Modern Hunters and Gatherers

ANT 4930/ANG 6930  
Sections 8143/8152  
Fall 2016

Mondays 3rd period, Matherly 0010  
Wednesdays 3rd-4th periods, Matherly 0014

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10am-noon and by appointment

Course Overview and Objectives

As a measure of human population, hunting and gathering societies are quite rare in today’s world, and fewer still continue to pursue an independent foraging lifeway. Anthropologists are, however, fond to point out that 99% of human existence has been spent in the context of hunting and gathering. Indeed, it is very common to point to many supposed human universals as the product of our evolutionary history as hunters and gatherers. This course examines the wide range of variation in contemporary hunter-gather societies. We will examine hunter-gatherer subsistence, social organization, demography, social organization, and cultural survival of contemporary hunter-gatherers. The study of hunter-gatherers is also a window on anthropology, and this course will examine how different historical and theoretical traditions within the development of the discipline have shaped anthropologists’ perceptions of hunting and gathering societies.

The objectives of this modified case study approach are many but include (1) Becoming familiar with the ethnology of hunting and gathering societies; (2) Analysis of the similarities and differences of the peoples who pursue a hunting and gathering lifestyle (3) Increasing knowledge of the history and nature of contact between hunters and gatherers and analyzing the consequences of contact and continued cultural survival; (4) Improving skills in working with ethnographic materials; and (5) Improving abilities in communication through written, oral, and visual methods.

Textbooks and Required Reading

The textbooks for the course are as follows. All are required:


These texts are ethnographic accounts that will provide a basis for discussion, and examples for understanding contemporary foraging societies. In addition, there will be a significant amount of reserve reading, which I will make available in .pdf format. These will be available through Canvas.

Exams and Grading

*Participation*. Because this is a reasonably small class, this class will be conducted in a discussion-oriented format.
Generally, I will provide a list of questions and discussion points that will help us through each week’s readings. I envision classes as more like debates rather than lectures, focused on questions, such as “what are the limits of studying foragers as living fossils?”; “What does it mean to be affluent in a hunting and gathering society?”; or “are Khoisan peoples truly independent foragers, or merely a dependent underclass?”; in each case, the readings form the basis of the discussion. This is not a passive classroom. To do well, as a student you will need to actively engage in the class discussions. All of these endeavors fall under “participation”, and all students will receive a grade (100 pts total) that summarizes contributions to the class.

**Exams.** There will be two exams, a mid-term and a final. Each is worth 100 points. Exams will consist of a combination of short answers and long essay questions. Both exams will be take-home and open book, due on the dates listed below. I generally hand out the exam a week or 10 days before the due date.

**Research Paper.** Undergraduate students are required to write a 14-16 page paper on a topic based on psychological anthropology.” There is a great deal of leeway here, but topics should be approved beforehand; thus, paper proposals are due well ahead of the paper due date. The term paper is worth 100 points. Details will be forthcoming at our second class meeting. Graduate student papers should be manuscript length (20+ pages).

Final Grades. Final grades are assigned out of 400 points (100 for participation, 100 for each exam, and 100 for the term paper). A detailed grade breakdown is as follows:

- A=360+, A-=352-359, B+=340-351, B=320-339, B-=312-319,
- C+=300-311, C=280-299, C-=272-279, D=250-271, E=<250

**Policy on Make-ups:** Exam and research paper due dates (listed below) are not subject to change. Late work will be penalized 10 pts. for each day past the due date of the assignment. If you anticipate a problem meeting a deadline, please see me in advance to discuss the matter and make alternative arrangements.

I will be using Canvas to manage the course. This means that all important materials can be viewed online using Canvas, including a copy of the syllabus, exams, assignments and any supplemental readings or links I might think to post. While Canvas is a useful tool for managing this course, it is important to remember that this is not an online course, and I am only using Canvas as an organizational tool.

**Course Policies**

**Classes, Readings, & Attendance Policy.** Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before class. I do not grade for attendance, though attendance is highly correlated with performance on exams, and thus the final grade in the course. And, of course, if you are not in class you are not participating, which means you are not earning those points. Finally: **University policy is that students are expected to attend all class meetings.**

**Electronics.** I expect cell phones and other small devices to be off. If you use a laptop for taking notes, social media and other sites unrelated to course material or not-taking are expected to be closed.

**Academic Honesty.** Unless it is specifically connected to assigned collaborative work, all work should be individual. Evidence of collusion (working with someone not connected to the class or assignment), plagiarism (use of someone else’s published or unpublished words or design without acknowledgment) or multiple submissions (submitting the same work for different courses) will lead to the Department’s and the University’s procedures for dealing with academic dishonesty. All students are expected to honor their commitment to the University’s Honor Code.

**Accommodation for Students with Disabilities.** Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Disability Resource Center. The DRC will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. **Please make any requests by August 31.**
UF Counseling Services. Resources are available on-campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career and academic goals that interfere with their academic performance. These resources include:

1. University Counseling and Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Road, 392-1575. Personal, career, and emergency counseling
2. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, Career development assistance and counseling
3. Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Writing assistance, study skills, test preparation

Course Evaluations. Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. Evaluations are typically open during the last 2-3 weeks of the semester, but students will be notified of specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are also available to students.
## Course Outline

The following course outline is approximate. We may spend more or less time on specific topics as class interest dictates. Exams and due dates, however, will occur as scheduled and are not subject to change.

### Important Dates:

Paper Proposals Due: **September 21**  
Mid-Term Exam: **Due October 12**

Papers Due: **November 21**  
Final Exam: **Due December 12, noon**

No Class, September 5 (Labor Day), November 23 (Thanksgiving)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 24</td>
<td>Hunter Gatherers, Ethos, Affluence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read Sahlins 1988, Stefansson 1988, Lee 1988</td>
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<td>Aug. 29, 31, Sept. 7</td>
<td>Pygmies and Central Africa</td>
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<td>Read Turnbull (all), Woodburn 1982, Ember 1978</td>
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<td>Sept. 19-28</td>
<td>Human Ecology, Foraging, Subsistence</td>
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<td>Oct. 3, 5</td>
<td>South Asia and Australia</td>
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<td>Endicott (all), Headland 1989</td>
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<td>Oct. 24, 26, 31</td>
<td>Southern Africa</td>
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<td>Shostak (all)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 28-Dec 7</td>
<td>Catch-up to the syllabus days</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
List of Readings in .pdf format:


Helm, June. 1993. ‘Always with them either a feast or a famine’: Living off the land with Chipewyan Indians, 1791-1792. *Arctic Anthropology* 30(2):46-60.


