

**NOTE: This is a sample syllabus. All links and readings will be updated four weeks prior to departure. Activities are subject to change. This sample syllabus is for informational purposes only.**

**REC/GRY 315: Ecotourism**

SUNY Cortland  
SAB 329/529  
Ecotourism: Tanzania & Zanzibar

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:**

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**Course Description:** Students will engage in applied learning, field observations, and reflective processing to explore and understand the contextual impacts and opportunities associated with ecotourism in Tanzania and Zanzibar, and more broadly the cultural, economic and environmental resources that intersect within the region

Through cultural immersion and hands-on experiential learning students will address principles and practices in ecotourism operations and responsible travel.

**About This Course:** Ecotourism 329/529 provides opportunities for experiential learning across a variety of majors and disciplines. Content is delivered via a hybrid course that has an online component and an immersion component through partnerships with local non-profit organizations. Students will address: 1). Environmental issues related to conservation. 2). Cultural impacts and opportunities associated with ecotourism approaches as opposed to mass tourism. 3), The potential for equitable economic opportunities via responsible travel and the preservation of natural capital.

**Instructional Style:** This is a hybrid course with online assignments pre and post excursion. The online component will be delivered via Blackboard. A pin number for accessing the Blackboard course site will be provided once the student is registered and no later than two weeks prior to departure. Internet access is required for the online component. The location-based component of the course is structured on an experiential learning model where students will participate in “hands-on” activities in partnership with local guides and instructors. In addition to hands-on learning, students will participate in processing and reflection activities throughout the trip.

Together the students, instructor, guides, and local community members co-generate learning.

**Course Rational:** This course is based on a transformative service-learning pedagogy that delivers a precise sequence of activities (contextual border crossing, dissonance, personalizing, processing, reflection, and integration). The design is generated to elevate the student's personal experience while enriching it academically.

Learning opportunities are embedded in activities throughout the program's itinerary and enhanced through methods typically associated with service-learning: cross-cultural engagement, field notes, dialogue, reflective journaling, and a cumulative analysis of how the experience will be integrated into the students' personal, academic, and professional aspirations.

### **Course Objectives**

- 1. Identify ecotourism sustainability issues and opportunities in relation to cultural, environmental, and economic frameworks.**
- 2. Analyze and evaluate impacts associated with ecotourism projects in the context of the destination communities.**
- 3. Synthesize how ecotourism operations may minimize impacts, maximize resources, promote equity and generate collaborative approaches to create positive relations and shared economic prosperity at a regional level.**
- 4. Describe the impacts of the course on the student's personal, professional and academic goals and aspirations.**

### **Resources**

**Explore these ecotourism resources:**

Global Sustainable Tourism Council (go to "for travelers" link): <https://www.gstcouncil.org/>

International Ecotourism Society: <http://www.ecotourism.org/>

UNWTO: <https://www.unwto.org/responsible-tourist>

**Required readings, podcasts and videos will be made available four weeks prior to departure.**

***Additional content and assignments for graduate students will be shared separately.***

### **Required materials:**

You will need two notebooks. One notebook is for your field notes. The ideal notebook for this purpose is a 6 in. x 9 in. center ruled Steno Book. These can be found in most college

bookstores. The centerline assists in putting your observations on one side and your corresponding interpretation of your observation on the other. You'll also need a notebook or some type of writing journal for your reflective journal. A ziplock bag may be useful in protecting your notebooks from the elements. Bring several pens as they can be difficult to find in our host communities.

**Assignments:**

Assignments are described in the course outline and evaluation section of this syllabus. One principle of ecotourism is quality over quantity. Likewise, I am more concerned about the quality of your assignments as opposed to the quantity. Therefore, while assignments may be brief in length they require genuine depth of thought. All pre-departure assignments are due three days prior to departure (you can submit well in advance of that) and post-excursion assignments are due no later than seven days after returning from the trip.

**Course Outline:**

The dates and activities for the experiential portion of this course are subject to change. In fact, while traveling one should be receptive to change as it is often unavoidable. During the immersive portion, the modules' assignment section provides prompts for your dialogue circles, field notes, and reflective journaling. The reflective journal assignment (extracting themes and exemplar quotes) isn't due until after your return.

