INTERNET:

Access to the internet will be provided via one netbook with a mobile modem. It will be made available sporadically, reception is quite limited when in distant field locations (i.e. you won't have this in the Mara). Most of the time at Soysambu and at Kolping there will be reception. PLEASE KNOW THAT YOU ARE NOT GOING TO KENYA TO SPEND TIME ON THE INTERNET. Treat it as a luxury – that you "might" get. That is the way you should look at it. Two of our destinations are far away from a phone line strong enough for internet traffic.

Put yourself in the frame of mind – right now – that you won't have internet, so whatever you do get, will be a nice surprise.

Now – all that being said, if you have your own netbook/ laptop – then this is easier. Just by your own modem and scratch cards and you now have your own independent internet access (wherever you can get a signal – it will be limited!!). Modem ($25) – and there are various memory packages you can buy from a Safari.com store. We will go shopping on Day 2 – and you get investigate phones, modems, and scratch cards at that time.

PHONES / MODEMS:

There will be a phone made available to all studentseach day at NO cost to you. BUT – this is for very quick calls. If you want to really spend time talking – no problem! Just buy a cheap phone. Done. Many students have done this - that way they can call whenever they want – all they want. You have to determine if this is best for you. My phone will be quite limited because I need it to run the course logistics on site.

The number to my phone will be provided to you, your family and friends for emergencies only. It is not – under any circumstances – available as a way for your family and friends to check up on you daily. To get a better understanding of phone options, go to the following website: http://safaricom.co.ke/

The instructor is not the best person to answer questions about whether your particular phone will work in Kenya by purchasing a new SIM card. **Please seek external advice on this.** You can always call your phone company and ask, but know this – students have been told that iPhones work with an international data plan in Kenya – and they DO NOT. iPhones, unless purchased in Kenya, are not a good decision for phone use. Great for everything else.

THE RED BAG

There will be a red backpack with us at all times. This bag is for communal use, it will contain the following items:

- The netbook
- Mobile modem (which is not to be removed from the netbook for your own computer)
- Antibacterial wipes and gel
- Writing instruments
- Paper towels
- First Aid kit with various medicines / bandaids / etc..

The items in this bag will be restocked with the limited budget we have for this, but please keep in mind that we all need to share the contents of this bag.

ASK THE STAFF:

It is quote common that when students are on study abroad they naturally gravitate toward the instructors to answer questions of all kinds. Though we will be able to answer most of your questions – we also want you to understand that you are adults on this trip and have the option of relying on the camp staff for relevant questions. Here is a list of common questions and random comments that **cannot be addressed by the instructor or the co-instructor. Please – ask the staff.** Ask the drivers. Ask the security guard.

- What's for dinner? (ask the cook)
- What's in this food – what's this made of? (ask the cook)
- I need more water – where can I get it? (ask the camp manager)
- Is this water filtered? (ask the camp manager or any staff)
- The zipper on my tent doesn't work right! (call an askari / guard)
- There is a spider in my tent! (call an askari)
- Where can I charge my batteries? (ask the camp manager)
- What's the name of the person that picks up the clothes? (ask the camp manager)
- Can I stand on the seats of the truck? (ask the driver)
- Can I leave my stuff in the truck – is it safe? (ask the driver)

Please try to be as **independent** as you can with these types of questions. You'll be in a new country and surrounded by people you don't know – so we understand your need to ask us questions we CANNOT answer – but try to find the right person who can help you. We are here for everything else.

SAFETY AROUND CAMPS:

Please listen to the camp security guards, especially about moving around at night. Predators and large mammals like buffalo and elephant come right through camp at night. It's dangerous to be outside at night. The guards (askari) will notice you if you exit your tents at night – and they will approach you to find out what you need. Be courteous – be responsible. If you want to call an askari to come and help you – you can flash you light outside your tent and they will come immediately (this will prevent you from needing to call out and wake up others).

NEGOTIATING FOR PURCHASES:

There is a way to go about negotiating prices for gifts you want to buy. We will make a bunch of restroom breaks - and those always have a gift shop nearby. If you are in a **typical** store – there is no negotiating of course, but once you find a market or are approached by people wanting to sell you stuff on the street (it will happen a lot) – you will want to know a few things about that interaction. We will discuss this briefly at orientation and more so in Kenya. We are here to help. The most important this right now for you to know is – be NICE – always!. Kenyans do not take well to aggression. You can't get a good price by saying "NO – I want it for 100 shillings or it's nothing!" The culture in Kenya is one that values the interaction itself, not just the sale. They want to talk to you – find out about you – and during that interaction you figure out a price. Here is a typical example of what you can go through:

If you do not want to buy anything:

Seller: Jambo! Hello my friend – come and see here I have something for you (physically leading you in)

Me: (wearing shades to avoid eye contact). Asante (thanks) – I am only looking right now.

Seller: But I have what you are looking for – here come here – do you want two of these or three?

Me: they are very nice, but I would like to see the whole market first and enjoy this day

Seller: here - this is nice – buy this for your mother – she will like it. Here, I will give you two – how much will you give me for two of these?

Me: Those are nice, but I will first see the whole market – thank you though! (and gently make your way onward).

Reduce eye contact – keep moving – but don't be rude.

That process could go on all day - they will not give up.

If you like what you see – and want a good price: (don't misinterpret this – I'm just explaining the process, which requires little "white lies" along the way.

