Course Description
The Wildlife Conservation and Political Ecology (WCPE) Seminar facilitates the students' learning to encompass diverse spaces, develop multi-scale analysis, and increase their sensitivity to social and power relationships that shape, and are shaped in our ever more interdependent world. Explicit to this framework are the dimensions of location and scale. The WCPE Seminar uses an interdisciplinary solution-seeking-based approach that integrates analyzed experiential, i.e. primary data, with formal classroom academic learning to address identified issues at defined levels of organization. This modified problem based learning (PBL) pedagogy, in which the students are asked to discover embedded issue at the local, regional, national and international scales throughout their semester. These “discoveries”, coupled with cultural immersion challenges students to identify and locate resources, examine methodologies in the acquisition of knowledge, question if and how to incorporate these new forms of knowledge and make ethical decisions in the gathering and dissemination of the information. The WCPE Seminar seeks to understand the diverse relationships that exist between humans, natural resources (both biotic and abiotic) and the resource management and sustainable use of the biological and cultural diversities. To develop the learning of skill sets that transcend disciplines and the course, the overall components of WCPE Seminar integrates the natural and social sciences. A fundamental aspect of the Seminar and the Program is that students are required to take responsibility and self-assessment of their learning. Evaluation is based on a myriad of formats, e.g. rubrics, oral presentations, peer review, portfolios, etc. with extensive feedback and meta-analysis. The overall goal of the WCPE Seminar is to facilitate the education of the students on complex and pressing issues, from the local to the global to enhance their ability to realize the full range of opportunities and responsibilities inherent in living and working in our interdependent world.

Course Objectives
The Wildlife conservation and Political Ecology seminar has an interdisciplinary, integrative, and critical focus encompassing 60 contact hours (4 credits). Its main objectives are:

- To learn about specific political ecology, conservation and preservation issues in Tanzania and East Africa;
- To gain an understanding of the interrelationships of the ecosystems of Tanzania and the impact of human presence and utilization;

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• To examine effective management of resources and protected areas for humans and wildlife; and
• To gain a knowledge of the natural history, behavior, biology, and ecology of Tanzania’s unique flora and fauna.

**Learning Outcomes**
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

• Interrogate anthropogenic landscapes and their patterns & processes as levels of organization that are distinct with the temporal or spatial scale invoked by the observer;
• Articulate the ways that resource use is organized and transmitted through social relations that may result and how they impact on the resources in an environment;
• Challenge presuppositions of “marginality” with global connectedness and assess how extra-local political-economic processes shape and are shaped by local spaces; and
• Recognize the plurality of positions, perceptions, interests, and rationalities in relation to the environment and investigate the complex and deep ways in which the dynamics of asymmetrical social and political power affect ecological systems.

**Course Requirements**

**Required Readings & film – prior to departure from united states**
3) The film “Baraka” – a visual interpretation of evolution, the environment, and change

Note: The Igoe book is used as an introduction to political ecology and background material for the Tarangire/Lake Manyara greater ecosystem.

**Overview of Reading Packet & other Major Sources**
A comprehensive reading packet of selected articles and chapters which examine pertinent issues in East African history, economics, politics, society, wildlife ecology, conservation, and land-use conflict is provided in country as required reading for each student. Some major sources for the Reading Packet include:

**Journals**: African Journal of Ecology, Conservation Biology, SWARA, etc.

**Books:**


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c) Other Major Sources: a variety of lecturers in their related fields, organizations including UNDP, Frankfurt Zoological, various Tanzanian based and international NGOs, Heifer Project Tanzania, Sokoine University, Morogoro, etc.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Wildlife Conservation and Political Ecology (WCPE) Seminar Assignments
Timely completion of all WCPE assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, depth of understanding, argumentation and presentation of evidence.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concept Papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term Portfolio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Synthesis Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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Grading Criteria

Grading Scale: The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

- 94-100% A
- 90-93% A-
- 87-89% B+
- 84-86% B
- 80-83% B-
- 77-79% C+
- 74-76% C
- 70-73% C-
- 67-69% D+
- 64-66% D
- below 64 F

Grading Criteria
An “A” grade for an assignment entails superior (not just “very good”) performance in terms of structure and organization of assignments, analysis, logical argumentation and consistency, and the provision of factual, numerical and/or historical evidence. In terms of Class Participation, an “A” grade refers to full attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in the WCPE Seminar lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of the students’ participation will be monitored and taken into account. The assessment tools include a portfolio design with a rubric format.