Date	Topic	Assignment
Prior to departure	<p>Welcome, course overview, cultural awareness and responsible travel. A Webex session will be scheduled to welcome everyone to the course.</p> <p>READ the syllabus and begin exploring resources. You'll be watching, listening, and reading multiple resources to give you the knowledge necessary to be a responsible traveler.</p> <p>Self-assessment assignment (submit on Blackboard)</p>	<p>Submit self-assessment survey via Blackboard.</p> <p><i>All pre-departure assignments are due no later than three days prior to departure</i></p>
Prior to departure	Principles of ecotourism and sustainable development (submit on Blackboard)	<p>Per the ecotourism resources, identify two key principles of ecotourism that you find most significant. Describe these principles and why, based on your academic or personal interests, you find these principles most relevant. <b>Submit on Blackboard Approx. 1-2 pages (APA).</b></p>

Prior to departure	<p>Context building for the three imperatives of ecotourism and sustainable development (submit on Blackboard):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cultural/historical (provide example)</li> <li>2. Economic (provide example)</li> <li>3. Environmental (provide example)</li> </ol>	<p>Having read, listened, and watched multiple resources, identify and explain one issue you found most interesting for each of the three imperatives. For instance, for the cultural historical imperative you could discuss what you learned about population change. You'd then identify another issue for each of the remaining two imperatives. Site the source for each of the issues you identified and explained.</p>
Day 1	<p>Travel day and orientation</p> <p>Walking tour</p> <p><b>Arrive Stone Town</b></p>	<p>Program overview and expectations</p> <p>Welcome to the class. Introductions. Overview of field notes, dialogue circles, and reflective journaling.</p>
Day 2	<p>Pillars and principles of ecotourism.</p> <p>Geopolitical history: Context of place</p> <p>The Three Ethics of Ecotourism</p> <p><b>Welcome to village of Kairo...orientation and tour</b></p>	<p>.</p> <p>Dialogue circle</p> <p>Key observations and interpretations from your field notes (<i>your observations and interpretations will be shared at the beginning of every dialogue circle. A dialogue circle student leader will be appointed and provided with instructions for leading the conversation</i>).</p> <p>Reflective writing --- how are you experiencing the transition from your cultural comfort zone to your new setting?</p>
Day 3	<p>Culture</p>	<p>Dialogue circle – how do the local projects relate to the principles of sustainable development you identified prior to arriving?</p> <p>Strength-based approaches.</p> <p>Issues and challenges. What would it look like if it “worked”?</p>

		<p>Reflective writing: how does your academic experience connect to your experience on the ground? What are you looking forward to?</p>
Day 4	Regenerative Agriculture	<p>Dialogue circle --- culture and the environment</p> <p>Reflective writing: what innovative sustainable ideas have impressed you? Any thoughts on how some of these principles could be implemented in your community?</p>
Day 5	Geopolitics and responsible travel	<p>Dialogue circle --- what is to be preserved and who decides, indigenous issues.</p>
Module 6	<p>Economics, issues of equity, and social justice.</p> <p>Considering the cultural context of development: responsible travel.</p>	<p>Dialogue circle --- what are some of the economic factors you identified prior to arrival? How have you experienced those issues thus far on the ground? How are you, through your participation in this course, addressing some of these issues?</p> <p>Reflective writing: How is culture shaping you? How is this experience challenging you?</p>
Day 7	Transformative travel	<p>Dialogue circle --- discovering your agency in complex systems</p> <p>Reflective writing: what is the role of the individual in addressing systemic change?</p>
Day 8	<p>Economics, issues of equity, and social justice.</p> <p>History of exploitation: from slaves, to diamonds, to cellphones.</p> <p><a href="#">Foreign aid as an obstacle to self-reliance?</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.academia.edu/7288922/Foreign-Aid-and-Self-Reliance-in-Post-">http://www.academia.edu/7288922/Foreign-Aid-and-Self-Reliance-in-Post-</a></p>	<p>Dialogue circle --- what are some of the economic factors you identified prior to arrival? How have you experienced those issues thus far on the ground? How are you, through your participation with GIVE and this course addressing some of these issues?</p> <p>Reflective writing: What do you have and what do you need?</p>

