

ANG 6186 – Hunter-Gatherers

Spring 2016

Section 21HA

Wednesday, Periods 3-5 (9:35–12:35)

Rinker 230

Kenneth E. Sassaman

Turlington B372

Office hours: Weds. 1:30–4:30, or by appt.

352-294-7601 (during office hours)

352-392-6772 (my lab all other weekdays)

sassaman@ufl.edu

Required Texts:

All readings for this class will be posted on e-learning site

Course Description

*Hunter-gatherer studies had long been the last vestige of anthropology's quest for natural man
(Barnard 2004)*

Although they are no longer the dominant form of human sociality and adaptation, and exist today in relatively minor numbers, hunter-gatherers continue to be the focal point of fundamental debates in anthropology and related fields of inquiry. From the romanticism of Rousseau and the rhetorical extremism of Hobbes, to the evolutionary ideals of Morgan and the ecological idealism of 1970s ethnographers, perceptions of “hunter-gatherers” have both conformed to and effected changes in anthropological inquiry and western society. Having undergone so many and so frequent conceptual shifts in the past two centuries, “hunter-gatherer” is a construct, some have argued, without empirical or evolutionary validity. Clearly people have lived off the land without agriculture or animal husbandry, so at the level of subsistence, “hunter-gatherer” is a meaningful category. However, none of the essentialist qualities once assigned to this mode of subsistence hold up to serious cross-cultural analysis. That is, hunter-gatherer subsistence is not structurally linked to egalitarianism, generalized reciprocity, and settlement mobility, to name a few of the more prominent features. Moreover, hunter-gatherer populations once believed to be deeply rooted in evolutionary time are now understood as historical consequences of state expansion and political oppression. So, what does the concept of “hunter-gatherer” mean these days and what does anthropological knowledge of people living off the land tell us about long-term evolutionary trends, on the one hand, and modern power relations, on the other?

In this seminar, we address this question by considering alternative perspectives on the incredible diversity of lifestyles typically described as “hunter-gatherer.” In previous offerings of this seminar, our review of alternative perspectives was structured by the dichotomy between evolutionary/ecological approaches on the one hand, and historical or political-economic approaches on the other. This dichotomy was useful but arguably a bit disingenuous. We will certainly contrast the two approaches throughout the semester as we try to find threads of complementarity or even agreement. But the seminar this term will be structured by broad topics,

not paradigms. Inspiration for this comes from a relatively new, compact volume by Vicki Cummings (2013) titled *The Anthropology of Hunter-Gatherers: Key Themes for Archaeologists*. Cummings was one of three editors of the even newer but not so compact *Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology and Anthropology of Hunter-Gatherers* (Jordan et al. 2014). In the short companion volume to the *Handbook*, Cummings starts off where most do, with subsistence, and then examines hunter-gatherers in terms of mobility, social organization, belief systems, landscapes, and material culture. Her intent in this volume is to ask if the study of modern hunter-gatherers helps us understand the past. Few would have questioned that 50 years ago, but today one cannot blithely apply ethnographic analogs to ancient people without serious critical reflection.

There is something for everyone in this seminar. We will review the many good contributions of behavioral ecology and other strands of evolutionary thinking. We can add to that the fascinating perspectives of what is often called Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and come to appreciate that the intimate relationships people had with wild plants and animals blurs the conceptual divide between hunter-gatherers and food producers. And we will take a look at some impressive niche construction in the way some hunter-gatherers altered landscapes.

Taking a turn, we will engage literature since the 1960s that paints hunter-gatherers as the “primitive communists” of social evolution. This perspective traces to structural Marxism and the efforts of social scientists to draw contrasts between societies structured by egalitarian principles (thought to be “original” to humanity) and those structured by social rank, status, or class. Much of this discourse in the past few decades has centered on the conditions under which egalitarian social relations are asserted and reproduced, not simply inherited as a “natural” condition. This leads us to a third major perspective, namely the idea that hunter-gatherers consist of societies embedded in larger sociopolitical and geopolitical structures, at least in the modern world. In this sense, hunter-gatherer exists today because of modernity, not in spite of it. We will also consider in this section of the course the extent to which hunter-gatherer societies have always been enmeshed in networks of inequality, or at least difference.

