DAY 1 | MAY 10: WELCOME TO HANOI
We arrive in Hanoi, the northern capital of Vietnam—an enchanting and eclectic city marked by ancient tradition, French colonial influences and the Vietnam War. After refreshing from our long journey, we explore the surrounding neighborhood in Hanoi. The old French Quarter, romantic lakes, street vendors against the backdrop of faded colonial buildings, provide a living snapshot of local cultural life.

DAY 2 | MAY 11: UNIVERSITY OF HANOI STUDENT INTRODUCTION
Today is dedicated to touring Vietnam’s eclectic capital, understanding Hanoi’s sequent occupancy, fierce identity and modern buzz. Our Vietnamese student partners meet us after breakfast. The students pair up for a walk around Hoan Kiem Lake where they discuss modern life and history with their Vietnamese peers. Student activity encourages discovery of the diverse perspectives of the Vietnam War. Vietnamese and American students enjoy lunch together at “Bun Cha Hanoi” – celebrated in CNNGo’s top ten street foods in Asia. In the afternoon, visit to Ho Chi Minh’s Mausoleum—containing the mummified remains of North Vietnam’s communist leader in a construction modeled closely after Vladimir Lenin’s. We explore the Presidential Palace and discuss the role of nationalism in Vietnamese history. We visit French-built Hoa Lo Prison, ironically referred to as the “Hanoi Hilton”—a POW prison turned interactive museum. Next stop is the Temple of Literature, built in 11th Century as the country’s first university, now standing as one of Hanoi’s best-preserved monuments. End the day with a water puppet show.

DAY 3 | MAY 12: HANOI ART TOUR
After breakfast, 09:00AM to 01:00PM, we have a private Art Tour with Sophie Art Tour, www.sophiesarttour.com. End the day with an exhilarating cycle ride through Hanoi’s bustling lanes and alleys of the Old Quarters.

DAY 4 | MAY 13: HOA BINH - MUONG’S CULTURAL MUSEUM
After Breakfast, we leave Hanoi in the early morning for Hoa Binh, enjoy the beautiful landscape on the way and after two hours driving, arrive in Hoa Binh. We will stop for coffee and then continue driving to Muong village and take a walk to visit around the village to see the life of local people. We will continue on, through the bamboo forest, to Cap village – a village of Dao ethnic minority where we will visit some families. After lunch, we visit Muong’s Cultural Museum, then drive back to Hanoi. Overnight in Hanoi.

DAY 5 | MAY 14: HANOI - HALONG BAY
Early departure from Hanoi for Halong with a scenic drive through the Red River delta. Welcome to an adventure, sailing through the Halong Bay. Allow your eyes to swim through the azure waters of this magical place, where thousands of sculpted limestone and islands rise from the water like gigantic teeth of dragons. Pass through picturesque areas like the Mat Quy and Am islets. Arrive at Tuan Chau Wharf to begin cruise on Halong Bay. Visit Ba Hang fishing village of little boats and rafts where you will have a chance to discover the traditional culture and customs of the fishermen. Enjoy kayaking or relaxing. Return to the boat for a cooking class by the cruise chef, then swimming on Soi Sim beach. Climb to the top of Soi Sim beach for a panorama view of Halong Bay.
DAY 6 | MAY 15: HALONG BAY - HANOI
Take part in Tai Chi class on the sundeck before or after breakfast with morning view of bay’s landscape. Transfer by tender to Sung Sot Cave. Walk up about 100 steps to the cave entrance. Explore for approximately 45 minutes. Return to the boat by tender. Proper shoes are highly recommended. Brunch is served while cruising back to the Tuan Chau Wharf. Drive back to Hanoi, stopping at But Thap pagoda, built in the 13th century and reconstructed in the 17th century. Famous for the Buddhist statue of a thousand hands and a thousand eyes, the pagoda is 350 years old and one of Vietnam’s artistic masterpieces. Arrive Hanoi, check in hotel. Overnight in Hanoi

DAY 7 | MAY 16: HANOI FREE TIME
Breakfast at hotel. Free day to sketch, photograph or explore. Faculty will organize small group activities. Overnight in Hanoi

DAY 8 | MAY 17: HANOI- HUE
Breakfast at hotel, transfer to Airport for flight to Hue. Arrive in Hue, welcome by your tour guide and transfer to hotel for check-in. Hue is known for its magnificent monuments built under the Nguyen Dynasty (1802 to 1945). Lunch in Hue. In the afternoon. Tour to the Imperial Citadel, designed for exclusive use by the emperor, his family, and his retinue, started in 1804. The city is protected by a series of four enormous outer walls that are 7-10 meters thick. Access to the walled city is via four arched gates, the best known of which is the Ngo Mon Gate, built in 1834. The Imperial City contains a series of palaces, ornate halls, libraries, residences, and colleges. Much of the City, including the Forbidden Palace, was destroyed during a vicious battle during the Tet Offensive of 1968. One can spend an entire afternoon wandering around the grounds of the Imperial City, viewing the ancient architecture of the Nguyen emperors and scars of recent battles. Dinner with special local food. Overnight in Hue.

DAY 9 | MAY 18: HUE SPECIAL TOUR - HUE UNIVERSITY- SPECIAL DINNER
Visit Quoc Hoc High School, founded on October 23, 1896 and known as the first and the oldest high school in Vietnam. Then we ride eastward along the city river to Thanh Toan tile-roofed Bridge in Thanh Toan village, in Thuy Thanh Commune, Huong Thuy District, about 8 km from Hue city. Here we will enjoy the scenery of the countryside with farmers working on their rice fields, talk to friendly local people in the small market to learn more about their daily life. Then we will meet with art faculty and students at Hue University, College of Art, Visual Art department and lunch will be at Thien Tam Restaurant, built in traditional Vietnamese style and created by a group of artists from the University of Fine Art in Hue city. The pwner of this open air restaurant, known for delicious vegetarian hot pot, is a friendly artist in the gallery next door.

