Independent Study Project
ISPR 3000 (4 Credits, 120 class hours)
SIT Study Abroad Program:
Tanzania: Wildlife Conservation & Political Ecology

Course Description
The Independent Study Project (ISP) provides the opportunity to study in greater depth an aspect of particular academic interest relating to the program theme. Students are required to indicate their proposed area of study as part of the admissions process. In most cases, the topic is then revised once in country, or a new topic is developed. With the assistance of the Academic Director and an ISP Coordinator, a project advisor appropriate to the topic is selected. Advisors are usually host country professors or experienced field professionals. In conducting their projects, students directly utilize the concepts and skills of field-based learning of the Environmental Research Methods and Ethics seminar, language capabilities developed through formal instruction and informal practice, knowledge gained in the WCPE thematic seminar, and contacts made in the homestay or larger community setting. In the process, they hone their skills in dealing with, and learning from, the unexpected, while accomplishing a major academic project in a challenging new environment.

Course Objectives
The Independent Study Project encompasses 120 academic hours (4 credits) and its main objectives are as follows:

- To learn in-depth about a particular aspect of Wildlife Conservation & Political Ecology in Tanzania;
- To learn to select, design, and implement an in depth field-based project, using primary-source research methodologies which are appropriate to the topic, and generate meaningful data;
- To develop critical skills through the interpretation of data and the development and presentation of arguments grounded in and supported by the data;
- To build students’ capacities, self-confidence, and autonomy by fostering their ability to learn independently in the host society for an extended period of time; and
- To promote opportunities for continual awareness of the ethics of field research and cultural learning, particularly in terms of interaction and reciprocity.

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Learning Outcomes
Upon completion of the course, students will have the ability to:

- Demonstrate the ability to compose and select an individual study project that investigates a specific dimension of wildlife conservation or political ecology within the context of Tanzania;
- Develop self-confidence, professional proficiency and a critical understanding of field-based learning;
- Employ and effectively utilize an appropriately designed and ethically-sound field study format to conduct and assemble their primary data; and
- Compose and deliver an original interpretation of their findings demonstrating systematic analysis.

Course Requirements
Requirements for the ISP include the following:

1. At least three meetings with project advisors and two meetings with the Academic Director and ISP Coordinator;
2. A 3 page “pre-proposal” midway through the semester and a 10-page final proposal for the ISP including a budget section before the study period;
3. A minimum of 120 hours of fieldwork (20 days at site) toward completion of the project;
4. Completion of field study journal that reflects the effort of the entire project. Include the following sections: background information, methods development, contacts, and study site description;
5. Participation in a two-day peer review process prior to the completion of the paper that includes a critical reading of a peer’s paper, discussion of comments and a re-writing period for their own paper;
6. An approximately 25-page paper presenting findings of the field study project, including abstract, introduction, study site description, methodology, results, discussion, conclusion, and recommendations sections with appropriate appendices; and
7. A 30-minute oral PowerPoint presentation upon completion of the project.

In addition to considering the project advisor’s assessment, the Academic Director evaluates student performance based on the quality of project content, preparation and implementation of project, quality of the oral presentation as a reflection of the written report or visual project, quality of the student’s investigation, depth of analysis and insight demonstrated, clarity of coherence and style, and completion of all requirements, including conferences with the Academic Director, ISP Coordinator and project advisor.

Representative Independent Study Project Topics and Advisors

Political Ecology and Conservation:
“Empowerment Through Awareness: Facilitation of Community-based Resource Management at Enashiva”
Advisor: Daniel Ngoitiko, M.A., Tazama Trust

“Changing Sexual Practices Among the Maasai Women of Ngare Sero”
Advisor: Lazarus Likindokoki, M.A., Arusha School of Tourism

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“Mto wa Mbu Eco-Tourism and its Benefits: An Outsiders View”
Advisor: Dr. Daniel Yamat, D.V.M., owner of Farasi Safaris

“Changing Land Use Practices Among Tea Farmers in the Mazumbai Area”
Advisor: Modest Mrecha, M.Sc. Sokoine University

“The Cultural Space of Bonga Flava and Arusha Hip Hop”
Advisor: Dina Matthews, ISP Coordinator for TZE Program

“Water Access in Arusha in Relation to Wealth Status”
Advisor: Joachim Chuwa, BA, Mahali Hii Clubs, Arusha, Tanzania

**Wildlife Conservation:**
“Ndarakwai Population Density as Determined by Dung Within Grassland and Woodland Ecotones”
Advisor: Raphael Ole Kosianga, D.V.M., Regional Veterinary Officer, Arusha, Tanzania

“Population Composition of Tarangire Elephants in the Wet Season Range of Simanjiro”
Advisor: Charles Foley, PhD, Princeton University/Tarangire Elephant Project

“Canopy and Habitat Use in Four Sympatric Primate Species in Sagara Forest”
Advisor: Dr. Mturi, Zoology Department, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

“A Comparison between Spider Diversity and Abundance by Altitude in Mazumbai”
Advisor: Prof. Kassuku, Sokoine PhD, University of Agriculture, Morogoro, Tanzania

“Baboon-Human Wildlife Interface Adjacent to Lake Manyara National Park”
Advisor: Prof. Maganga, PhD, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Morogoro, Tanzania

“Invertebrate Compositoin and Diversity in the InterTidal Zone of Pangani Bay”
Advisor: John Kaaya, M.Sc., Frankfurt Zoological Society

“Comparative Behavioral Aspects of Two Troops of Baboons at Ndarakwai”
Advisor: Vedasto Ndibalema, M.Sc., Ndarakwai Graduate Student

**PLEASE NOTE:** COURSE CONTENTS, LECTURERS AND READINGS MAY BE MODIFIED AS NEEDED. SHOULD ANY CHANGE OF CLASS TOPICS OR LECTURERS BE NECESSARY, STUDENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED.

**Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

**Assignments**
Timely completion of all assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized.

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<tr>
<th>Written Report</th>
<th>75%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluation**
Evaluation of the written report for the Independent Study Project (75% of grade) is based on the following criteria:

1. Development of topic and achievement of objectives
2. Project definition and focus
3. Methodology and ethics
4. Accuracy of information

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5. Critical analysis and thought
6. Use of information from participation, observations, interviews, and other techniques
7. Use of cross-cultural communication skills
8. Style and expression
9. Grammar and documentation

Students should note that the written ISP report must be submitted with the cover note included on page 69 accompanied by an electronic copy on CD, completed advisors evaluation form, ISP information sheet and ISP Copyright declaration.

Evaluation of Oral Presentations (25% of grade) is based on the following criteria:
1. Timing (adhering to time limit).
2. Rhythm/speed of delivery.
3. Structure of presentation (introduction, question, methods, results, conclusions).
4. Clarity of presentation including diction and ability to communicate key issues.
5. Appropriate presentation of background information (pitching at the correct level).
6. Quality of visual aids/props/PowerPoint.
7. Appropriate use of Maps, tables, graphs, photographs.
8. Accuracy of information presented.
10. Quality of responses to questions.

Evaluation is based on the ISP Advisor, the ISP Coordinator and Academic Director’s evaluation of the student’s completion of the above stated criteria. A rubric format is used in the final evaluation.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-86%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-83%</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74-76%</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-73%</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-69%</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64-66%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>below 64</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading Criteria**
An “A” grade for an assignment entails superior (not just “very good”) performance in terms of structure and organization of project, 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 all lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities pertaining to the ISP. It also means polite and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of the students’ participation will be monitored and taken into account.

**Student Expectations**

**Class Participation**
Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all lectures, discussions, educational excursions 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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