Lastly we will consider that hunter-gatherers are “us,” always have been, both conceptually in the sense that we construct knowledge about hunter-gatherers to understand the modern condition, and objectively in the sense that we have underestimated the complexity of hunter-gatherer societies worldwide and through time.

This seminar is designed for students of ethnography and archaeology alike. Students of ethnography will become familiar with a wide range of comparative material, as well as alternative conceptual frameworks for interpreting hunter-gatherer diversity. Most important, this seminar will help to develop intellectual skills for debasing normative and typological approaches to societal variation. For archaeologists the seminar offers the opportunity to delve into the empirical record of hunter-gatherer diversity for analogical purposes, while reminding us of the shortcomings of uniformitarian principles. We will actually consider very little archaeological material in this class, though I hope you will agree that everything we cover is extremely relevant to any archaeology of hunter-gatherer “prehistory.”

Readings

You do not have to purchase anything for this class; all readings will be posted on the Sakai e-learning site for the seminar (<https://elearning2.courses.ufl.edu/portal/site/UFL-ANG6186-84598-12016>). However, there are some texts you may want to purchase if you do not already own them. The concise Cummings (2013) volume mentioned above would be useful if you have no prior experience with the literature on hunter-gatherers. Smathers has an e-book version you can read online. Robert Kelly's (1995) *The Forager Spectrum* is a tour de force of behavioral ecological perspectives on hunter-gather diversity, and now his second edition, under new title (Kelly 2013), updates and expands on this benchmark synthesis. A collection of topical essays edited by Panter-Brick et al. (2001) takes an interdisciplinary approach, with chapters dealing with language, demography, nutrition, and health, as well as behavioral ecology, technology, and art. The *Handbook* noted earlier (Cummings et al. 2014) is a trove of current syntheses, but it is very expensive (~\$200). An earlier encyclopedia issued by Cambridge University Press (Lee and Daly 2004) is now available in paperback; its content is largely ethnographic.

We will read portions of all the volumes noted above, as well as a few dozen papers and chapters from other books. You are invited to introduce additional readings for the seminar, but if you do please provide a digital copy that can be posted to the e-learning site at least one week before it will be introduced into discussion. All such additions will be considered supplemental to the core readings listed below, all of which are mandatory.

Format and Expectations

This is a graduate seminar so the expectation is that everyone will prepare for each class session by reading all the assigned materials and developing some thoughts for discussion. I will provide a brief overture of each week's topic, as well as a list of questions and topics to discuss.

Your major assignment is a term paper, which will be divided into two parts, the first conceptual, the second substantive. The conceptual portion of the paper will center on one or more themes drawn from a list of possible topics; the substantive portion will focus on a particular society or group of people, either "traditional" hunter-gatherers or some small-scale equivalent. Either way, you are expected to relate your case material to the conceptual theme you choose, as well as place your case material into broader historical and sociopolitical context. Each portion of the paper is expected to be ~15 double-spaced pages. I will provide guidelines for writing papers by our third meeting. Your final grade for this seminar will be based on the quality of the paper (30 percent each part), a 20-minute presentation of your research (20 percent), and participation in discussion (20 percent), which of course requires attendance.

