

## ANTH 330 SUMMER SESSION: HUNTER-GATHERERS

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**Nota Bene:** This is a ten-week course packed into a four-week term: thus, the pace is fast and the workload is heavy. Accordingly, this course is recommended for highly motivated people who have the time and energy to dedicate to four weeks of intensive study.

**Course Content:** This course examines the ecological niche to which our species is adapted. For most of human evolution, survival has depended on what could be acquired through the hunting, fishing, and/or gathering of wild resources. Thus, the qualities that make us human were shaped by the recurrent features of the physical and social environments that our ancestors encountered as foragers. To fully understand what it means to be human one must therefore understand our foraging legacy. While no modern hunter-gatherer group is a “living fossil” of our evolutionary past, collectively these groups provide insight into the adaptive problems our ancestors faced, the adaptations that selection produced in response to these problems, and how these adaptations yield different solutions in response to differing local environments. This class surveys a diverse set of societies that survived as hunter-gatherers into the modern era. We will explore how different hunter-gatherer groups interact with their physical and social environment in the process of acquiring and sharing foods, allocating labor, raising children, and deciding where to live and when to move, largely from an evolutionary and ecological perspective. The class attempts to achieve a balance between a review of ethnographic information about hunter-gatherer groups, the scientific theories for understanding both recurrent and variable aspects of people’s behavior across these groups, and the data used to support or falsify these hypotheses.

**Course Requirements.** All course materials (i.e., syllabus, readings, lectures, films, assignments, tests) are posted on the course Canvas site and organized by week, as is the **Schedule of Readings** (see below). You are responsible for checking the course Canvas site regularly for updates and announcements. No extra credit allowed; no late work or make-ups allowed without Approved Proof of Legitimate Reason for missing the due date (for exceptions, see **Technical Difficulties**). Except as noted, each week you must complete the following:

1. **Readings.** Each week there is a set of articles/chapters to be read before listening to the lectures (the lectures reference the readings, so lectures will be hard to follow if you haven’t done the reading first). The readings are scientific articles and chapters from ethnographies and edited volumes about important topics in hunter-gatherer research.
2. **Lectures.** A set of lectures to be watched before taking the week’s test.
3. **Film and Lab.** Each week, you must watch a film and complete a lab worksheet. These assignments test your ability to apply important concepts presented in the week’s readings/lectures. In so doing, they also serve as review for tests. Films are used to illustrate core concepts where verbal description (i.e., lecture, text) is inadequate. These include: (1) the conditions and challenges of day-to-day forager life; (2) the extensive

knowledge and skill sets that scaffold even the most basic foraging tasks; and (3) the degree to which humans are dependent on cooperation for survival.

4. **Tests.** Each week there is a ~30-question, timed, closed book, multiple-choice, online test on that week's readings and lectures. Tests are designed to assess your understanding of core course concepts and important research findings.

**Grading Rubric:** Your course grade will be based on the total points you earn on the Worksheets and Tests. Grading is done on a straight percentage scale.

A+ = 99-100%	A = 93-98.9%	A- = 90-92.9%
B+ = 87-89.9%	B = 83-86.9%	B- = 80-82.9%
C+ = 77-79.9%	C = 73-76.9%	C- = 70-72.9%
D+ = 67-69.9%	D = 63-66.9%	D- = 60-62.9%
F = < 59.9%		

Expected levels of performance:

**A+:** Quality of student's performance significantly exceeds all requirements and expectations required for an A grade. Very few, if any, students receive this grade in a given course.

**A:** Quality of performance is outstanding relative to that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates mastery of course content at the highest level.

**B:** Quality of performance is significantly above that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates mastery of course content at a high level.

**C:** Quality of performance meets the course requirements in every respect; demonstrates adequate understanding of course content.

**D:** Quality of performance is at the minimal level necessary to pass the course, but does not fully meet the course requirements; demonstrates a marginal understanding of course content.

**F:** Quality of performance in the course is unacceptable and does not meet the course requirements; demonstrates an inadequate understanding of course content.

**Academic Honesty:** academic misconduct is a violation of the UO Student Conduct Code, which prohibits the “act of cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism. Examples: looking at another person’s exam, making up lab results, and failing to cite sources in a paper.” Listening to lectures, watching films, and studying with other students in the class is allowed and encouraged, but all tests and assignments must be done independently: all work submitted for this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this class. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty risks failing the class.

**Office Hours:** I regularly check my email twice a day, once in the morning and again in the early evening. (I often check it at other times as well, but these are unpredictable.) This means that if you email me after 7:00 p.m., I probably won't see it until the next morning, and if you email me in the late morning or early afternoon, I probably won't see it until that evening. If you feel that you need to meet with me in person, email me to schedule an appointment.