	<a href="#">Socialist Tanzania The Case of the Distribution of Mosquito Bed Nets</a>	
Day 9	<p>Handprint vs. footprint.</p> <p>The “footprint” concept seeks to minimize your environmental impact. The “handprint” concept is a proactive approach to improving conditions.</p> <p>See video at:</p>	<p>Dialogue circle --- how are the sustainable development goals being realized at the local level?</p> <p>Reflective writing: What handprints are you leaving here? How might you continue making a positive difference when you return?</p>
Day 10	<p>People, places, and the precautionary principle.</p> <p>Asset Based Community Development in a fragile Small Island State.</p> <p><b>Spice Island Tour</b></p>	<p>Dialogue circle --- environmental, cultural, and economic conditions are interrelated. Share an example of how you see these three dimensions being interwoven and what does it mean?</p> <p>Reflective writing: how do you personally deal with the complexity of the issues and challenges that surround you? How do you see yourself addressing some of these issues once you return?</p>
Day 11	<p>Education and human rights.</p> <p>Developing and delivering an English language after-school program</p> <p>Environmental impacts of educating young girls..</p>	<p>Dialogue circle --- how do the local children perceive education? How do your peers perceive education?</p> <p>Reflective writing: what are you grateful for?</p>
Day 12	<p>Sustainable design.</p> <p>When is a plastic bottle not just a plastic bottle?</p> <p><b>Depart for two-day safari in Nyerere National Park, Tanzania</b></p>	<p>Dialogue circle --- how is the building project grounded in the principles of sustainability?</p> <p>Reflective writing: what innovative sustainable ideas have impressed you? Any thoughts on how some of these principles could be better implemented in your community?</p>
Day 13	<p>Safari: international dimensions of poaching.</p> <p><a href="http://www.fastcoexist.com/3026125/rfid-tagged-rhinos-and-smart-watering-holes-the-google-funded-tech-fighting-poaching">http://www.fastcoexist.com/3026125/rfid-tagged-rhinos-and-smart-watering-holes-the-google-funded-tech-fighting-poaching</a></p>	<p>Dialogue circle --- what were your favorite moments? Does your knowledge of the challenges facing the “big five”, enhance or detract from your experience?</p> <p>Reflective writing: can you appreciate what you don’t understand? What do you value?</p>
Day 14	Expanding the ecotourism dialogue.	

	Advocacy and continues engagement  <b>Depart from Arusha</b>	Reflective writing: What themes have begun to emerge from your experience? How will you keep and share these themes?
Post trip Reflective journal	Processing  Extracting key content from reflective journal.	Reflective journal assignment  You will submit a summary of your reflective journal by identifying and sharing the key emergent themes from your journal. These themes are the distillation of the moments, experiences, observations, issues, impacts, and insights that you found most significant or meaningful. Do so by finding quotes and excerpts from your journal that best reflect these critical experiences.
Post trip online portfolio assignment	Integration  Generate a multi-media presentation (annotated Powerpoint, photos and/or video) on how this experience impacted you professionally, personally, and academically. Share the story of your journey and its impact.	Portfolio  The portfolio presentation is designed to be shared with groups of interest. Students will identify three opportunities to share their presentation with these groups.  Portfolio is due within one week after your return (if you have an add-on or additional travels, submit the portfolio within one week of your return from your extended stay).

**Evaluation:** There are 100 points available for this class. Letter grades will be assigned based on the following point system:

- 1) Pre-departure on-line assignments --- 25 points
  - a) Self-assessment survey to frame the preconceptions of the upcoming experience and your intentions for being a responsible traveler (5 pts).
  - b) Principles of ecotourism. Identify two principles, i.e. pillars, which drive ecotourism activities and give an example of how these principles are being addressed (5 pts).
  - c) Context building: Navigate the resources and discover information pertaining to cultural/historical, economic, and environmental issues. Select topics within each of the three dimensions and identify and explain the issues and there relevancy (15 pts).

2) Participation --- 25 points

Experiential learning requires a commitment to fully and positively participate in all programs, projects and activities. Participation will be evaluated with the on-site lead guides. A rubric for evaluating participation will be reviewed on site.