Course Outline

Date	Topic	Readings
Jan. 6	Conceptualizing Hunter-Gatherers	Lee and Daly 1999; Barnard 2004; Jordan and Cummings 2014; Kelly 2013 (Chapter 1)
Hunter-Gatherer Subsistence		
Jan. 13	Foraging Optimally	Winterhalder 2001; Sheehan 2004; Koster 2008; Lopes et al. 2011; Morgan 2009
Jan. 20	Scarcity and Abundance	Bailey et al. 1989; Bailey and Milner 2002; Hayden 1994; Sahlins 1972 (Chapter 1); Waguespack and Surovell 2003
Hunter-Gatherer Mobility		
Jan. 27	Mobility	Kelly 2013 (Chapter 4); Kent 1992
Feb. 3	Sedentism	Coupland et al. 2010; Ames 1991; Kelly 1992; Hitchcock 1982
Hunter-Gatherer Sociality		
Feb. 10	Egalitarianism as Culture and Politics	Ingold 1999; Woodburn 1982; Boehm 2001; Brunton 1989; Henrich 2012
Feb. 17	Social Complexity	Arnold et al. 2015; Sassaman 2004; Kelly 1995 (pp. 302-331)
Feb. 24	Symbioses, Alliances, and Networks	Apicella et al. 2012; Wiessner 1982; Grinker 1994 (Chapter 3)
Mar. 2	<i>Spring Break – No Class</i>	
Hunter-Gatherer Belief, Cosmology, Memory, and Landscape		
Mar. 9	Relational Ontologies	González-Ruibal et al. 2011; Zedeño 2008; Jordan 2003 (Chapter 5); Cannon 2014
Mar. 16	Learning and Memory	Conkey 2001; Holdaway and Allen 2012; Ingold 2000; Oetelaar et al. 2013
Mar. 23	Landscape	Basso 1996; Oetelaar and Meyer 2006; Morphy 1995; Sassaman and Randall 2012
Hunter-Gatherers and “Us”		
Mar. 30	Historical	Sassaman 2001; Woodburn 1988; Stiles 2001; Headland & Reid 1989

Apr. 6 Rhetorical

Flannery and Marcus 2012 (Chapters 1-5);
Trigger 1999; Lee 1992; Suzman 2004

Presentations

Apr. 13 Presentations

Apr. 20 Presentations

Readings

Ames, Kenneth

1991 Sedentism: A Temporal Shift or a Transitional Change in Hunter-Gatherer Mobility Patterns?
In *Between Bands and States*, edited by Susan A. Gregg, pp. 108-134. Occasional Paper 9, Center
for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

Apicella, Coren L., Frank W. Marlowe, James H. Fowler, and Nicholas A. Christakis

2012 Social Networks and Cooperation in Hunter-Gatherers. *Nature* 481:497-501.

Arnold, Jeanne E., Scott Sunell, Benjamin T. Nigra, Katelyn J. Bishop, Terrah Jones, and Jacob Bongers

2015 Entrenched Disbelief: Complex Hunter-Gatherers and the Case for Inclusive Evolutionary
Thinking. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* (DOI 10.1007/s10816-015-9246-y).

Bailey, Geoff, and Nicky Milner

2002 Coastal Hunter Gatherers and Social Evolution: Marginal or Central? *Before Farming* 4(1):1-
15.

Bailey, R. G. Head, M. Jenike, B. Owen, R. Rechtman, and E. Zechenter

1989 Hunting and Gathering in Tropical Rain Forest: Is It Possible? *American Anthropologist*
91:59-82.

Barnard, Alan

2004 Hunter-Gatherers in History, Archaeology, and Anthropology: Introductory Essay. In *Hunter-
Gatherers in History, Archaeology, and Anthropology*, edited by Alan Barnard, pp. 1-13. Berg,
Oxford.

Basso, Keith H.

1996 Wisdom Sits in Places: Notes on a Western Apache Landscape. In *Sense of Place*, edited by
Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, pp. 53-90. School of American Research Press, Santa Fe.

Boehm, Christopher

2000 Conflict and the Evolution of Social Control. *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 7:79-101.

Brunton, Ron

1989 The Cultural Instability of Egalitarian Societies. *Man* 24:673-681.

Cannon, Aubrey

- 2014 Historical and Humanistic Perspectives on Hunter-Gatherers. In *Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology and Anthropology of Hunter-Gatherers*, edited by Vicki Cummings, Peter Jordan, and Marek Zvelebil. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Conkey, Margaret W.

