Wildlife Conservation and Political Ecology Seminar
ENVI-3000 (4 Credits / 60 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Tanzania: Wildlife Conservation & Political Ecology

Course Description
The Wildlife Conservation and Political Ecology (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 the WCPE Seminar integrate 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.

Learning Outcomes
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
- Understand the interrelationships of the ecosystems of Tanzania and the impact of human presence and utilization;
- Interrogate specific political ecology, conservation and preservation issues in Tanzania and East Africa;
- Assess effective management of resources and protected areas for humans and wildlife;
- Articulate the ways that resource use is organized and transmitted through particular social relations and how they impact on the resources in an environment;
- 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.

Pre-departure Readings
Prior to departure from USA students are expected to read the following:
Course program
This course consists of several interrelated modules that incorporate presentations, lectures, readings, excursion activities and assignments. During the semester, students are provided with readings which are updated as new material is sourced.

Module 1: Setting the context: African history, ecology, and tourism
This introductory module raises key issues about the role of the researcher, writer, student, and tourist in Africa. Conducted during orientation, the module integrates background readings, facilitated discussions, and drop-off exercises in central Arusha. Students are exposed to different ways of recording history, a political ecological perspective on the nature of ‘development’ and its potential impact on conservation efforts in Tanzania, and grapple with the perceptions of themselves as students, tourists, or researchers. As an assignment, students write a short piece on why they are here, which serves as the basis for later reflection in their midterm-portfolio.

Required readings
Introduction to TZE:

What is Political Ecology?:

Are we tourists or not? Reflections on tourism and its impact

Module 2: Introduction to wildlife management in TZ
Module 2 introduces students to wildlife in Tanzania, exploring the key question as to whether or not Tanzania’s wildlife is under threat. The module takes place during orientation in Ndarakwai private ranch, situated on the western slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro. It integrates the background readings with night drives and four guided walks, accompanied by local wildlife experts who explore mammals, birds, and ethnobotany. During this module, students also have an organized program of presentations and discussions with faculty of the College of Wildlife Management in Mweka. Topics include mountain ecology, climate change, hunting, wildlife tourism, community-based natural resource management (CBNRM), governance and fire ecology.
Required readings
- Tanzania Natural Resource Forum (2008). *Wildlife for all Tanzanians: Stopping the loss, nurturing the resource and widening the benefits.* Brief 1: The end of the game? The decline and depletion of Tanzania’s wildlife, and Brief 2: The causes of wildlife decline in Tanzania
- Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute (2010). *Tanzania elephant management plan 2010-2015* Chapter 1
- WWF (2014). *Aerial total count of elephants and buffalos in Serengeti-Mara ecosystem*


Module 3: Local vs global perspectives of globalization, development, aid and conservation
Module 3 takes place while students are learning intensive Kiswahili and living with their homestay families in Ngaramtoni, on the outskirts of Arusha. We take this opportunity to have focus group discussions with members of the surrounding community, where students gain an understanding of how key global issues affect local people, and compare this to the more academic input they receive from the readings. In addition to the focus group discussion, the module includes facilitated discussion as the SIT group, and individual conversations with their homestay families. Students compile a mid-term portfolio at the end of this module. This encourages them to reflect on a range of issues addressed in various forums during the semester, particularly as they play out in their homestay, and to integrate the readings with what has been learned and experienced during the semester. In addition, they use different methods of collecting data, interpreting this, and consolidating it into a coherent and integrated report.

Required readings
*How does globalization, development and aid affect local people?*
- Citizen newspaper, Foreign revenue dependency fall, November 16, 2017
- Citizen newspaper, Why the donor musical chairs game is back on, April 19, 2017
- Citizen newspaper, Controversy about donor aid and development, April 2, 2017
- Moyo, Dambisa (2009). *Aid is not working Dead Aid: Why aid is not working and how there is a better way for Africa.* New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux
  - Chapter 3 – Aid is not working
  - Chapter 4 - The silent killer of growth
  - Chapter 1 – Globalizing Africa
  - Chapter 7 – Decomposing modernity

*How does environmental conservation and climate change affect local people?*

Module 4: The complexities of conservation and wildlife management: Balancing the needs of people vs animals
This module forms the backbone of the program, and integrates readings, student-led presentations, expert input and discussion, presentations by park management, and intensive field work in the national parks – Tarangire, Lake Manyara, Serengeti, and Ngorongoro Crater Authority Area. Students form groups, each of which focuses on one particular area for their
field work and exploring the park, all accompanied by a wildlife expert. Each day smaller groups present their experiences to the larger student group, and engage in discussion with the local experts.

The key assignment for this module is the presentation of each of the topics below by a small group of students. Each small group is responsible for producing a presentation to highlight the key issues in the readings, using additional sources if possible, and relating these to their experiences during the semester. They need to facilitate and manage discussion which will include input from the accompanying experts. For each topic, every student, as their written assignment, needs to produce short summaries of the key issues from the readings, giving their opinions on the topic, and developing several key questions for further discussion during the presentation.

Required readings
Are people and conservation mutually exclusive?
- Igoe, Jim (2004) Conservation and Globalization: A study of national parks and indigenous communities from East Africa to South Dakota, Chapters 1, 2 and 3

Are wildlife management areas a solution?

Is there a solution? Management of the Ngorongoro Crater Authority Area and community participation

How did the Serengeti develop? Background and key issues in the Serengeti

How do people and wildlife interact? Key issues around human-wildlife interaction

What is Serengeti’s future in terms of management complexity and sustainability?

Module 5: Tropical forest ecology
This module takes place at the Mazumbai Forest Reserve, managed by our partner institution, Sokoine University of Agriculture. This is located in the Western Usambara mountains of Tanzania which form part of the Eastern arc mountains stretching into Kenya. Students explore the forest with experienced ethnobotanists and field guides. They integrate these experiences with the readings, student-led presentation based on the readings, and discussion and input from the ethnobotanists. As with module 4, a small group of students presents the key issues arising in the readings, and facilitates discussion. All students produce short summaries of the key issues from the readings, and develop several key questions for further discussion.

Required readings
• Conte, CA (2004). Highland sanctuary: Environmental History in Tanzania’s Usambara mountains, Ohio University Press Pages 1 – 40 (Chapters 1 and 2)

The following reading seminal reading is required reading only for presenters of the seminar:
• Terborgh, James (1992). Diversity and the tropical rain forest, New York: Scientific American Library (Chapters 3, 4 and 5)


Module 6: Traditional or modern? Key issues facing the Maasai today
The foundation of the final module is a three-night stay in the home of a Maasai family in Ngaresero in the Lake Natron area. By this stage of the semester students are aware of a range of issues affecting the Maasai people, and have been exposed to varying opinions about these issues. The homestay experience allows students to see for themselves how Maasai live, and to gain a more personal understanding of their lives and how global and local issues affect them. Following the homestay experiences, a small group of students presents the key issues arising from the readings, and the debriefing of students’ homestay experiences, assisted by the academic director and academic coordinator.
Required readings

- Snyder, M. (2004). Once intrepid warriors: Gender, ethnicity, and the cultural politics of Maasai, Book review, *Africa Today*; Fall 2004; 51, 1; ProQuest Central pg. 124

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

The final grade is based on the following breakdown of assignments:

- Political ecology concepts - presentation 15%
- Political ecology concepts – written assignment 30%
- Mid-term Portfolio 40%
- Participation 15%

The grading scale is as follows:

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