

# Dozens of American Students Learn Indonesian Philosophy

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Faculty of Philosophy UGM collaborating with School for International of Training (SIT) Study Abroad for two weeks from 19 September - 3 October 2016 hosts *Oriental Studies* programme, involving students from various U.S. universities. The event gives understanding to the students on faith, culture, social and language values.

"SIT has run for seven years, involving students from the U.S.," said Dr. M. Mukhtasar Syamsuddin, Dean of Faculty of Philosophy, on Monday (19/9) after opening the event.

Mukhtasyar explained the students can choose to study not only in Indonesia, but also India or other Asean countries such as Vietnam, Philippines, etc. Most, however, have opted to study in Indonesia as they considered they can learn more about Indonesia.

"The predominantly Muslim country seems to have attracted the U.S. students to learn about the religion of the Indonesian people. And why do they choose the Faculty of Philosophy UGM? Because here they can learn the philosophy of Indonesia," he said.

Mukhtasyar said Indonesian philosophy, particularly philosophy of Pancasila, is much required as the basis for resolving faith, social and political issues. The U.S. students wanted to learn this and to



do that, the students would not only learn in class but also visit pesantrens (Islamic boarding schools) and cultural centres in Yogyakarta, also Borobudur and Prambanan Temples which are historical heritage important for interfaith life of today.

Hastangka, S.Fil., M. Phil, coordinator of SIT at the Faculty, said starting in 2011, the programme runs under the theme of art, religion, and social change.

Hastangka added the students would live in the Godean village to learn the lives and values of rural people. “They will visit Islamic boarding schools in Pandanaran and Gontor to see the Islam in Indonesia. Also, they will visit viharas, temples, as well as Borobudur and Prambanan Temples to see how old tradition heritage exists and how to learn from this heritage,” he said.

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