



THE SCHOOL  
FOR FIELD STUDIES

# Introduction to Swahili Language and East African Tribal Communities SFS 2060

**Syllabus, Spring 2019**

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Center for Water and Wildlife Studies (CWWS)  
Kilimanjaro Bush Camp, Kimana, Kenya

This syllabus may develop or change over time based on local conditions, learning opportunities, and faculty expertise.  
Course content may vary from semester to semester.



## Course Overview

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This course contains two distinct but related modules: Swahili language and Kenyan/Tanzanian Tribal/Maasai society and culture. The Swahili language module offers listening, oral and written practice of the Swahili language at a basic level of proficiency (beginner only) to increase students' communication and comprehension skills. Much of the Maasai population does not speak Swahili, but it is the national language of Kenya and Tanzania. The Kenyan Tribal/Maasai socio-culture module emphasizes understanding of, and direct contact and interaction with, the Maasai community with which the Center works with. This exposure to culture and language will be reviewed and processed through lectures, field exercises and classroom discussion. The socio-cultural module is designed to help students experience intense immersion in the culture and be therefore more adept at working effectively in their community based directed research efforts.

## Swahili Language Module

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This module is designed to provide students with a basic understanding of the Swahili language at a rudimentary level. The vast majority of our students have no prior Swahili language training. This module will help students communicate more effectively with community members, clients and others who speak Kiswahili, offer them insight into the Kenyan culture via language history and development, and enable students to increase their basic conversation and comprehension skills in Kiswahili.

There are eight noun classes in the Swahili language, which are the key to learning the language. To assist the students grasp the language quickly, we will first cover these noun classes and their concord-prefixes and the various rules of the grammatical structure. After this, the course will proceed by learning and practicing grammar and vocabulary, including terms and phrases commonly used. Students will engage in oral and written practice exercises to assist them to develop skills to understand and communicate in Kiswahili.

## Socio-cultural Module

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This module provides students with an understanding of the various Kenyan ethnic groups' history, society, and culture; Maasai roles in natural resource conservation; and the challenges facing pastoralism and wildlife conservation in Kenya. Particular emphasis will be given to the historical and current issues that affect the Maasai culture and society. The course will cover topics on the role of cultural practices including ceremonies and rituals in shaping the Maasai social systems. Historical processes of change in the territorial and socioeconomic conditions of the Maasai and how this has influenced natural resource conservation will also be covered. Other areas to be covered will be the cultural and ecological significance of cultivation in the livestock-based production system of the Maasai in Kenya. Students will participate in various community projects that will expose them to day-to-day community activities.

## Learning Objectives

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### Maasai Cultures Module

The objective of this module is to introduce students to:

- Natural Resource exploitation by the Maasai; mainly exploitation of wild fauna and flora for cultural reasons and how this influences the conservation of these resources.

- The role of Rituals, Ceremonies, Kinship (clans and family) and Age sets (age group) system in Maasai social organization and livestock production
- Maasai and cultural interactions through a day long home stay
- Community activities where students will visit local schools to observe the extent of the spread of education among Maasai children and compare the number of girls to boys. Also visit a Maasai Manyatta and boma to observe the role of women in the production economy

### Swahili Language Module

In this module students will:

- Learn the various Swahili noun classes and their concord prefixes which will help the student in grasping the use of the language
- Practice pronunciations, greetings, counting and reading in Kiswahili
- Practice conversation including asking and answering questions
- Conduct exercises on translating words and phrases from Swahili to English and vice versa.

### Assessment

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#### Maasai Cultures Module

Culture Course Exercises/Essay	Assessment Item	Value (%)
FE-SSC 09	FE I: A critical analysis of Maasai Manyatta as ecotourism enterprises and/or cultural entities	15
SSC 12	Essay II: Based on the home stay	20
	<b>Socio-culture Total Percentage</b>	<b>35</b>

#### Swahili Language Module

Kiswahili Exercises	Assessment Item	Value (%)
SSC01 & SSC02	Exercise I: written exercise covering: Self-introduction , Greetings, counting, days of the week, parts of human body, family members, and animal names, Verbs, Vocabularies, Pronouns	15
SSC03 & SSC04	Exercise II: Written Exercise on constructing sentences using prefixes, tenses, Noun classes	15
SSC TEST	Some Items from both SSC 01 – 04	20
SSC05 & SSC06	Exercise III: Oral Exercise on translation, phrases, speech and communication	15
	<b>Language Total Percentage</b>	<b>65</b>

## Grading Scheme

A	95.00 - 100.00%	B+	86.00 - 89.99%	C+	76.00 - 79.99%	D	60.00 - 69.99%
A-	90.00 - 94.99%	B	83.00 - 85.99%	C	73.00 - 75.99%	F	0.00 - 59.99%
		B-	80.00 - 82.99%	C-	70.00 - 72.99%		

## General reminders

**Readings and handouts:** Assigned readings and hand outs (exercises / assignments) will be available prior to the scheduled activities. Course readings must be read and clarification on issues sought where necessary since ideas and concepts contained in them will be expected to be used and cited appropriately in assigned course essays and research papers.

**Academic Honesty:** SFS has adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards student cheating, plagiarism, data falsification, and any other form of dishonest academic and/or research practice or behavior (including but not limited to, standards set by any college or institution with which the student is associated). As a result, any SFS student found by SFS to have engaged in or to have facilitated academic and/or research dishonesty will receive no credit (0%) for that particular activity.

**Deadlines and expectations:** Deadlines for written field exercises and other assignments are posted to promote equity among students and to allow faculty ample time to review and return assignments in good time. As such, deadlines are firm and extensions will only be considered under the most extreme circumstances. Late assignments will carry a 10% grade reduction for each day late; after three days no material or request for review will be accepted.

