

2004-2005

PROGRAM IN

K E N Y A



ST. LAWRENCE
UNIVERSITY

Canton, New York 13617

St. Lawrence University
Kenya Semester Program
(established in 1974)

Introduction St. Lawrence University's semester-long study program in Kenya has for thirty-one years offered a remarkable, multifaceted, intensively cross-cultural opportunity that intertwines classroom instruction and field learning. The program's home base is in Nairobi, the capital, but students spend many weeks on various field components, including homestays in a rural, agricultural community and two two-week field trips – one emphasizing issues of culture and development, the other issues of environment, rangeland ecology and wildlife conservation. Students also have a three-week homestay with a family in urban Nairobi. Through direct interaction with several of the many ethnic groups who make up Kenya and with Kenyans from many different walks of life, students learn to appreciate the diversity and the creativity of Kenyans as well as the complexity of the challenges they face.

The program serves majors from a number of different disciplines. Some of the issues considered are: conflicts between sustainable development and democratization; cultural development, westernization and the maintenance of indigenous traditions; economic growth and equity; the balance between conservation, biodiversity, and ecological change.

The academic program includes two required courses and two electives. Study of **Kiswahili**, the national language of Kenya, is required of all students. While English is the language of instruction and government, Kenya also has over forty different languages which are the mother tongues of distinct ethnic groups; Kiswahili was developed by early traders as a hybrid language which facilitated communication among the different groups. It is spoken by about 45 million people in eastern and central Africa. Although prior study of the language is not required, learning Kiswahili is one of the most important ways of gaining access to the people and their cultures.

The second required course is titled **Culture, Environment and Development in East Africa**. This course integrates the several field components, including the final, four-week-long

independent field study, and the home stay experiences, providing a context in which students reflect on their varied experiences through analytical perspectives drawn from several disciplines.

Setting Lying on the Equator, Kenya is a unique and varied land. The tropical Indian Ocean belt gives way to vast, semi-arid savannas that dominate 70 percent of the country and support several pastoralist populations. Central and western Kenya are characterized by well-watered fertile agricultural zones which are densely populated. Cutting a swath through the center of the country is the Great Rift Valley, flanked by magnificent escarpments, volcanic massifs and the snowcapped peaks of Mount Kenya and Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest summits.

To the west the country is bounded by Lake Victoria, source of the Nile River. The cosmopolitan capital city of Nairobi, rising from the plateau of south-central Kenya, is the home base of our program. Students will also gain familiarity with many of the rural areas, in which approximately 85 percent of the country's population resides.

Eligibility Off-campus study is an opportunity open to sophomore, junior and senior students with appropriate academic preparation, motivation, and interest in a relevant area. Students currently on disciplinary, social, or academic probation are not eligible to apply for, or participate in, off-campus study programs. Second-semester seniors must petition to participate.

Students **must** have completed at least one course with significant Africa or diaspora content prior to participation.

Admission to this program is based on the quality of application. Candidates must present a coherent academic rationale for participation in the Kenya Semester Program and a record of academic performance that demonstrates ability to meet the challenges of off-campus study. Normally, this means a GPA of at least 2.8, but the selection committee considers closely the candidate's rationale for participation and academic record as a whole. Candidates for the Kenya Program must also present evidence of maturity, responsibility and cultural sensitivity.

An interview is a required part of the application. If an on-campus interview is not possible, candidates are required to participate in a detailed telephone interview.

Orientation All St. Lawrence students are required to attend a series of orientation meetings on campus prior to their departure. Both St. Lawrence and non-St. Lawrence students will receive written material that includes information covered in the orientation meetings. Topics covered in the orientation meetings and printed information include medical requirements, health and safety issues, cultural adjustment, Kiswahili phrases, the program's structure and calendar, flight and arrival information, and a suggested packing list. Parents will receive a copy of the orientation handbook also.

