HEB 1362

Hunter-Gatherers

Tuesday 2-4:30pm

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.

Through consultation with the instructor throughout the semester, students will complete an individual research project on a topic of his/her choice. The project may be a review paper or based on a quantitative analysis of an ethnographic dataset to test an evolutionary and/or ecological hypothesis. Students will write a 5-7 page paper, in addition to making a formal powerpoint presentation to the class at the end of the semester.

Prerequisite(s): None
Text(s): *The Lifeways of Hunter-Gatherers*, 2nd Edition. Please purchase this text as soon as possible.
Author(s): Robert L. Kelly

Opinion papers and problem sets
One-page papers (Times New Roman 12-point font, 1 inch margins, double-spaced word doc) 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, propose a health solution, 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).

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. However, students are expected to work individually on their final research projects, which means that code written for the final projects must be completed on an individual basis.

- **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)	• Class: Introduction
Week 2 (Jan 31)	• Reading: Kelly Chs. 1 & 10 • Class: Hunter-gatherers and anthropology
Week 3 (Feb 7)	• Reading: Kelly Ch. 2, Kaplan et al. 2009 • Class: Methodological approaches to human behavior
Week 4 (Feb 14)	• Reading: Kelly Ch. 3 • Class: Foraging theory, Introduction to R I
Week 5 (Feb 21)	• Reading: Kelly Ch. 4 • Class: Mobility and sedentism, Introduction to R II
Week 6 (Feb 28)	• Reading: Kelly Ch. 5 • Class: Technology, Visualizing data in R
Week 7 (Mar 7)	• NO CLASS
Week 8 (Mar 14)	• NO CLASS
Week 9 (Mar 21)	• Reading: Kelly Ch. 6 • Class: Sharing, Manipulating data in R
Week 10 (Mar 28)	• Reading: Kelly Ch. 7 • Class: Demography and life history, Simple statistical tests I
Week 11 (Apr 4)	• Reading: Kelly Ch. 8 • Class: Sexual division of labor and co-residence, Simple statistical tests II
Week 12 (Apr 11)	• Reading: Kelly Ch. 9 • Class: Egalitarianism
Week 13 (Apr 18)	• Reading: Gross 2015 • Class: Future of small-scale societies
Week 14 (Apr 25)	• Class: Presentations