3) Processing and Reflective Journal --- 25 points

Students shall keep a double entry field journal noting key observations and their interpretation of those observations. These notes will be shared as part of regularly scheduled group dialogues. The notes and group discussions will enhance the students' ability to process and reflect on their experience. Each student will generate a reflective journal. Reflection is a critical dimension of experiential learning. Excerpts and emergent themes from the journal will be shared with the instructor. .

4) Final Project --- 25 points

The culminating project synthesizes the experiences and assignments above into a presentation that communicates the impact of the course personally, academically, and professionally. The students may select from a variety of mediums (video, annotated Powerpoint) to convey their findings. Students will identify three groups for sharing their presentation. This may include presenting the portfolio in a class, to a club, or at a conference.

Letter grades will be assigned based on the total points earned out of the 100 available points.

**Instructor Policies:**

The instructor reserves the right to add or delete assignments. The course outline is a tentative schedule and may be modified to meet class needs.

**A note regarding international experiential learning:**

Experiential learning in another setting is demanding physically, emotionally, and intellectually. In order to ensure a more positive experience for all involved, please consider the following:

- Be prepared. As the itinerary outlines, you will be in challenging, sometimes remote environments. A positive attitude is essential to a positive experience.
- Be ready to work physically and intellectually: we will be applying lessons with hands-on experiences. You'll get dirty. Dig in.
- Not only complete your online assignments prior to departure, but capture the meaning so you can share your findings with the group.
- The course is designed to generate opportunities for observation, engagement, and personal reflection. These objectives can be enhanced through positive group dynamics. Your willingness to participate, work as a member of a team, and be respectful of one another and all those we encounter is essential to a positive learning experience.
- When traveling, there are many variables that can influence a trip; transportation delays, weather, distance from services and facilities, etc. It is essential that we remain adaptive to changing circumstances and be patient with ourselves and those around us.
- Your attention, engagement, participation, and intellectual contributions are essential. You will be in a beautiful and sometimes challenging environment. Don't lose sight of your commitment to the course and the corresponding respect for those guides and guests who are facilitating your learning experience.



- Communicate. Communicate with your instructor, communicate with your guides. Be proactive and timely in conveying any information that may impact your performance in the course.
- We are responsible for co-generating learning. Ultimately, the quality of your experience largely depends on your willingness to invest yourself in the learning process.

This syllabus has been created as a guide to this course and is as accurate as possible. However, all information is subjected to modification to meet the needs of the class.

### **CLASS POLICIES:**

Contacting the instructor: Email will be used as the primary means of contact: [cohenk@cortland.edu](mailto:cohenk@cortland.edu). My office phone is 607-753-2574 should you need to contact me directly.

**Assignment Requirements:** All assignments must be typewritten (except Participation Points). Work done in this class is to be original, done exclusively for this class, and in compliance with departmental standards for written work. Please proofread carefully for spelling, grammatical errors, and paragraph organization.

**Participation:** Students are expected to participate in all course activities. Failure to participate may result in a failing grade. Disruptive, inappropriate or dangerous behavior that interferes with the instructor's ability to deliver the course or other students ability to participate safely and effectively in the course may result in the student being removed from the course per SUNY Cortland's International Program policies.