Once in Kenya, all students participate in an intensive orientation program designed to prepare them for their initial experiences in Kenya and to get acquainted with the other participants. They receive an in-depth introduction to conversational Swahili and discuss a number of the critical issues facing contemporary Kenya. Faculty and classes are introduced, as well as the overall focus and emphasis of the Kenya Semester. Special attention is given to orienting students to the dynamics of rural agricultural Kenyan society and the practicalities of living in that environment. Immediately following orientation, in a total cultural immersion situation, each student will live, individually, with a representative, agricultural family for one week.

Curriculum Students travel to Kenya at approximately the beginning of the regular St. Lawrence semester: mid-August for the fall; mid-January for the spring. Whichever semester students choose, they will be in Kenya for about four months.

Whether matriculated at St. Lawrence or elsewhere, all students must take four courses to earn full-semester credit.

Required Courses Students must register for two required courses:

1. ***Kiswahili*** at the appropriate level (1 SLU unit or 3.6 credits)

Elementary Kiswahili 101, 102
Intermediate Kiswahili 103, 104

or

Advanced Kiswahili 201, 202

2. ***African Studies 337/Anthropology 348: Culture, Environment and Development in East Africa*** (1.5 SLU units or 5.4 credits)

The course aims to help students absorb, analyze, and synthesize diverse -- but linked -- field experiences, using a variety of analytical frameworks. The course includes: semester-long common readings, seminar discussions, a rural, agricultural home stay (1 week), an urban home stay (3 weeks), an environment/wildlife conservation focused field study (2

weeks), a culture/development field study (2 weeks), an advanced topic unit or independent field study (4 weeks), and several student writing assignments and other projects, culminating in a final essay.

The advanced topic unit and the 4-week independent field study are conducted in the last month of the semester (after the elective course work has been completed). The academic director normally offers a field-based advanced topic in conservation biology as an option for a small number of students. Other students work independently in placements which are organized by the program with various government agencies, research groups, and non-governmental organizations. This experience is designed to allow students to explore in some depth issues raised in the core course; students will be placed in assignments that complement their academic interests and complement the core course. In the past, independent field study placements have allowed students to pursue interests in: animal behavior, aquaculture, archaeology, biochemical research, health development, ecology, economics, financial management and planning, geology, marketing research and development, medicine, ranch management, rural development, teaching, traditional arts and crafts, and veterinary medicine.

Elective Courses Students choose **two** elective courses. Electives currently offered are:

- **AFS 348/ENVS 348: Biodiversity Conservation and Management in East Africa** (1 SLU unit; 3.6 credits)
- **AFS 354/HIST 354: Introduction to the History of Modern Kenya** (1 SLU unit; 3.6 credits)
- **AFS 349/ANTH 349: Health, Sickness and Healing in Kenya** (1 SLU unit; 3.6 credits)
- **AFS 326/GOVT 326/SOC 326: Critical Issues in Socio-Economic Development in Kenya** (1 SLU unit; 3.6 credits)

The teaching faculty are drawn from the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University. All faculty possess advanced academic degrees.

For research and study, students use the University of Nairobi library, where reading and reserve book privileges have been extended to participants in the St. Lawrence program. We also maintain a small library at our study center in Karen, a Nairobi suburb (see below, under Living Accommodations). We

encourage students to make use of other resource centers and libraries in Nairobi.

Extracurricular Activities When not involved in classroom or field-based study, students may travel on their own within Kenya, unless circumstances make it unwise. They must travel with at least one companion from the program, and the program staff must be informed of all travel plans. Extracurricular weekend trips may also be organized by the program staff, expenses being shared by all who participate.

Credit For St. Lawrence students, credits earned while participating in the Kenya Semester Program are considered resident credits; therefore, no special residency waivers are required, nor is there any transfer of credit. Each student registers for the normal four-course load, and grades are averaged into each student's cumulative St. Lawrence G.P.A.