**Students With Disabilities:** Appropriate accommodations will be provided for students with documented disabilities. If you anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please contact me asap and send me a notification letter from Disability Services outlining your accommodations.

**Technical Difficulties:** With online courses, technical failures inevitably occur. As I cannot monitor the course site continually, I depend on you to notify me of any tech issues as soon as they come to your attention. Don't panic if I don't respond to your email immediately (see **Office Hours**). When tech failures occur, deadlines will be extended as appropriate.

**Course Goals:** By the end of the term, students should be able to

- 1) define the basic features of the human ecological niche, and cite examples of these features from a range of hunter-gatherer cultures
- 2) understand how variation in habitat produces variation in the basic features of the human ecological niche
- 3) understand the human ecological niche as a set of adaptive problems and our species as a set of adaptations that evolved in response to them
- 4) understand the role that information and cultural transmission play in our species' ecological niche
- 5) identify features of the human ecological niche and human cognitive design that distinguish humans zoologically from other animals

## SCHEDULE OF READINGS

### WEEK 1: HUMAN LIFE HISTORY

#### Unit I: Theoretical Overview

**Sugiyama 1996** "Introduction" to *In Search of the Adapted Mind: A Study of Human Cognitive Adaptations Among the Shiwiar of Ecuador and the Yora of Peru*

**Lee & DeVore 1968** "Problems in the study of hunters and gatherers"

**Kaplan et al 2000** "A theory of human life history evolution: diet intelligence and longevity"

#### Unit II: Cooperation

**Leonard et al. 2007** "Energetics and the evolution of brain size in early *Homo*"

**Hrdy 2005** "Comes the child before the man: how cooperative breeding and prolonged dependence shaped human potentials"

**Hill & Kaplan 1985** "Food sharing among Ache foragers: tests of explanatory hypotheses" (to p. 239 only!)

**Film:** *The Hunters*

### WEEK 2: ECOLOGY & CULTURE

#### Unit I: Conflict Management

**Boehm 1993** "Egalitarian behavior and reverse dominance hierarchy" (p. 227 to top of p. 236 only!)

**Marshall 1976** "Sharing, talking, and giving: relief of social tensions among the !Kung"

#### Unit II: Subsistence & Settlement Patterns

**Lee 1984** “Subsistence: foraging for a living”

**Tonkinson 1978** “Subsistence in a most marginal habitat”

**Turnbull 1983** “The forest world”

**Downs 1966** “The land,” “Using the land”

**Mithen 1990** “The ethnography of hunter-gatherer decision making”

**Heffley 1981** “The relationship between northern Athapaskan settlement patterns and resource distribution”

**Films:** *The Art of Tracking*

## **WEEK 3: RISK MANAGEMENT**

### **Unit I: Kinship & Marriage**

**Lee 1984** “Kinship and social organization”

**Tonkinson 1978** “The social imperative”

**Apostolou 2007** “Sexual selection under parental choice: the role of parents in the evolution of human mating”

### **Unit II: Health & Subsistence Risk**

**Sugiyama 2004** “Illness, injury and disability among Shiwiar forager-horticulturalists”

**Gurven et al. 2000** “It’s a wonderful life: signaling generosity among the Ache of Paraguay”

**Minc 1986** “Scarcity and survival: the role of oral tradition in mediating subsistence crises”

### **Unit III: Resource Management & Wayfinding**

**Lewis 1982** “Fire technology and resource management in Aboriginal North America and Australia”

**Tonkinson 1978** Excerpts from “The Spiritual Imperative” (pp. 14-19), “The Religious Life”

(pp. 87-94), “Songlines” (pp. 104-105) and “Interrelationship of Myth, Ritual, and Songline” (p. 105)

**Films:** *Life and Death of the Classic Lillooet Culture*

## **WEEK 4: CHILDHOOD & LEARNING**

### **Unit I: Hunter-Gatherer Childhood**

**Bird & Bliege Bird 2005** “Martu children’s hunting strategies in the Western Desert, Australia”

**Blurton Jones et al. 1994** “Differences between Hadza and !Kung children’s work: original affluence or practical reason?” (pp. 189-205 only!)

**Gurven et al. 2006** “How long does it take to become a proficient hunter? Implications for the evolution of delayed growth”

### **Unit II: Cultural Transmission**

**Gwich’in 1997** *Gwich’in Words About the Land*, “Vadzaih (Caribou)”

**Blurton-Jones & Konner 1976** “!Kung knowledge of animal behavior”

**Hewlett & Cavalli-Sforza 1986** “Cultural transmission among Aka pygmies”

**Film:** *Cree Hunters of Mistassini*