### SUNY Cortland Policies

- **Academic Integrity:** The College is an academic community that values academic integrity and takes seriously its responsibility for upholding academic honesty. All members of the academic community have an obligation to uphold high intellectual and ethical standards. All students are expected to uphold academic integrity standards. Plagiarism is defined as taking the ideas of others and using them as one's own without due credit. Students who cheat in examinations, course assignments, or plagiarize in this course may be disciplined in accordance with university rules and regulations. (College Handbook, Chapter 340)
- **Diversity:** SUNY Cortland is dedicated to the premise that every individual is important in a unique way and contributes to the overall quality of the institution. We define diversity broadly to include all aspects of human difference. The College is committed to inclusion, equity, and access and thus committed to creating and sustaining a climate that is equitable, respectful and free from prejudice for students, faculty and staff. We value diversity in the learning environment and know that it enhances our ability to inspire students to learn, lead and serve in a changing world. We are committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive campus through the recruitment and retention of faculty, staff and students. As a community, we hold important the democracy of ideas, tempered by a commitment to free speech and the standards of inquiry and debate. To this end, we are dedicated to developing and sustaining a learning environment where it is safe to explore our differences and celebrate the richness inherent in our pluralistic society. (College Handbook, Chapter 130)
- **Requests for Accommodations for Disabilities:** As part of SUNY Cortland's commitment to a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment, we strive to provide students with equal access to all courses. If you believe you will require accommodations in this course, please place a request with the Disability Resources Office at [disability.resources@cortland.edu](mailto:disability.resources@cortland.edu) or call 607-753-2967. Please note that accommodations are generally not provided retroactively so timely contact with the Disability Resources Office is important. All students should consider meeting with their course instructor who may be helpful in other ways. (College Handbook, Chapter 745)
- **Title IX:** Title IX, when combined with New York Human Rights Law and the New York Education Law 129-B, prohibits discrimination, harassment and violence based on sex, gender, gender identity/expression, and/or sexual orientation in the

education setting. The federal Clery Act and NY Education Law 129-B provide certain rights and responsibilities after an incident of sexual or interpersonal violence. When a violation occurs, victims and survivors are eligible for campus and community resources. Where the College has jurisdiction, it may investigate and take action in accordance with College policy. If you or someone you know wishes to report discrimination based in sex, gender, gender identity/expression, and/or sexual orientation, or wishes to report sexual harassment, sexual violence, stalking or relationship violence, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at 607-753-4550, or visit [cortland.edu/titleix](http://cortland.edu/titleix) to learn about all reporting options and resources. (Updated by SUNY Legal Feb. 1, 2018)." (Title IX <http://www2.cortland.edu/titleix>)

- **Inclusive Learning Environment:** SUNY Cortland is committed to a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment. The course instructor honors this commitment and respects and values differences. All students enrolled in this course are expected to be considerate of others, promote a collaborative and supportive educational environment, and demonstrate respect for individuals with regard to ability or disability, age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity/expression, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or other aspects of identity. In an environment that fosters inclusion, students have the opportunity to bring their various identities into conversation as they find helpful, but are not expected to represent or speak for an entire group of people who share aspects of an identity. If you have any questions or concerns about this statement, contact the Institutional Equity and Inclusion Office at 607-753-2263. (IEIO <http://www2.cortland.edu/about/diversity/>)
- **Communication and Language:** Knowing how to communicate effectively with all members of a community is a crucial skill for those in recreation and leisure studies. The use of certain words or phrases can express gender, ethnic, or racial bias, either intentionally or unintentionally. The same is true of language referring to persons with disabilities, which in many instances can perpetuate negative stereotypes and disparaging attitudes. The Recreation, Parks and Leisure Studies Department's commitment to cultural competence supports the removal of bias in language against persons on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic group, disability, or age within written classroom assignments, presentations, lectures, and everyday interactions. The Recreation, Parks and Leisure Studies Department chooses to convey respect through language that is accurate, positive, and inclusive. This practice is consistent with the American Psychological Association Publication Manual's guidelines for reducing bias in language.
- **Use of Electronic Communication Devices in RPLS Classes:** As a member of the college community, each student has a responsibility to other students who are members of the classroom community. Because of their disruptive nature, the Recreation, Parks and Leisure Studies Department prohibits the use by students of cell phones, PDAs, or similar communication devices during scheduled classes. **All such devices must be turned off or put in a silent mode and should not be taken out during class.** Variations and exceptions to this policy may be granted at the discretion of the instructor. Use of cell phones, similar communication devices, or any unauthorized electronic data storage device in testing situations, other than to receive College emergency notifications, may constitute a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy and lead to sanctions under the 340.02 Violation of Academic Integrity Policy.
- **Sustainability:** In the Recreation, Parks and Leisure Studies Department, we believe in the necessity of environmental responsibility. Respect and care for the natural environment is embedded in our department's history. As best as possible, we promote and practice sustainability for the world as we use resources for teaching, scholarship, service, and personal use. As we model and advocate for environmental stewardship, our goal is to move students to internalize stewardship of community and global resources and carry it into their own professional and personal lives.

Contact Information for the School of Professional Studies:

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