Zimbabwe – what did the highest inflation rate in the world (ever) mean to large tracts of land meant to preserve iconic wildlife? Likewise, how has political change over 120 years changed people’s relationship with “their” parks. Colonial regimes created large national parks intended to preserve wildlife. In doing so, they removed people from these new conservation areas (parks), as well as controlling use of natural resources within parks. How have animals and people who rely on the same spaces fared during colonial regimes, the fight for independence (1960’s to the 1980s), post-independence slaughter and abuse of wildlife, 37 years of dictatorship, and current commodification of nature for wealthy outsiders? Explore these and other related questions with Dr. Taylor (a native of Zimbabwe) in a two-week expedition to some of Africa’s least-visited and remote parks. Yes, we will be in the “bush.” Bush that is accessible only by rugged 4x4 trucks carrying all of our supplies. We will read about and discuss the dilemmas of conservation by the light of the campfire, as we take tea in the bush, and after interacting with residents who live on the margins of national parks.

What we examine in this class is the thesis of “conservation and control” – a topic constantly explored by critical political ecologists. We, as political ecologists and you as students of the class, will question the premise that conservation and preservation of environmental systems, resources and landscapes are commensurate with community sustainability and the protection of livelihoods. We will realize, quickly, that this premise is far from true, especially where such communities have been deeply involved in environmental management and ecosystem maintenance for hundreds, if not thousands of years. We then move on to learn that the creation and management of parks is fraught with conflict. People live in close proximity to parks and the wildlife within those parks. We simply cannot remove people from those spaces and deny them livelihoods and resources upon which they have relied for hundreds of years. Simply, in this class we will learn about the “imposition of wilderness” (Neumann 1998) and how wilderness conservation has transformed complex landscapes of production into commodified landscapes of consumption, primarily for tourists.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this class you will have acquired basic knowledge about the discourse in political ecology related to conservation and control around the world. You will then gain a specific understanding about the history of parks and conservation in Zimbabwe. With your direct experiences and observations in Zimbabwe, you will be able to contextualize your prior book learning about parks and people with examples from Zimbabwe. Moreover, you will be able to take your first-hand observations and have informed discussions (based on the literature you have read as well as your observations) with colleagues and local residents about conservation and control in Zimbabwe and other places in the world that have begun to put aside space and wildlife so that it can be accessed mainly by the world’s elite.

**Readings**
Readings will come from the following books and papers:


**Evaluation**

Your grade is based on the following items:

1. Proof that you have read the books/readings. This may take the form of a formal review for each text or simply a long list of questions related to your readings (25%)
2. Participation in all discussions (10%)
3. A detailed field note book that contextualizes your readings with your observations and conversations (15%). You will give me this notebook at the end of class so that I can evaluate your contextualization.
4. Incorporation of your readings of the texts into discussions with me while we are in the field. In these conversations, I expect you to contextualize what you are seeing with your previous “book learning” (25%)
5. A final reflection that incorporates all of the above elements (25%).

**DUE DATE for FINAL REFLECTION:** 31ST AUGUST 2019.

**Itinerary and class details**

Late May and early June (penultimate and ultimate week of class): Two class meetings prior to the end of the Fall Quarter to introduce the class, discuss expectations and comportment while in Zimbabwe.

August 18 to 19: Denver to Harare.

August 19: Arrive to Harare Airport (must have $30 for visa purchased at airport). Stay at Jameson Hotel.
August 20: Orientation to Harare and Zimbabwe. Our first glimpse of wildlife at the Mukuvisi Woodlands in the suburbs of Harare. Stay at Jameson Hotel. Discussion about politics in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe from 1890 to the present. Presentation on natural history of Zimbabwe.

August 21: Planning and shopping and packing for our time in the bush. We will plan menus and cooking rotations and thus prepare specific shopping lists. Stay at Jameson Hotel. Discussions about the thesis of “conservation and control” – for whom by whom?. Here we will discuss the work and ideas of Neumann and the philosophy of political ecology. We will also ask if all we are seeing is neo colonialism.

August 22. Pack and leave early for Gonarezhou National Park. This is a long drive. We will stop on the roadside and eat sandwiches. Make camp at Chipinda Pools Campsite. We will discuss the creation of parks in Zimbabwe and the displacement of local people from those parks. Here we will draw heavily on the work of Rosaleen Duffy (2000).

August 23. Chipinda Pools area. Presentations from Zimbabwe National Parks about wildlife management and several game drives. Here we will compare the discourse of the rangers with the discourse of locals who have been displaced by parks creation around the world. We will bring in the work of Neumann, Peluso, Robbins, and Duffy (see reading list).

August 24. Break Camp and head to Chilojo Cliffs. Presentation by local villagers who are permitted restricted access to the park. In our discussion this night, we will put our direct learning from the local villagers in the context of theoretical discussions from the night before. Here you will write a short essay on theory of conservation and control versus your direct understanding from both park rangers and local villagers.

August 25. Chilojo Cliffs. Reflection on conservation of animals and its impact on local livelihoods, especially when millions of acres are involved. Saving animals and starving people? Here we will contrast the idea of conservation of animals with the stark facts of hunger and the general economic situation in Zimbabwe/other places like it. Does it matter that we can save animals when people are dying of hunger, malaria, and water borne diseases? Who comes first. This debate is framed by the discourse of political ecology provided by Paul Robbins.

