

Article on Kenya for the *PA Council for International Education*

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I recently returned from Kenya where I participated in a faculty exchange program with Kutztown University and Kenyatta University in Nairobi. Although I consider myself fairly well traveled, this was my first visit to Africa. Thus far, this trip has been my most intellectually stimulating. I spent five weeks at Kenyatta University and an additional two weeks traveling throughout Kenya. During my time at the university, I had the opportunity to meet with graduate students both individually and collectively. Every Friday, I met with the MA and PhD students in History and Political Science for a seminar in World Politics. We would then meet individually throughout the week on their research projects. In addition, the Political Science faculty at Kenyatta is currently forming a separate PhD program distinct from the History department. I spent much time assisting them in structuring the curriculum for this new program. Because I don't have an opportunity to work with advanced graduate students at Kutztown University, I found the level of interaction and interest in politics refreshing and reinvigorating. In fact, I would argue that overall the level of interest in politics is quite high across the Kenyan population. In addition to my work with the graduate program, I also gave a series of lectures to the faculty on US foreign policy and democratization. These were quite well received as Kenya is in the midst of a democratic transition.

Aside from my academic responsibilities, I made some wonderful friends and became acquainted with various aspects of Kenyan culture. I picked up quite a bit of kiSwahili, which was very handy in traveling throughout the country. I traveled to the coast to Mombasa and visited two Mosques while there. I also traveled to the north to Samburu, which is somewhat unusual in that it is considered dangerous the closer one gets to Ethiopia and the Sudan. And, my favorite part of the trip was my safari to the Maasai Mara and the Serengeti. The drive through the Great Rift Valley and into the Mara is something everyone should see in their lifetime. The Mara is the crown jewel of game preserves. In all, I visited four game preserves across Kenya. The Maasai tribe "owns" the land of the preserves and is guardians of the animals. I put "owns" in quotations because they are a nomadic tribe and they don't believe in ownership in the Western sense.

I plan on returning to Kenya next summer to teach in the new graduate program in Political Science and to conduct research on Kenya's democratization process. I am also going to strongly encourage our graduate students at Kutztown University to participate in Kenyatta University's summer student exchange.