- 2001 Hunting for Images, Gathering Up Meanings: Art for Life in Hunting-Gathering Societies. In *Hunter-Gatherers: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, edited by Catherine Panter-Brick, Robert H. Layton, and Peter Rowley-Conwy, pp. 267-291. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Coupland, Gary, Kathlyn Stewart, and Katherine Patton

- 2010 Do You Ever Get Tired of Salmon? Evidence for Extreme Salmon Specialization at Prince Rupert Harbour, British Columbia. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 29:189-207.

Cummings, Vicki

- 2013 *The Anthropology of Hunter-Gatherers: Key Themes for Archaeologists*. Bloomsbury, London.

Cummings, Vicki, Peter Jordan, and Marek Zvelebil (editors)

- 2014 *Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology and Anthropology of Hunter-Gatherers*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Flannery, Kent, and Joyce Marcus

- 2012 *The Creation of Inequality: How our Prehistoric Ancestors Set the Stage for Monarchy, Slavery, and Empire*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

González-Ruibal, A., A. Hernando, and G. Politis

- 2011 Ontology of the Self and Material Culture: Arrow Making among the Awá Hunter-Gatherers (Brazil). *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 30:1-16.

Grinker, Roy Richard

- 1994 *Houses in the Rainforest: Ethnicity and Inequality among Farmers and Foragers in Central Africa*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Hayden, Brian

- 1994 Competition, Labor, and Complex Hunter-Gatherers. In *Key Issues in Hunter-Gatherer Research*, edited by Ernest S. Burch, Jr., and Lina J. Ellanna, pp. 223-239. Berg, Oxford.

Headland, T. N., and L. A. Reid

- 1989 Hunter-Gatherers and Their Neighbors from Prehistory to the Present. *Current Anthropology* 30:43-66.

Henrich, Joseph

- 2012 Hunter-Gatherer Cooperation. *Nature* 481:449-450.

Hitchcock, Robert

- 1982 Patterns of Sedentism among the Basarwa of Eastern Botswana. In *Politics and History in Band Societies*, edited by E. Leacock and R. Lee, pp. 223-267. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Holdaway, Simon, and Harry Allen

- 2012 Placing Ideas in the Land: Practical and Ritual Training among the Australian Aborigines. In *Archaeology and Apprenticeship: Body Knowledge, Identities, and Communities of Practice*, edited by Willike Wenrich, pp. 79-98. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Ingold, Tim

- 1999 On the Social Relations of the Hunter-Gatherer Band. In *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers*, edited by R. B. Lee and R. Daly, pp. 399-410. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- 2000 To Journey along the Way: Maps, Wayfinding and Navigation. In *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*, by Tim Ingold, pp. 219-242. Routledge, London.

Jordan, Peter

- 2003 *Material Culture and Sacred Landscape*. AltaMira, Walnut Creek, CA.

Jordan, Peter, and Vicki Cummings

- 2014 Introduction. In *Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology and Anthropology of Hunter-Gatherers*, edited by Vicki Cummings, Peter Jordan, and Marek Zvelebil, pp. 1-29. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Kelly, Robert L.

- 1992 Mobility/Sedentism: Concepts, Archaeological Measures, and Effects. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21:43-66.
- 1995 *The Forager Spectrum*. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C.
- 2013 *The Lifeways of Hunter-Gatherers: The Foraging Spectrum*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Kent, Susan

- 1992 Studying Variability in the Archaeological Record: An Ethnoarchaeological Model for Distinguishing Mobility Patterns. *American Antiquity* 57:635-660.

Koster, Jeremy M.

- 2008 Hunting with Dogs in Nicaragua: An Optimal Foraging Approach. *Current Anthropology* 935-944.

Lee, Richard B.

- 1992 Art, Science, or Politics? The Crisis in Hunter-Gatherer Studies. *American Anthropologist* 94:31-54.

