ANTH 400 Hunter-Gatherers  
Dr. Mark Plew  
9-10:15, TTH, MB 135  
Spring Semester, 2016

Introduction

This course will explore variation in foraging life ways of prehistoric and contemporary hunter-gatherers. Its focus relates to how hunter-gatherers affect behavioral solutions to subsistence within varied environments. We will examine ways in which hunting and gathering strategies use differing patterns of social interaction, mobility and technologies to successfully exploit their environments. The course will emphasize the ways in which hunter-gatherer diversity is explained through the use of various models, theories and insights drawn from behavioral ecology. This course will consist of discussions, student presentations and written papers. The first nine weeks of this course will include an intensive review of hunter-gatherer diversity.

Objectives

Completion of this course will enable the student to:

- Discuss the history of hunter-gatherer research
- Discuss models of behavioral/evolutionary ecology that are used to explain food choices and settlement patterns
- Describe and discuss examples of hunter-gatherer mobility and settlement, resource acquisition and social organization
- Discuss and critique models and theories used to explain hunter-gatherer behaviors
- Discuss analogical applications of hunter-gatherer behavior to contexts of early hominid/human evolution and later prehistoric periods

Required Texts

*The Lifeways of Hunter-Gatherers: The Foraging Spectrum* by Robert L. Kelly

*Hunter-Gatherer Foraging* by Robert Bettinger (I include Bettinger as a source book that will be useful for some of you in developing your projects-it’s a quick read for context)

Recommended:

*Limited Wants, Unlimited Means: A Reader on Hunter-Gatherer Economics*

*Environment*, Edited by John Gowdy
Books you may wish to review that you may wish to look at:

*Hunter-Gatherer Foraging Strategies: Ethnographic and Archaeological Analyses* by B. Winterhalder and E.A. Smith

*Evolutionary Ecology and Human Behavior* by E.A. Smith and B. Winterhalder

*Hunter-Gatherers in History, Archaeology and Anthropology*, Edited by Alan Barnard*

*Hunter-Gatherers: Archaeological and Evolutionary Theory* by Robert L. Bettinger

*Ethnoarchaeology and Hunter-Gatherers*, Edited by K. Fewster and M. Zvelebil

*Hunter-Gatherer Landscapes* by Michael Jochim

*Cultural Diversity Among Twentieth Century Foragers*, Edited by Susan Kent

*Hunters and Gatherers in the Modern World*, Edited by P. Schweitzer, M. Biese, and R. Hitchcock

*The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers* by Lee and Daly


*Archaeology and Ethnoarchaeology of Mobility* edited by Sellet, Greaves and Yu

**Course Requirements and Evaluation**

You will be evaluated in terms of your participation in class and by the quality of your written and presented work. There will be no exams in this course. You will sit for four 25 point quizzes. These will be non-cumulative and cover roughly one-quarter of the course material. You will be given one week’s notice of quizzes.

The major assignment in the course will be the preparation of a 15-25 page research paper relating to some aspect of hunter-gatherer anthropology/archaeology and a fifteen to twenty (20) minute oral presentation based on the research paper. A formal abstract of the paper is due by February 15th. Presentations must be prepared by March 15. I will assign you a time at which you will present your findings. Following your presentation, your colleagues and I will ask you a series of questions and provide you feedback. My intention is that the input you receive regarding your project can be used as the basis for
re-working your paper. The research paper and presentation will each count 100 points toward a total of 300 points for the course. The paper is due by the last class period.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Tuesday lectures will be topical and fit to the weekly assignments of the syllabus. On Thursdays we will break up into working/discussion groups. I will give you a set of questions that you will discuss together—bulleting out key points. I will roam about during your discussions to answer questions. We will take a few minutes at the end of the TH period to briefly go over the questions. The quizzes will be based on questions I give you on TH.

Though most required reading assignments are from Kelly, I encourage you to read some if not all the suggested readings that are listed for each week.

Grading

Grades will be assigned per the following scale:

A=300-270
B=296-266
C=265-235
D=234-204
F=203 or fewer points

The course uses the BSU +/- System for grading.

Office Hours

TTH 10:30-11:45 or by Appointment. Phone: 426-3444. Email: mplew@boisestate.edu

Course Syllabus

Week 1. The History of Hunter-Gatherer Research-Anthropological Approaches to Hunters and Gatherers


Sahlins in Gowdy (1986), recommended
Yengoyan, “Anthropological History and the Study of Hunters and Gatherers: Cultural and Non-cultural” (suggested—in Barnard)
Binford, Bands May Exist only in the History of Anthropology in Archaeology and Ethnoarchaeology of Mobility, Sellet, Greaves and Yu, 2006
Week 2. Subsistence, Mobility and Exchange

Kelly, *The Foraging Spectrum*, Chapters 3-5, Bettinger Chapters 1-5


Weeks 3 and 4. Foraging Behavior, Group Size and Reproduction

Kelly, *The Foraging Spectrum*, Chapters 6-7

Optimization and Risk in Human Foraging Strategies by Yellen in *Journal of Human Evolution* (suggested)  
Marlowe, F., “Marital Residence Among Foragers” in *Current Anthropology* 44 (suggested)  

Week 5. Hunter-Gatherer Social Structure/Organization

Kelly, *The Foraging Spectrum*, Chapter 8

Woodburn, Egalitarian Societies, in *Man* 1982  
Leacock, Women’s Status in Egalitarian Society: Implications for Social Evolution, in Gowdy 1998  

Week 6. Hunting and Gathering Behaviors and Paleoanthropology

Kelly, *The Foraging Spectrum*, Chapter 9


Quiatt and Huffman, “On Home Bases, Nesting Sites, Activity Centers and New Analytic Perspectives” in *Current Anthropology* (suggested) 1986

O’Connell, Hawkes and Jones, “Hadze Scavenging: Implications for Plio/Pleistocene Hominid Subsistence”, *Current Anthropology* (suggested) 1988


**Week 7 and 8. Archaeological Perspectives on Hunter-Gatherer Mobility, Subsistence and Settlement**

**Organizational Variability**


Kent, “Relationship Between Mobility Strategies and Site Structure” (required)


**Resource Intensification and Use**

Simms, “Acquisition and Nutritional Data on Great Basin Resources” in *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* (required) 1986

Broughton, “Late Holocene Resource Intensification in the Sacramento Valley, California” The Vertebrate Evidence” (required) 1994


**Archaeological Evidence of Complex Hunter-Gatherers**

Kelly, *The Foraging Spectrum*, Chapter 8 for review
Testart, “The Significance of Food Storage Among Hunters and Gatherers: Residence Patterns and Population Densities” in *Current Anthropology* (suggested)

**Week 9. The Future of Hunter-Gatherer Research**


**Weeks 10-18, Student Presentations**