2025). Learning from experience to improve climate adaptation under the UNFCCC: A case study of the Mekong Delta. Johns Hopkins University Library. <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/70720>
- 2) Thomas, S., Mills, S., Lee, K.J., Bouldam, & S. Onsy, S. (2025). Barriers to and facilitators of civil registration in the Lao People's Democratic Republic: A qualitative study. *Journal of Population Research*, 42(1), Article 5.
- 3) Thomas, S. (2022). Final report: The survey of the socio-economic impact of UXO removal on households in Salavan, Sekong, and Champasak Provinces. Lao PDR from December 2020 - December 2021. Japan International Cooperation System.
- 4) Senesathith, S. (2018). The situation of the resettlement of the population from the Xe Pian-Xe Namnoy Hydropower Project in Paksong District, Champasak Province. PICE-LENS2-006. Faculty of Social Sciences, National University of Laos.
- 5) Senesathith, S. (2017). The impact of tourism policies on tourist arrival in ASEAN: A case study of Lao PDR. *ASEAN Journal of Management and Innovation*, 4(2).
- 6) Senesathith, S. (2016). The relationship between the preservation of world heritage sites and the development of tourism destinations in Lao PDR: A case study of the town of Luang Prabang. *Journal of Tourism and Leisure Research*, 3.
- 7) Senesathith, S. (2011). A new emergence of tourism in Lao PDR for the two decades. *Journal of Ritsumeikan Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3. <https://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/>
- 8) Senesathith, S. (2018). Improving local benefits from tourism at Ting Cave, Luang Prabang, Lao PDR. Paper presented at the 6th Interdisciplinary Tourism Research Conference, Cappadocia, Turkey.
- 9) Senesathith, S. (2017). Cultural heritage for sustainable tourism: A comparative study on Luang Prabang Town and Hoi An. In *Critical Issues for Sustainable Tourism Development in Southeast Asia* (pp. 259-276).
- 10) Senesathith, S. (2012). Utilization of heritage value by locals affects tourism in Luang Prabang city, Lao PDR. In 2nd Interdisciplinary Tourism Research Conference Proceedings, Feithiye, Turkey (pp. 968-981).
- 11) Senesathith, S. (2011). Tourism transformation in Luang Prabang City, Lao PDR. *JITR Annual Conference Proceedings*, 26, 293-296.
- 12) Senesathith, S. (2011). Comparative study on tourism promotion policies between Luang Prabang City, Lao PDR, and Kyoto City, Japan. Paper presented at the 10th Asia Pacific Forum, Singapore.
- 13) Senesathith, S. (2019). Improving local benefits from tourism at Ting Cave, Luang Prabang, Lao PDR. Supported by Southeast Asian Studies Regional Exchange Program (SEASREP) Foundation
- 14) Thomas, S. (2021). Are payments for environmental services properly accounted for as government transfer payments or as a component of gross national product? Paper submitted to a class of Macroeconomics at College of Marin, California, USA.
- 15) Thomas, S. (2021). How could microfinance help alleviate poverty in Lao PDR? Paper submitted to a class of Microeconomics at College of Marin, California, USA.
- 16) Thomas, S. (2023). Climate change as a factor in the mass displacement of human populations: Lessons from the Mekong Delta in Vietnam. Paper submitted to a class at Johns Hopkins University, Washington D.C., USA.
- 17) Thomas, S. (2024). Government and business relations in Lao PDR: Success and drawbacks. Case study of the tourism sector. Paper submitted to a class at Johns Hopkins University, Washington D.C., USA.
- 18) Thomas, S. (2024). How climate change is threatening the Mekong Delta in Vietnam and the socio-economic consequences. Paper submitted to a class at Johns Hopkins University, Washington D.C., USA.

### PUBLICATIONS OF BOOKS

1. Thomas, S. (2026). Learning from Experience to Improve Climate Adaptation: How Evaluation Flaws Leave the Most Vulnerable Behind in Vietnam's Mekong Delta, in Flood, S. & Rogan, F. (Eds.), *Energy, Climate and the Environment*, Palgrave Macmillan publication. (In press).
2. Thomas, S. and McKnight, S. (2022). "Gender and Race in the US Economy." (Draft: Ancillary Textbook Project for College of Marin.)
3. Senesathith, Simonekeo., and Pathoummalangsy, Chanpheng. (2009). "*Hospitality Skills*", National University of Laos, L'Equilivre (Lecture et Ecriture Locales) Association publication, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR.
4. Senesathith, Simonekeo., Phabouthdy, Salurmsak., Phetxaysy, Khamphou., and Chanthalima, Lintha. (2010). 'MICE Meeting for Business', (Lao Language) National Tourism Authority and Department of Tourism and Hotel Management, published by Sustainable Tourism Project of ADB, Vientiane capital, Lao PDR Thomas.

### REFERENCES

#### Nina Hall

Associate Professor of International Relations at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS).  
Johns Hopkins University

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#### Tran Dinh Lam

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#### Phout Simmalavong

Associate Professor of Political Science, Former Minister of Education and Sports of Lao PDR.

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#### Koyama Masahisa

Former Dean of the College of International Relations.

Ritsumeikan University.

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#### Samuel Lantei Mills

Project Director for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics.

The World Bank Group

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### INTERESTS

- Lecturing in Political Sciences
- Support community and diversity inclusion.
- International Relations
- Mentoring and advising
- Culture & Team-Building