Anthropology 279: Humans and Nature in South Africa
Prof. Larissa Swedell
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Study Abroad in Cape Town

Course Description:
This course explores the interface between humans and the natural world, with a specific focus on South Africa. Through readings, discussion, field trips, and written assignments, we will explore the ways in which humans view animals, historically and today, in a wide variety of contexts. We will discuss animals as food, as pets, as pests, and as study subjects. We will also discuss wildlife conservation principles and challenges, including the causes and consequences of human-wildlife conflict. Finally, we will investigate and discuss real-life conservation challenges in South Africa, including big game hunting, ivory poaching, wild cats as agricultural pests, and conflict between humans and nonhuman primates, such as baboons and vervet monkeys. The course will include field trips around the Cape Town area, including the Castle of Good Hope, the IZIKO and District Six museums, Robben Island, the Christiaan Barnard museum, Monkey Town, the Boulders Penguin Colony, Cape Point and the Cape of Good Hope, and various baboon-frequented areas of the Cape Peninsula.