



HEB 1362

Hunter-Gatherers

Tuesday 2-4:30pm

Geological Museum Room 105, 24 Oxford Street

Instructor: Vivek V. Venkataraman

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Office Location: 50D Peabody Museum

Office Hours: Friday 1-2pm or by appointment

Course Description: Modern industrialized life is highly unusual from an evolutionary perspective. For the vast majority of our species' history, we lived in small, mobile, social groups and subsisted on non-domesticated foods. This hunting and gathering way of life has profoundly influenced our evolved physiology, life history, psychology, and social behavior. In this seminar, we examine recent human evolution and adaptation through the lens of the food quest: the goal of acquiring adequate energy to stay alive and reproduce. After establishing fundamental ecological and evolutionary principles, we then survey hunter-gatherer populations around the globe. We focus on cross-cultural variation in foraging and subsistence, technology, life history, co-residence patterns, and social behavior. The course highlights the strengths and weaknesses of using modern hunter-gatherers as models for the past.

Assignments will consist of short weekly papers, problem sets, and films. Class activities and problem sets will involve introductions to basic statistical concepts and computer programming in R. Roughly one-third of each class period will be devoted to working collaboratively in R. Students will also acquire skills in reading and writing scientific papers. The final project involves reading an ethnography or completing an independent project, writing a 7-9 page paper, and giving a presentation to the class.

Prerequisite(s): None

Text(s): *The Lifeways of Hunter-Gatherers*, 2nd Edition (2013). This text is available on reserve at Tozzer Library, but you are strongly encouraged to purchase this text as soon as possible.

Author(s): Robert L. Kelly

Opinion papers and problem sets

One-page opinion papers will be due on a weekly basis. These must be posted to Canvas by 6pm on the Monday before class. These papers will form the basis for discussion during the week's class periods and are intended to improve critical reasoning capacities and writing ability. The papers should state a problem or central aspect encountered in the week's readings and lectures (or in the material covered following the previous opinion paper), then

develop a thesis with respect to the material. These should not be summaries but instead adopt a critical stance [for example: a pro or con position, expand upon a flawed assumption, reveal a gap in the literature, etc...]. The topics are completely open-ended, and you are encouraged to bring in perspectives from your daily life and current events. The papers will receive a grade between 0 (not submitted) and 10 (excellent). Proper punctuation, spelling, grammar, and creativity are part of that assessment. I will provide feedback on each paper via Canvas. Occasionally, I will provide more detailed prompts for these opinion papers, and some may involve small puzzles or calculations (ie, problem sets). The formatting requirements of the paper are as follows: Times New Roman 12-point font, 1 inch margins, double-spaced, .doc format.

Final papers

Students have a few options with the final paper. The first option will require students to read an original ethnography on a hunter-gatherer society and to write a critical analysis. The second option is to write a research paper on a topic of the student's choice. Like the weekly papers, the paper should present a novel argument and not be merely a summary of the ethnography or the topic. The paper should address one or more of the broad themes discussed in the course that situate the topic in the context of hunter-gatherer studies more broadly. Third, students may pursue a data-driven project using pre-existing data (e.g., cross-cultural ethnographic data, or original unpublished data shared by the instructor).

Students will present their papers as powerpoint presentations during the final class. Keep in mind that these presentations occur before the paper is due, and thus they should be used as a chance to get feedback from your colleagues to improve your paper.

The formatting requirements of the paper are as follows: 7-9 pages double spaced (not including the bibliography), Times New Roman font, 12 pt, 1 inch margins, .doc format. Adherence to these requirements will be strictly enforced.

Grade Distribution:

Weekly opinion papers and problem sets	40%
Final paper	20%
Final presentation	20%
Participation	20%

Letter Grade Distribution:

≥ 94.00	A	74 - 76	C
90 - 93	A-	70 - 73	C-
87 - 89	B+	67 - 69	D+
84 - 86	B	64 - 66	D
80 - 83	B-	60 - 63	D-
77 - 79	C+	≤ 60	F

Course Policies:

- **Academic Integrity and Harvard Honor Code**

- Students are expected to live up to the Harvard Honor Code (<http://honor.fas.harvard.edu/honor-code>) and not participate in behaviors – including cheating and plagiarism – that compromise it. Please keep in mind the Harvard Honor Code: *"Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity—that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one's own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs."*

- **Collaboration Policy**

- Students may NOT collaborate on the weekly opinion papers or problem sets. Students may discuss higher order concepts and issues relating to the material, but not the details of the exercise. It is helpful and encouraged for students to learn programming in R in a collaborative environment. Students are expected to work individually on their final research projects.

- **Students with disabilities**

- Students with learning, physical, or psychiatric disabilities who may need classroom accommodations are encouraged to see me before the end of the second week of the term. Discussions will remain confidential, but the Student Accessibility Office may be consulted to discuss how to best implement the requested accommodation.

- **Religious observances**

- If you have a religious observance that may conflict with your participation in the course, please speak with me before the end of the second week of the quarter to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Tentative Course Outline: The weekly coverage might change slightly throughout the course. Be sure to check Canvas frequently for updates. Please ensure you are set to receive all notifications for the course via Canvas.

Week	Content
Week 1(Jan 24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class: Introduction
Week 2 (Jan 31)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: Kelly Chs. 1 & 10 • Class: Hunter-gatherers and anthropology
Week 3 (Feb 7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: Kelly Ch. 2, Kaplan et al. 2009 • Class: Methodological approaches to human behavior, Introduction to R I
Week 4 (Feb 14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: Kelly Ch. 3 • Class: Foraging theory, Introduction to R II
Week 5 (Feb 21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: Kelly Ch. 4 • Class: Mobility and sedentism, Visualizing data in R
Week 6 (Feb 28)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: Kelly Ch. 5 • Class: Technology, Flint-knapping with Ian Wallace
Week 7 (Mar 7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO CLASS
Week 8 (Mar 14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO CLASS
Week 9 (Mar 21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: Kelly Ch. 6 • Class: Sharing, Manipulating data in R
Week 10 (Mar 28)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: Kelly Ch. 7 • Class: Demography and life history, Simple statistical tests I
Week 11 (Apr 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: Kelly Ch. 8 • Class: Sexual division of labor and co-residence, Simple statistical tests II
Week 12 (Apr 11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: Kelly Ch. 9 • Class: Egalitarianism, Visit by Kirk Endicott (Dartmouth College)
Week 13 (Apr 18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: Gross 2015 • Class: Future of small-scale societies
Week 14 (Apr 25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class: Presentations