

NRES 479- International Environmental Studies Seminar- Kenya  
Spring 2019 (Mondays 4-5:50pm in TNR 361)

**Instructors:**

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Office hours (TNR 363): M 12-1, T 10-11, and by appointment

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Office hours: by appointment

This course will expose students to the culture, history, language, and environmental issues of Kenya. Additionally, this course will provide logistical information to prepare students for travel abroad.

**Objectives:** At the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a familiarity with both the historic and contemporary cultures within Kenya.
2. Demonstrate a familiarity with the environmental issues and related policies in Kenya.
3. Demonstrate a familiarity with Kenyan geography, including locations being visited.
4. Understand their role as ambassadors of the U.S., the State of Wisconsin, UW-Stevens Point, and the College of Natural Resources.

**Required readings:** There is no assigned text for this class; we will provide required readings, and they will be posted as .pdf documents in D2L.

We will be reading chapters from four books:

Hoffman, Carl. 2010. *The Lunatic Express*. Broadway Paperbacks, New York.

Kapuscinski, Ryszard. 2001. *The Shadow of the Sun*. Vintage International, New York.

Kenyatta, Jomo. 1965. *Facing Mt. Kenya*. Vintage books, New York.

Meredith, Martin. 2006. *The State of Africa: A History of Fifty Years of Independence*. Free Press, London.

Other recommended readings:

Achebe, Chinua. 1958. *Things Fall Apart*. Anchor books, New York.

Achebe, Chinua. 1966. *Chike and the River*. Anchor books, New York.

Eggers, David. 2006. *What is the What*. Vintage Books, New York.

Kingsolver, Barbara. 1998. *The Poisonwood Bible*. HarperPerennial, New York.

**Grading:** Grades will be based upon the following:

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|------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Attendance                | 20% |
| 2. Reading reflection        | 40% |
| 3. Current issues assignment | 40% |

Scale: >90%	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
<60%	F

Failure of this course will prevent you from being able to participate in the Kenya experience.

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory for all lecture periods. Students will be required to sign in at the beginning of each lecture period. Advanced notice of an absence is required.

**Language requirement:** Each student will be responsible for learning simple words and phrases in Swahili, one of the official languages on Kenya (in addition to English). On April 1, you will have the opportunity to practice Swahili with Susan Schuller, RPCV Tanzania.

**Language resources:** The CNR maintains one set of 5 CDs and one single disk program to learn Swahili. You can stop by Jessica Tomaszewski's walk-in hours in TNR 122 to check them out. Here are some online resources that are useful:

<http://www.101languages.net/swahili/swahili-word-list/>

<http://www.omniglot.com/language/phrases/swahili.php> (click on each word for audio pronunciation)

<http://www.glcom.com/hassan/index.html>

<http://goafrica.about.com/od/peopleandculture/a/swahili.htm>

**Reading reflection:** We will be reading chapters from four books (listed above), to help give you a background and understanding of history and culture in Kenya and other parts of Africa.

1. Write a one-page summary of each chapter.
2. Reflect on the following things, using examples from the chapters (2-3 pages total):
  - a. Reflect on how cultural, historical, and geographical/political issues are all intertwined in these readings. Think about how similar or different these issues are in the U.S., using examples to strengthen your answers.
  - b. What is the author's perspective, and how does it influence the story, introduce bias, etc.?
  - c. Reflect on your own personal bias/assumptions/perspectives, going into this course. What assumptions are you bringing with you, based on your own experiences, and how might these change after being part of the course? How were some of your assumptions exemplified in the readings, or were some assumptions proved incorrect or different?

**Current issues assignment:** For this assignment, you will research two current, major and unrelated 'issues' in Kenya; political, environmental, cultural, financial, etc. You can work in groups of 2, or work alone. You will present these issues to the class during class on April 29; Presentations can be in the form of a powerpoint presentation (not too many slides) but powerpoint or other computer software is not necessary. Presentations should be no more than 5 minutes, and we will have a few minutes following for questions/discussion. \*\*\*I don't want anyone in the class covering the same exact issue/topic, so you must sign up for a topic with me ASAP to avoid repeats. You can send me an email, visit me during office hours, or talk to me before/after class to see if your topics have been chosen by someone else. Please do not spend a lot of time researching your issue before you have confirmation from me that no one else is covering it.\*\*\*

You will also need to write a brief description of each issue (1 paragraph is fine), as well as provide links to specific resources that you used (use at least 3 sources for each issue). Try to be as broad as possible. For example, what do you think are some major environmental issues facing the US today? You might talk about climate change, the Gulf oil spill, renewable energy, etc. You will have 2 paragraphs total (one for each issue) that should be uploaded to Canvas before 4pm (class time) on May 6.

### Tentative Course Schedule- Spring 2019

Date	Content
March 25	Introduction/ course schedule
April 1	Swahili lessons- Susan Schuller
April 8	Former students will visit and share photos & experiences
April 15	CWES meeting (CNR students only); CPS 116; no class for non-CWES students
April 22	History, Politics and Environment- Kenya
April 29	Current issues student presentations
May 6	Last-minute planning/ packing/ etc.
	No meeting during final exam period