While all courses taught in Kenya have been approved for St. Lawrence credit, some departments may limit the number of courses taken abroad that may count toward a major, or they may have other regulations about how such courses fit into a major. For dual listed courses, students must indicate when they register in Kenya under which department they want the course listed. Students, therefore, must confer with their advisors and department chairpersons well in advance of going abroad in order to plan their academic programs and avoid problems.

Living Accommodations The St. Lawrence University Study Center is located on 5 1/2 acres in the Nairobi suburb of Karen, eight miles from the city center. Transportation to and from the city is provided by program vehicles. For the brief periods during which all students are together, they live in a large dormitory. The program's academic and administrative directors and the assistant director -- and their families -- live on the property and are easily accessible. Linens, blankets and morning and evening meals are provided, as are weekly lunch stipends.

Advisement Students planning to study abroad should meet with their advisors in order to plan a tentative program of study while in Kenya and, as far as possible, the remainder of their undergraduate career. The program directors are the liaison with the St. Lawrence campus. SLU students will receive materials from the Registrar and other on-campus offices -- as

well as news from campus -- to ensure a smooth transition upon their return.

Cost

The basic charge per semester is the same as the St. Lawrence comprehensive fee for a semester (in 2004 - 05, \$19,012.50). This covers tuition, room and board, and all program activities throughout the semester. It does not include airfare (approximately \$1,500 from JFK in 2004), immunizations, fees for passports and visas. Upon arrival in Kenya, students must have \$225 in cash to cover the following charges: \$50 for course materials, \$75 damage deposit which covers a cell phone and damage to SLU property; \$100 for local health insurance (required in addition to basic insurance coverage, see below). Students need additional funds for personal spending and travel. In past years students' personal expenses during the term have averaged \$900, but this amount clearly depends upon the individual.

A non-refundable first payment of \$500 is to be made upon acceptance to the program. The remaining sum must be paid upon receipt of bills from St. Lawrence University. Participants in the program will have incurred responsibility for the full cost once they have formally accepted enrollment. Refunds will be made in accordance with the policy outlined in the St. Lawrence catalog, minus any money that has been paid out on behalf of the student.

Insurance

All students are required to have medical and accident insurance which offers worldwide coverage. The St. Lawrence comprehensive College Blue, Blue Cross/Blue Shield Plan offers good coverage. In addition, we recommend a supplementary Medex package (available to SLU and non-SLU students for \$3.00/month) to get increased insurance for medical evacuation and other emergencies. In addition to the above, for convenience in getting access to local health care in Nairobi, students **must** purchase a local health insurance package (\$100 for the semester) which covers all routine outpatient medical needs (including lab tests, x-rays, prescriptions) up to \$645, and hospitalization costs up to \$2,580.

Financial Aid

Since the Kenya Semester Program is a regular St. Lawrence Program, financial aid for St. Lawrence students is automatically applied. St. Lawrence cannot offer institutional financial aid to non-St. Lawrence students; therefore, they should check with their home university's financial aid office.

There are travel funds available to SLU students to help pay for airfare to and from the program as well as grants to help finance students' research projects. Visit the Center for International and Intercultural Studies for more information.

Application Deadline Completed applications for the Kenya Semester Program must be submitted to the Center for International and Intercultural Studies by **September 25 for the spring semester; February 20 for the fall semester.** Normally, decision letters will be sent out about four weeks after the application deadline.

Students not accepted for off-campus study have one week from notification of the decision to file an appeal through the Center for International and Intercultural Studies (CIIS). An appeal must be based on additional information that was not considered in the original decision. Students who wish to appeal a negative decision must first discuss their case with the Director of Off-Campus Programs.

Information Additional information is available from:

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL STUDIES
St. Lawrence University
Canton, New York 13617
Telephone: (315) 229-5991
Fax: (315) 229-5989
email: npierce@stlawu.edu
web: http://www.stlawu.edu/ciis/html/off_campus/kenya

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