Program Calendar

Components of the WCPE Seminar:

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1) Livelihood Module – Runs concurrently with the 3-week Bangata Homestay

The objectives of this module are:

- to examine the complex issue of “globalization”;
- to allow students to begin to examine the issue of “livelihood” from an experiential and theoretical framework;
- introduce students to viewpoints written by southern hemisphere social critics on political economy and development;
- contextualize the issue of poorness in Africa and specifically Tanzania in relation to gender, positions of privilege and power, population growth and environmental degradation;
- introduce students to methods of collecting social science data such as Participatory Rural Appraisal; and
- allow students the opportunity to meta-analyze their preconceptions on a variety of cultural presuppositions.

This module includes:

- Two weeks of primary data collection with the Bangata Homestay family;
- The primary data is collected using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methodologies, e.g. community mapping, flow diagrams, transect walks & three focus groups with members of the community of various ages and genders;
- Three weekly readings and facilitated discussions: Cultural Globalization, Political Economy/Development, and Poverty via the UNDP (2008) Development Report on Tanzania – these readings are incorporated as reference material in the product of this module. Each week’s readings require a one-page concept paper prior to the discussion with subsequent Academic Director feedback.

2) Mid-Term Portfolio (due last week of Bangata Homestay)

The culmination of the Livelihood Module consists of the following:

- Several community maps overlaid with analytical paragraph, one resource flow map of the students household, and several Tables & Figures – Household Activities with an accompanying paragraph deconstructing the categories of productive, reproductive and community “work” as designated by the United Nations Development Program;
- A 3-Section Paper – a position on Globalization section in relation to a chosen “issue” in Bangata, a deconstruction of Gender paper & a Meta-Analysis section.

3) Final Synthesis Paper (due prior to ISP departure)

The 12-page (12 pt font/ 1.5 spacing) paper requires the student to bring together primarily the pertinent chapters of Serengeti II and their two and half month stay in Tanzania into a coherent paper on a conservation topic concerning this unique 25,000 km$^2$ ecosystem. The students are free to choose the topic, the only criteria being that the analysis is multi-disciplinary and scalar combining the natural and social sciences.

4) Political Ecological Concepts (interwoven into topic-specific locations throughout Program)

Each student will become an “expert” in a particular ecological or management concept with appropriate conservation implications. Students begin their research on the topics prior to departure for excursions and also obtain primary information from guides, rangers, researchers, each other, and their own senses (cited as personal communications). In the
field, students point out examples pertaining to their concept to the rest of the group, and are prepared to answer questions about them. Students give a 60-minute oral presentation on the political ecological concept (13 in total during a semester). An outline is due 3 days prior to the presentation. Students are evaluated not only on the presentation itself, but also on their ability to field questions and make ‘educated’ guesses when they don’t know the answer.

Related excursions and activities include:

- Mt. Meru: Three week peri-urban Homestay with agriculturalists’ family; Livelihood Module (see below);
- Lake Natron: One week Homestay with Maasai agro-pastoralists and participatory observation anthropology field skills and focal groups by age set;
- Arusha and Surrounding Area: Drop-offs, interpersonal skills development, survival skills and logistical planning of accommodations outside of the Program;
- Related Activities – students receive lectures from various sources emphasizing the local thru the national to the international levels and their inter-relatedness; weekly Debates & Discussions of assigned readings (see Reading Packet below), student-led facilitations, a mid-term portfolio & final synthesis paper.

Student Expectations

Class Participation
Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all Academic Seminar lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook and the Program Dossier given to students at Orientation.

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