Seller: Jambo! Hello my friend – come and see here I have something for you (physically leading you in)

Me: (don't stare at the item) I am looking for a nice shuka (even though you actually want the very one in front of you) – and I'm not sure if I like the one from over in that other shop (pointing down the market) – or maybe you have one that is better.

Seller: Come – look – here – which kind (and they will jump to lay out about 10 of them – and they will go to great lengths to open them for you – which you notice is kind of pressuring you).

Me: Those are all very nice, but I saw some over there I like (now you are lying – you want that very one in front of you).

Seller: how much – you tell me – here are many. I can find any that you want.

Me: Well, I like other colors I don't see here (lie), but maybe that one there is kind of nice (pointing to the shuka). We are going to another market right now (lie) so I might wait. But what is your "asking" price for that one?

Seller: These are all hand made with the best materials (lie) and very hard to find (lie) - these are 5000 shillings (over $50!!, but worth more like $5). In general – what they are asking – is about 10x what it is worth. To get to a more reasonable price you can say you only have $-- and are any for sale at that price. Good luck with that.

Me: I am sure they are very nice, but we are stopping on the road in Laikipia to buy some (lie) and I will probably get them there. Our leader also takes us to the buyer directly (total lie). They sell them cheap. I can give you 1000 shillings (and at that moment you have in your hand 1000 shillings – do not dig through your bag at all for money) – I think that is almost $12 US dollars – that is pretty good.

Seller: (With a look of having been insulted - this is the process). Oh – no you will not get it for that – these are 5000 shillings. These come from far away. Here – how about this one – and this one – and this one. How many you want? I give you 2 for 8000. Here (while putting them physically on you) – you like these? 8000. Which kind do you want?

Me: I will come back (and they freak out at this point because you are leaving) and see – I only have 1000 shillings (now you put it in your pocket – because other vendors are watching you too). (now you proceed to move away).

Seller: O.k – 2000 – here this one for 2000.

Me: But I only have 1000 – I will look around. Thank you so much (and keep moving away).

Seller: O.k – just for you – I give you this one for 1000.

COURTESY AT CAMP SITES:

We are all adults – and we are all at the university level – and this is the level of maturity I want to see on the trip. We are not on a Caribbean vacation – we **do not curse- EVER** (Kenyans see cursing as insulting and pretty low class) – we do not act like children. Be courteous - be responsible – be friendly.

Camp staff like to shake hands – they like to know you are having a good time – and they want to make sure you are o.k. So – be nice about it. If you are feeling irritable for any reason (and it will happen), just do your best to manage it.

Though it is common in the DC area to walk by someone (passing them) and not even make eye contact – it would be considered rude in Kenya – especially at the camps. Enjoy your time – say hello to people – wave hello to people who are watching you go by from a distance. And so on. Yes, everyone will stare and you will wonder, why are they always staring at me?? They will – it's nothing personal. You're a visitor – therefore you are going to be stared at.

SHOWERS / BATHS:

Showers in Kenya are a bit different, depending on where you are. In Kolping (outside of Nairobi) – it's pretty standard – but you will have to find the power switch to turn on the water heater. This is usually located just outside the door to the restroom. Don't ask why - it just is. Lights too – this switch will be located outside the door to the restroom or bedroom. Make sure you turn the heater switch on for hot water!

For some odd reason, the British love to have their sinks with a separate faucet for cold and one for hot. So you have either scalding hot water from the faucet on the left – and freezing cold on the right – and you end up with your hands out going back and forth. It's silly – but that's what you will deal with. The shower- fortunately – is combined, but you will have the same scalding hot and very cold – and it's tricky to get just the right temperature. We are so spoiled in the US with this – we love our hot and functional showers.

When in the Mara – you will have what are called bush showers. Your shower and toilet are in your tent – in the back. It's nice (no outhouses!). But to get a shower, you have to request one. Then they will bring boiled for you – come to your tent and fill up a large canvas bag – hoist it over your shower (no, they can't see you in there) – and you simply turn on the faucet (which is really tricky) over your head to let the water fall on you. It's limited! Turn it on – get wet – turn it off. Lather up and clean – then turn it on again to rinse. If you left it on the entire time – it would probably last about 10 minutes max. Bush shower… it's quick, but it's good. And the water will smell like a camp fire – because that is what they used to boil it.

In Laikipia, I think they have running hot water from regular plumbing.

Don't ever drink any water from a shower or sink. Do not wash or rinse your toothbrush with it. It's for cleaning only. Only use bottled / filtered water .

PESTS:

Yes, you will see and encounter pests. The occasional spider, bird, bats sometimes, ants, and in Laikipia – one room had a mouse visiting. You won't really have any of this in Nairobi – but once we are out in the wild – yes, there are plenty of wild animals that want to investigate the tent and restroom – after all, it has water! You may also see these during meals. They like food too!

If you find something you want to get rid of - just ask an askari (camp guard) and they will help you (while laughing at you, but oh well). This is not something to worry about – you are after all – in Africa. Just take it with stride and deal with it the best you can – if – it happens. We have never had any issues with snakes in tents – but they are indeed outside, so always be careful.

Dump your shoes in the morning, just in case a bug has crawled in them.

Do not leave your luggage bags open in your tent while you are gone! Vervet mokeys love to go through your stuff – so will some birds. Keeping your bag zipped also helps to keep bugs from going in there. Also – never leave your tent open while you are gone. And never leave your tent unzipped at night – for obvious reasons. I tend to also use the luggage locks when I am out of the tent.