



## **Independent Study Project**

ISPR 3000 (4 Credits / 120 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 in Tanzania. Although students are required to indicate their proposed area of study as part of the admissions process, this is usually revised once in country, or a new topic is developed. The ISP draws on the knowledge and various skills gained from the thematic, language and research methods and ethics seminars, integrating these with students' experiences in homestays and on excursions.

Students work with the academic director and various in-country experts to develop an ISP proposal, schedule interviews, and arrange logistics such as accommodation and translators, as needed to conduct their ISP. With the assistance of the academic director, academic coordinator or ISP coordinator, students select an ISP advisor appropriate to their topic. 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 Wildlife Conservation and Political Ecology 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 research project in a challenging new environment. Students are required to submit a detailed ISP itinerary to the academic director prior to starting their ISP which is reviewed by an ISP Review Board, along with the ISP proposal, to ensure that the ISP

\*This syllabus represents a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

and related logistical arrangements are feasible, safe, and ethical. Students are also required to check in with staff throughout their ISP regarding progress.

## **Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able 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;
- Compose and deliver an original interpretation of their findings demonstrating systematic analysis; and
- Demonstrate awareness of contingencies and complexities of working across cultures.

## **Course Requirements**

In the weeks leading up to the ISP students have numerous opportunities to prepare for the ISP. These include individual meetings with the academic director, academic coordinator, ISP coordinator and ISP advisor. Small group discussions around past ISPs and possible ISP topics also take place in the first few weeks of the program, including input from Tanzanian experts who have considerable experience in working with students on their ISPs. About four weeks into the program a full day seminar is held which includes review of methodologies and data analysis techniques taught in the Environmental Research Methodologies and Ethics Seminar, introduction of the ISP Review Board process worksheet and culminates with a poster showcase of all students' ISP study design for peer, Tanzanian and academic director review. In week 7, students visit their respective ISP sites to clear logistical obstacles (village permissions, accommodations, translators, etc.) and conduct site-specific reconnaissance to hone all major aspects of their ISP and, if possible, pre-test methodologies. The ISP paper and data collection takes place during weeks 11 – 13, when the students are required to collect data for 20 days. The actual number of hours collecting data depends on the ISP, but ranges between 80 – 160 hours. During week 14 of the program the students travel to the program site or to their respective ISP Advisor to receive assistance on predominantly data analysis and other substantive quantitative and qualitative aspects of the report.

The ISP should be a minimum of 20 pages, excluding appendices. Students need to submit an electronic copy to their advisor and to the academic director and the academic coordinator.

Week 15 of the program is in Arusha where students give a 30-minute presentation of their ISP, followed by an additional 15 minutes for questions and discussion.

## **Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

The ISP grade is composed of the following components:

Written Report	80%
Oral Presentation	20%

The overall ISP process also involves developing a detailed and rigorous ISP proposal, and keeping a work journal documenting all work done towards the ISP. However, these are graded as part of the Environmental Research Methods and Ethics seminar.

Evaluation of the ISP report is based on the ISP Advisor, the ISP Coordinator and Academic Director's evaluation of the student's completion and based on criteria outlines in a rubric provided to students during the first few weeks of the semester. Evaluation of oral presentations is also based on a rubric provided to students in the first few weeks of the semester.

### Grading scale

The grading scale for all courses 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

### Recent Independent Study Project Topics and Advisors

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Title	ISP advisor
What, where, why: a survey of <i>Felidae</i> populations at Enashiva Nature Refuge, Tanzania	Dr Oliver Nyakunga, College of Wildlife Management, Mweka
"The Human Beings is Nothing but a Water Baby:" How Water Has Shaped Lives and Livelihood in Tanzania	Max Perel-Slater, Executive Director, Maji Safi Group
Environmental consciousness amongst tourists and Sustainability in Tourism in Tanzania	Dr Reheme Shoo, College of Wildlife Management, Mweka
Distribution, diversity, and den locations of <i>Canidae</i> and <i>Hyaenidae</i> species across habitat type at Enashiva Nature Refuge	Dr Oliver Nyakunga, College of Wildlife Management, Mweka
"If somebody's not farming he or she's not having a good life" – Foodway relationships and implications for cultural reproduction and livelihoods of Chagga women in Mamba, Tanzania	Dr Emmanuel Lyimo, Tanzania <i>Wildlife</i> Research Institute
Identity, paramilitary and a new culture of conservation: Perceptions of ranger trainees at the Pasiansi Institute, Mwanza, Tanzania	Oscar Paschal Nyakunga, Academic Coordinator, SIT TZE
The Relationship of Traditional Healers to their Medicinal Plants Through Treatment of Mental Illness in Sagara Village, Tanzania	Dr. Felicity Kitchin, Academic Director, School for International Training
Utilization and Accessibility of <i>Securinaga Virosa</i> for Medical Use in Morogoro Municipality	Dr. Hezron Nonga, School of Veterinary and Medical Sciences, Sokoine University of Agriculture

