

## Communicating Hospitality across Cultures — Dr Pimtong Tavitiyaman

Cross-cultural experience in the hospitality industry underpins Dr Pimtong Tavitiyaman's ability to engage students at SPEED. A lecturer for the Bachelor of Arts in Hospitality Management and Bachelor of Arts in Travel Industry Management programmes, Dr Tavitiyaman draws on her understanding of the best practices in Thailand and the U.S., combined with observations of Hong Kong, to prepare students "for the future, when they step into the business."

With knowledge gained working in frontline and supervisory positions in a five-star hotel in Thailand and restaurants in the U.S., Dr Tavitiyaman reflects that a focus on customer service instead of just doing a job is the key to career success. In Thailand, she says, "the customer is god," but the U.S. approach is more concerned with getting everything done and less appropriate for aspiring hoteliers in service-conscious Hong Kong.

Dr Tavitiyaman's students tend to be more familiar with the local industry and those in nearby countries, so her broad perspective helps to expand their worldviews. That is even true in one area that she has only become acquainted with since she started teaching. Among other courses, Dr Tavitiyaman teaches the legal aspects of hospitality and tourism, using concepts and language that students find awkward at first. Yet the ideas they are exposed to, she says, are "globally applicable" and will aid them as their careers progress.

Reflecting on her time as an undergraduate in Thailand, Dr Tavitiyaman mentions that "Hong Kong students are more open, they speak up." She appreciates the more casual atmosphere this creates, which allows her to combat the sort of boredom she experienced when listening to overly serious lecturers as a student.



With an easy going personality and a ready smile, Dr Tavitiyaman livens her lectures with good humour and refers to aspects of popular culture such as movies to contextualise her students' learning. "I am friendly," she explains, which is a language that speaks across cultures.

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### 融會不同的款待業文化 — Pimtong Tavitiyaman博士

Pimtong Tavitiyaman博士曾於不同國家的酒店餐飲業工作，令她在專業進修學院執教款待業管理文學士及旅遊服務業管理文學士兩個課程時更游刃有餘。Tavitiyaman博士利用她對泰國和美國兩地最佳實踐案例的認識，輔以她對香港酒店業運作的觀察所得，啟發學生，為他們「在未來投身酒店業做好準備」。

綜合她過往在泰國一間五星級酒店和美國多間餐廳擔任前線工作及管理職務的經驗，Tavitiyaman博士認為優良的客戶服務是在款待業工作成功的關鍵。她說，泰國人奉行「以客為尊」，美國人則比較著重解決事情的效率，人情味較少；因此，美國式的款待

態度並不完全適合以服務為本的香港從業員。Tavitiyaman博士認為，香港學生對本地及鄰近國家的款待業有一定認識，有助她帶領他們擴闊世界觀；而她在香港的日子尚淺，與學生交流可真正達到教學相長。Tavitiyaman博士主要教授有關酒店業和旅遊業的法律課程。對於初次接觸法律的學生來說，學習一些複雜的概念和艱深的用語，起初難免有點困難。但Tavitiyaman博士認為，這些法律知識是「全球通行」，對學生將來的事業發展有很大幫助。

回想昔日在泰國修讀大學課程時，教授們講授嚴肅課程內容時的沉悶方式，Tavitiyaman博士經常引以為鑑。她認為

「香港的學生敢於表達個人意見，思想比較開放」，而她亦樂於引領這種輕鬆融洽的學習氣氛。

Tavitiyaman博士性格隨和，笑容可掬。她擅於運用輕鬆幽默的手法和引用電影等流行文化的例子教學，令課堂更生動有趣，啟發學生學習。Tavitiyaman博士形容自己「親切和善」。友善，正是跨越不同文化的共通語言。