In the afternoon, we visit the Lotus Thanh Tien Paper Village in Thanh Tien Village Phu Mau commune, Phu Vang district, Thua Thien Hue province. The village is located along the southern bank of the Perfume River downstairs and is known for the traditional craft of making paper flowers. We will visit Tù Hiệu Pagoda, considered the final resting place of the Nguyen Dynasty’s eunuchs. Tonight we visit Mr Ngon’s house to enjoy the traditional royal tea ceremony, have dinner with three generations of the former royal family and learn more about Vietnamese culture and traditional customs. Overnight in Hue
DAY 10 | MAY 19: HUE FREE TIME
Breakfast at hotel. Free day to sketch, photograph or explore. Faculty will organize small group activities. Overnight in Hue

DAY 11 | MAY 20: HUE - HOI AN. STREET FOOD TOUR, VIETNAMESE BINGO
Breakfast at hotel, transfer to Danang (110km). Panoramic views of the clouds, the sea and the mountains on the road through the Hai Van Pass to the scenic Lang Co lagoon on the way to Hoi An. Walking tour of the colorful local Hoi An markets, where we meet and chat with stall holders about their food, then continue along main and back streets, discovering out-of-the-way street vendors making and selling a wide variety of exotic foods. We will end up at The Ancient House, where we will enjoy refreshments and taste a wide selection of local delicacies bought from the vendors we saw met on the tour. This evening, we join tradition Vietnamese Bingo in old town. Overnight in Hoi An

DAY 12 | MAY 21, 2016 HOI AN TRA QUE TOUR AND WALKING TOUR
You have the option to ride a bicycle or be driven to Tra Que Vegetable Village, known for its sweet scented & green vegetables that spice up the daily meals of Hoi An people. Experience a day of living and working with the local farmers in this village. We will be treated to an herbal foot massage followed by a lesson in cooking local dishes. Then we enjoy a walking tour of Hoi An, exploring the historic attractions of this charming colonial town on a walking tour, including the Quang Cong Temple, Phuoc Kien Pagoda, Japanese Covered Bridge and Quang Dong Pagoda. and the Hoi An Silk Village. Overnight in Hoi An

DAY 13 | MAY 22, 2016 HOI AN - SAIGON (HO CHI MINH CITY)
After breakfast, transfer to the airport for the flight south to Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) — Vietnam’s financial hub. We orient ourselves with a brief visit to the city’s most acclaimed architectural landmarks. Historic neighborhoods, religious temples, Chinatown, Binh Tay market and riverside dwellings will give us a unique perspective on Saigon past and present. We visit Notre Dame Cathedral, the Municipal Post Office and The Reunification Palace, one of the most important buildings in the city. Here on April 30, 1975, the ‘American War’ officially ended when tank number 843 of the North Vietnamese Army crashed through the gates. After lunch, we will visit artist studios and galleries, including Quoc Thanh le art gallery. Overnight in Saigon.

DAY 14 | MAY 23, 2016 LOCAL EXCHANGE WITH LOCAL COLLEGE’S STUDENT IN SAIGON
Today is spent at the Local college campus for a special cultural exchange project with students from the local college school. We will enjoy lunch together, sharing personal stories and gaining new understanding of each other’s cultures. Next, we visit Saigon Fine Art Museum, one of the largest fine arts centers of Vietnam. Then we proceed to The War Remnants Museum. Formerly known as the Museum of American War Crimes, this is a poignant display of the futility of war. The ‘Requiem’ exhibit is particularly touching, dedicated to both foreign and Vietnamese journalists who perished during the conflict. The courtyard outside contains the spoils of war; rusting jets, tanks and cannons captured from the American military machine. Overnight in Saigon
DAY 15 | MAY 24, 2016 MEKONG DELTA – VINH LONG/HOMESTAY
Drive to the Mekong Delta (the “rice basket” of Vietnam) to explore its thriving agrarian economy, river culture, and spicy cuisine. At Cai Be town, take a boat trip to Cai Be floating market to buy ingredients to prepare for the cooking lessons today. After lunch, choose from a variety of activities: Visiting the cottage industry workshops (coconut candy, rice paper, pop-rice), Watching a performance of local traditional music, Visiting bonsai garden or orchard (nursery garden), Rowing a boat on the small canal, Strolling on the island or bicycling along village paths, or Cutting fruit in the orchard. Then we will learn to cook traditional cuisine as we help prepare the evening meal. Evening games and activities with our host families.

DAY 16 | MAY 25, 2016 VINH LONG – MEKONG DELTA-SAIGON
After breakfast at the home stay, we visit Mr Tam Ho’s nursery garden in An Binh Island and local brick & pottery workshops. After lunch in Vinh Long, transfer back to Saigon. Arrive Saigon in late afternoon, free time. Overnight in Saigon.

DAY 17 | MAY 26, 2016 SAIGON FREE TIME
Breakfast at hotel. Free day to sketch, photograph or explore. Faculty will organize small group activities. Overnight in Saigon.

DAY 18 | MAY 27, 2016 SAIGON - DEPARTURE
After breakfast, leave hotel for our international flight back to JFK.