Perceived Predator Risk by Prey Species at Enashiva Nature Refuge	Oscar Paschal Nyakunga, Academic Coordinator, SIT TZE
Community Involvement in the Conservation of Mount Kilimanjaro: What stake do local communities living adjacent to Kilimanjaro National Park have in its conservation, and to what extent are they sustainably involved?	Dr Emmanuel Lyimo, Tanzania <i>Wildlife</i> Research Institute
“Teach a Man to Fish” Compiling a local’s guide to fishing in Ushongo Mtoni, Tanzania	Dr Alfred Gideon Mseja, College of Wildlife Management, Mweka
Fungal pathogens of <i>Newtonia Buchananii</i> , <i>Ocotea Usambarensis</i> , and <i>Syzygium Guineense</i> across four altitudinal bands	Dr Alex Kisingo, College of Wildlife Management, Mweka and Mr Kiparu, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Mazumbai
A Comparison of Community Involvement in Conservation: Ushongo and Ngare Sero, Tanzania	Dr Masuruli, College of Wildlife Management, Mweka and Dr Kitchin, Academic Director, SIT
Be the Rainforest. Taste the Rainforest: A catalogue of edible plant species found in Mazumbai Forest	Mr Kiparu, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Mazumbai
Feeding Preference of Twiga ( <i>Giraffa maasai</i> ) at Enashiva Nature Refuge	Dr Obeid Mahenya, College of Wildlife Management, Mweka
Livestock and Human Health: The role of water and people’s perspectives	Dr Nonga, Prof Kazwali, School of Veterinary and Medical Sciences, Sokoine University of Agriculture
Vulnerability and Resilience: The Farmers of Sagara Village	Dr Felicity Kitchin, Academic Director, School for International Training
Thieving Behaviors of Olive Baboons ( <i>Papio anubis</i> ) at the Loduare Gate, Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania	Francis Richard Makari, Ass Livestock Officer, Ngorongoro Crater Authority Area
Education is the Key to Life: An Investigation into the Value placed on Education by different Stakeholders in Mgwashi and Kizanda Villages	Dr Felicity Kitchin, Academic Director, School for International Training
The Mystery of the Missing Thumbs: Evolutionary Advantages of Pollex Reduction in <i>Colobus angolensis palliatus</i>	Dr Oliver Nyakunga, College of Wildlife Management, Mweka
Superimposed Spatial Distributions of Environmental Risk and Socioeconomic Status in Spontaneous Housing	Dr Felicity Kitchin, Academic Director, School for International Training
Maasai Farmers: A case study of community perceptions of continuity and change following livelihood diversification in Loiborsoit and Mungerre, TZ	Dr Felicity Kitchin, Academic Director, School for International Training
Local Perceptions of Environmental Ethics: A Study of Environmental Education Methods and Conservation Efforts in Kizanda Village, West Usambara Mountains	Ms. Alodia Machuma, College of Wildlife Management, Mweka

**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 you at Orientation.

**Student research** (the Independent Study Project and Field Study Project) is a product of field work and as such students have an obligation to assess both the positive and negative consequences of their field study. Ethical field work, as stipulated in the SIT Statement of Ethics, results in products that are shared with local and academic communities; therefore copies of ISP/FSPs are returned to the sponsoring institutions and the host communities, at the discretion of the institution(s) and/or community involved. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad may archive, copy, or convert the ISP/FSP for non-commercial use, for preservation purposes, and to ensure future accessibility. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad archives my ISP/FSP in the permanent collection at the SIT Study Abroad local country program office and/or at any World Learning office. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad has a non-exclusive, perpetual right to store and make available, including electronic online open access, to the ISP/FSP. Students retain all ownership rights of the ISP/FSP product and retain the right to use all, or part, of my project in future works. Please refer to the Student Handbook or the Access, Use, and Publication of ISP and FSP form.

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at [disabilityservices@sit.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@sit.edu) for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.