**Class attendance and participation:** Since we offer a program that is likely more intensive than you might be used to at your home institution, missing even one lecture can have a proportionally greater effect on your final grade simply because there is little room to make up for lost time. Participation in all components of the program is mandatory because your actions can significantly affect the experience you and your classmates have while at CWMS. Therefore, it is important that you are prompt for all course activities.

## Course Content

**Instructors:** MO – Moses Okello

**Type-** L: Classroom lecture, **FL:** Field lecture, **FEX:** Field Exercise, **FEX/D:** Field exercise combined with a class discussion

No.	Lecture Titles and Descriptions	Instructor	Type	Time (hours)	Readings
<b>Swahili Language Module</b>					
SSC 01	Greetings, Self-introduction, reading, counting family members, parts of human body and animals names	MO	L	3	<b>Mangat, Alice. (2004).</b> Wilson. P.M. (1985).
SSC 02	Useful Vocabulary and phrases. Verbs and Verbs infinitives, personal pronouns, tenses	MO	L	3	<b>Kiswahili na Utamaduni Baba Malaika</b>
SSC 03	Sentences formation and order. The first four noun classes and their concord prefixes	MO	L	2	

No.	Lecture Titles and Descriptions	Instructor	Type	Time (hours)	Readings
SSC 04	Conversation, Question words, (asking and answering questions)	MO	L	4	
SSC 05	Oral and written Exercises on translating words , phrases and sentences	MO	L	4	
SSCO 6	Practice on communication and Speech	MO	L	4	
<b>Language Instructional Hours</b>				<b>20</b>	
<b>Socio-Cultural Module</b>					
SSC 07	<b>Policies and Rules for Living within the communities of SFS and the surrounding community</b> An introduction to both SFS wide and center specific policies and sensitizing students on community living	MO	L	1	No Readings
SSC 08	<b>Playing it safe in a foreign place: Risk Management and Health issues in Tanzania</b> SFS safety guidelines Introduction to various hazards students are likely to encounter while at the center and most common diseases	MO	L	1	No Readings
SSC 09	<b>Natural Resource exploitation an kinship in the Maasai production system</b> How do the maasai utilize wild fauna and flora? Which plant and wild animal species do they utilize? Do women play a significance role in the Maasai livestock and Agricultural production? Individual and family role in the Iraq social and production system	MO/Guest	FL	1	<b>Kiringe, J.W. (2005).</b> <b>Kiringe, J. W. (2006).</b>
SSC 10	<b>A critical analysis of Maasai Manyattas as ecotourism enterprises and/or cultural entities</b> What role do cultural Manyattas play in exposing the Maasai culture to tourists and what benefits do the Maasai derive from this activity?	MO	FEX/D	3	<b>Bruner, M. E and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. (1994).</b> <b>Hitchcock, Robert K., Brandenburgh and Rodney L. (1990).</b>

No.	Lecture Titles and Descriptions	Instructor	Type	Time (hours)	Readings
					Macleod, Donald. (2002).
SSC 10	<b>Ceremonies, Rituals and Festivals among the Maasai.</b> What rituals and ceremonies do the Maasai continue to perform and what is their significance?	MO/Guest	L	1.5	<b>Spencer, Paul. (1991).</b> <b>Fratkin, Elliot. (1991)</b>
SSC 11	The role of sections, kinship and the age-group structure in the Maasai society	MO/Guest	L	1	<b>Berntsen, John. (1979).</b>
SSC 12	Experience of Maasai Tradition/Modern Lifestyle (a full day home-stay)	MO/All	FEX	TBD	See Additional readings included in folder
SSC 13	Community service activities		FEX	TBD	No readings
SSC 14	Cultural sensitivity for the DR and analyzing the communities you will work with		L	1.5	No readings
	<b>Socio-Cultural Instructional Hours</b>			<b>10+</b>	
	<b>TOTAL HOURS</b>			<b>30+</b>	

## Reading List

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\*Readings in **Bold** are required

**Berntsen**, John. L. (1979). Maasai Age-Sets and Prophetic Leadership: 1850-1910. *Africa* 49 (2) 134-146

**Bruner**, M. E and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B 1994. Maasai on the lawn: tourism realism in East Africa

**Fratkin**, Elliot. (1991). The Loibonas Sorcerer. A Samburu Loibon Among the Ariaal Rendille, 1973-87. *Africa* 61 (3): 318-333

Hassan et al. (2004). Test Yourself Swahili

**Hitchcock**, Robert K., Brandenburgh and Rodney L. 1990. Tourism, Conservation, and Culture in the Kalahari Desert, Botswana. *Cultural Survival Quarterly. Cambridge*, 14 (2): 20

**Kiringe**, J. W. (2006). A survey of traditional health remedies used by the Maasai of Southern Kajiado District, Kenya. *Ethnobotany Research and Applications* 4:57-69

**Kiringe**, J.W. (2005). Ecological and anthropological threats to ethno-medicinal plant resources and their utilization in Maasai communal ranches in the Amboseli region of Kenya. *Ethnobotany Research and Applications* 3: 231-241

**Kiswahili** na Utamaduni Baba Malaika- Dictionary

Macleod, Donald. (2002). Disappearing Culture? Globalization and a Canary Island Fishing Community.  
*History and Anthropology*,.13 (1): 53-67

Mangat, Alice. (2004). Swahili for Foreigners. Kenway Publications, Nairobi, Kenya.

**Spencer**, Paul. (1991). The Loonkidongi Prophets and the Maasai: Protection Racket or Incipient State?  
*Africa* 61 (1):334-342

Wilson. P.M. (1985). Simplified Swahili. Longman.