Lee, Richard B., and Richard Daly

- 1999 Introduction: Foragers and Others. In *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers*, edited by R. B. Lee and R. Daly, pp. 1-19. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Lopes, Priscila F. M., Mariana Clauzet, Natalia Hanazaki, Milena Ramires, Renato A. M. Silvano, and Alpina Begossi

- 2011 Foraging Behaviour of Brazilian Riverine and Coastal Fishers: How Much is Explained by Optimal Foraging Theory? *Conservation and Society* 9:236-246.

- Morgan, Christopher
2009 Optimal Foraging Patterns in the Sierra Nevada, Alta California. *California Archaeology* 1:205-226.
- Morphy, Howard
1995 Landscape and the Reproduction of the Ancestral Past. In *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space*, edited by Eric Hirsch and Michael O'Hanlon, pp. 184-209. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Oetelaar, Gerald A., David G. Anderson, and Peter Dawson
2013 The Hearth, the Home and the Homeland An Integrated Strategy for Memory Storage in Circumpolar Landscapes. In *About the Hearth: Perspectives on the Home, Hearth and Household in the Circumpolar North*, edited by D. G. Anderson, R. P. Wishart, and V. Vaté, pp. 223-248. Berghahn, New York.
- Oetelaar, Gerald A., and D. Meyer
2006 Movement and Native American Landscapes: A Comparative Approach. *Plains Anthropologist* 51:355-374.
- Panther-Brick, Catherine, Robert H. Layton, and Peter Rowley-Conwy (editors)
2001 *Hunter-Gatherers: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Sahlins, Marshall
1972 *Stone Age Economics*. Aldine, Chicago.
- Sassaman, Kenneth E.
2001 Hunter-Gatherers and Traditions of Resistance. In *The Archaeology of Traditions: Agency and History Before and After Columbus*, edited by T. R. Pauketat, pp. 218-236. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

2005 Complex Hunter-Gatherers in Evolution and History: A North American Perspective. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 12:227-280.
- Sassaman, Kenneth E., and Asa R. Randall
2012 Shell Mounds of the Middle St. Johns Basin, Northeast Florida. In *Early New World Monumentality*, edited by Richard Burger and Robert Rosenswig, pp. 53-77. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.
- Sheehan, Michael S.
2004 Ethnographic Models, Archaeological Data, and the Applicability of Modern Foraging Theory. In *Hunter-Gatherers in History, Archaeology, and Anthropology*, edited by Alan Barnard, pp. 163-173. Berg, Oxford.
- Stiles, David
2001 Hunter-Gatherer Studies: The Importance of Context. *African Studies Monographs*, Supplement 26:41-65.
- Suzman, James
2004 Hunting for Histories: Rethinking Historicity in the Western Kalahari. In *Hunter-Gatherers in History, Archaeology, and Anthropology*, edited by A. Barnard, pp. 201-216. Berg, Oxford.

Trigger, David S.

- 1999 Hunter-Gatherer Peoples and Nation-States. In *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers*, edited by R. B. Lee and R. Daly, pp. 473-479. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Waguespack, Nicole M., and Todd A. Surovell

- 2003 Clovis Hunting Strategies, or How to Make Out on Plentiful Resources. *American Antiquity* 68:333-352.

Wiessner, Polly

- 1982 Risk, Reciprocity and Social Influences on !Kung San economics. In *Politics and History in Band Societies*, edited by E. Leacock and R. Lee, pp. 61-84. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Winterhalder, Bruce

- 2001 The Behavioural Ecology of Hunter-Gatherers. In *Hunter-Gatherers: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, edited by Catherine Panter-Brick, Robert H. Layton, and Peter Rowley-Conwy, pp. 12-38. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Woodburn, James

- 1982 Egalitarian Societies. *Man* 17:431-451.

- 1988 African Hunter-Gatherer Social Organization: Is It Best Understood as a Product of Encapsulation? In *Hunters and Gatherers, Vol. 1: History, Evolution, and Social Change*, edited by T. Ingold, D. Riches, and J. Woodburn, pp. 31-64. Berg, New York.

Zedeño Maria Nieves

- 2008 Bundled Worlds: The Roles and Interactions of Complex Objects from the North American Plains. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 15:362-378.