August 26. Chilojo Cliffs. What does it mean to pay thousands of dollars to view animals? Are large parks the best model for conservation? Does the world have the space? Here we will draw on the critical work of Duffy (2010) to see if there are alternative models to wildlife/wildspace conservation. We will think out of the box and suggest alternatives based on our reading and experiences.

August 27. Break camp and drive to Great Zimbabwe National Monument. Stay at Norma Jean’s near the Monument. Presentations on Zimbabwe’s early history and pre-historic views of animals. This break from the “parks” of Africa will give us the long-term perspective on the relationship between animals and people in Zimbabwe with a focus on pre-colonial times. Here we will draw on the work on Neumann (1998) and presentations by local guides at Great Zimbabwe.
August 28. Drive to Victoria Falls. This will be an all day drive with a stop in Bulawayo for food and diesel. We will camp at the National Parks Campsite a few miles west of the falls and be enveloped, as the locals call it “mosi oa tunya” – the smoke that thunders. Here we will discuss the international commodification of natural sites like Victoria Falls and how, despite economic and political turmoil, some international tourist sites manage to survive and attract hundreds of thousands of visitors from around the world. We will also discuss the moral dilemmas of visiting a country/place that witnesses mass hunger and extreme poverty while tourists pay US $ 200 for a bungee jump and a fireside “ritual dance” by local villagers.

August 29. Day at Victoria Falls. Here we will visit the falls and learn about the “discovery” of Africa by white colonists like David Livingstone. We will reflect on the cost to enter a site like Victoria Falls and the commodification of nature. In the evening we will conduct a final discussion about nature and conservation in Africa through the example of Zimbabwe and the readings. We will cover what we have learned, and, as important, how we have learned. Each person will reflect on their learning process. This reflection will form the beginning of the final reflection that is due on August 31st, 2019. This reflection can be written on the LONG flight home the next day.

August 30. Fly out from Victoria Falls to Denver

**Alcohol and Drug Policy and General Student Conduct Policy**

Because this is a DU class, DU policies with respect to general conduct, and alcohol and drug misuse apply on this course. As guests of another country and as students enrolled in a DU class, good behavior is expected of all students. Some evenings will be free; however, it is expected that students maintain good behavior during any free time (as defined below and also in the University Honor Code). *Disruptive behavior or violations of class rules will result in a preliminary verbal warning by the instructor(s). This warning will be communicated to the Academic Programs Office.* A second violation will be communicated in writing to the student and the University of Denver. A third violation will result in dismissal from the course. Any costs associated with dismissal from the course are the responsibility of the student and they will be billed to the student by the university.

The following statement comes directly from the DU Office of Internationalization Student Code of Conduct and applies to this course and all international classes (please see the 2017-2018 the University Honor Code Statement at https://www.du.edu/studentlife/studentconduct/media/documents/honor_code.pdf)

“The University of Denver’s Honor Code is in force during a student’s time abroad studying, researching, involved in service learning, or otherwise taking part in DU-sanctioned programming. The Office of International Education at the University of Denver has developed a number of relationships with overseas partner institutions and program providers. We value these relationships and have informed our partners abroad of the DU Honor Code, along with our concern to maintain that Code. As a representative of the University of Denver, it is up to you to perform well in the classroom and be a respectful citizen in the community at large, even while abroad. We expect you to serve as an ambassador of the U.S. as well as the University of Denver. The reputation you leave will affect the students who follow you, so please take this
responsibility very seriously. Every study abroad participant is registered through the University of Denver and continues to be subject to DU policies. These include the University Honor Code, the Student Conduct Policies, and other related policies. For complete information on these codes, please refer to DU’s website at http://www.du.edu/ccs/code.html.

Point 2 from the DU Student Conduct Policies with respect to Alcohol misuse

- Possession and/or use of alcohol except as expressly permitted by law or University Policy. Alcoholic beverages may not be used by, or possessed by any person under the legal drinking age (i.e. 21 years of age in the US).
- Manufacture and/or distribution of alcohol except as expressly permitted by law or University Policy. Alcoholic beverages may not be distributed to any person under the legal drinking age (i.e. 21 years of age in the US).
- Intoxication to the point of endangering one's own health or safety regardless of age.
- Any act which causes a person to consume alcohol without their effective consent.
- Any possession or use on University Premises of paraphernalia used to facilitate the rapid consumption of alcohol. This includes but is not limited to beer bongs or similar items.
- Any violation of these Student Conduct Policies while intoxicated regardless of age.

Point 4 from the DU Student Conduct Policies with respect to Drug misuse

- Possession and/or use of any Federally Illegal Drug, or any possession or use of any prescription drug or other controlled substance except under the direction of a licensed physician. Marijuana, including Medical Marijuana, is prohibited on campus in all circumstances.
- Manufacture or distribution of any Federally Illegal Drug is prohibited, including Cannabis in any form.
- Being under the influence of any Federally Illegal Drug, prescription or non-prescription drug, or other controlled substance to the point of endangering one's own health or safety.
- Any possession or use on University Premises of paraphernalia used to facilitate the use of any Federally Illegal Drug or other controlled substance in violation of this policy. This includes but is not limited to marijuana pipes, bongs and scales or other measuring devices.
- Any act which causes a person to ingest any Federally Illegal Drug, prescription drug, or other controlled substance without their effective consent.
- Any violation of these Student Conduct Policies while under the influence of any Federally Illegal Drug, prescription drug, or other controlled substance in violation of this policy regardless of age.