

ANTY 458: ARCHAEOLOGY OF HUNTER-GATHERERS SYLLABUS

Professor: Dr. Anna M. Prentiss; Office: Social Sciences 205; Message Telephone (Anthropology Department) 243-2693. Email: anna.prentiss@umontana.edu; Office hours: I will not be holding open-door office hours due to risks associated with the pandemic. Please feel free to email me for an appointment (I am open to telephone, Zoom, or outdoors in-person meetings).

PANDEMIC INFORMATION

- This course will be taught on a Remote basis via Zoom. Thus, there will be no in-person face-to-face issues.
- If you are sick or displaying symptoms, please contact the Curry Health Center at (406) 243-4330
- Up-to-Date COVID-19 Information from the University of Montana:
- UM Coronavirus Website: <https://www.umt.edu/coronavirus>
- UM COVID-19 Fall 2020 website: <https://www.umt.edu/coronavirus/fall2020.php>
- Remain vigilant in mitigating the spread of COVID-19

I. DESCRIPTION:

The course will introduce the archaeological study of hunter-gatherer societies. Primary emphasis will be on archaeological method and theory. The course is divided into several components. The course begins with an introduction to anthropological perspectives on hunter-gatherers. In subsequent weeks, the course explores method and theory in the archaeology of hunter-gatherer subsistence, mobility, technological organization, and sociality. Students will emerge from the course with an enhanced understanding of archaeological methodology and anthropological theory. Put another way, students will gain the basic tools for recognizing and explaining variability in hunter-gatherer cultures from an archaeological perspective.

II. PURPOSE:

A. MISSION STATEMENT: This course is an elective for anthropology majors.

B. Objectives for the student:

1. To identify and understand the range of potential adaptations undertaken by the world's hunting and gathering peoples.
2. To develop concepts which aid in our understanding of the processes of culture change in hunter-gatherer societies.
3. To develop concepts and methods which aid in the interpretation of the archaeological record of hunter-gatherers.

4. To practice analytical skills in evaluating basic archaeological research.
5. To read primary and secondary sources and consider their significance to archaeological problems.

C. Goals for the student:

1. To develop a broad perspective on the economy and social organization of hunter-gatherer peoples.
2. To develop ability to identify important analytical strategies for researching the archaeological record of hunter-gatherers.
3. To develop the ability to recognize archaeological signatures of past hunter-gatherer behavior.
4. To be able to use sophisticated theoretical concepts from anthropology to explain change and variation in hunter-gatherer societies.

D. General Learning Outcomes for the student:

In addition to basic content-related objectives outlined above, the course has several general liberal-learning goals for developing basic academic skills. With successful completion of this course, the student will improve ability in the following areas:

1. To develop the ability to manage data requiring the student to organize information and distinguish between empirical fact, inference, and theory.
2. To develop the ability to understand organizing principles to be used in sorting information.
3. To compare and evaluate arguments.
4. To organize thoughts and communicate these in written form.
5. To practice in synthesizing information during constrained time periods (as in exams).

III. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

A. Prerequisites: None

B. Texts and readings:

Required Texts:

Bettinger, Robert L.

2009 *Hunter-Gatherer Foraging: Five Simple Models*. Eliot Werner Publications, Clinton Corners, New York.

Kelly, Robert L.

2013 *The Foraging Spectrum: Diversity in Hunter-Gatherer Lifeways*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Jones, Kevin T.
2012 *The Shrinking Jungle*. The University of Utah Press, Salt Lake
City.

Recommended Readings:
Available from the Mansfield Library

C. Grade Determination:

Grading will be accomplished via (1) preparation of one assignment; (2) one class presentation and (3) two examinations. The assignments and exams will be submitted to the professor via e-mail attachments.

(1) Research Assignment: All participants will submit a 15 page (25 pages for Graduate Students), typed, double-spaced, research paper on hunter-gatherer archaeology (see handout). The paper is due on December 13 at 5:00 P.M. and is worth 150 points.

(2) Exams: A mid-term and final examination: short answer and essay questions worth 100 points each. These will be "take-home" exams. A list of questions and terms will be provided in advance of the exam.

Sample Exam:

I. Please write a short essay (about 2 pages) on each of the following questions (25 points each).

1. Compare and contrast the "pristinist" and "revisionist" schools of hunter-gatherer anthropology. What have we learned about hunter-gatherers from this discussion?

II. Definitions: Please define and give the importance to hunter-gatherer archaeology of each (5 points each).

middle range theory
Nunamiut ethnoarchaeology
indigenist school
Richard Lee

(3) Participation: Good seminar discussion requires preparation and participation by all. Students are expected to be participants, that is, by completing their research paper presentation and providing thoughtful, questions, opinions, and critique during class seminars and discussion sessions. All students will provide a 10-20 minute presentation of the results of their research during the final week of regular class. Participation is worth 50 points.

Deadlines are extended only in cases of illness or an emergency. Final grades are determined as follows:

Grading:

Exams	200
Paper	150
Presentation	50
Total	400

360-400 = A

320-359 = B

etc.

The professor retains the option to use + and – grades when final scores are close (i.e. within a point on a 0-100 scale) to an up or down transition.

D. Tests and Other Important Dates for Course

September 23	Mid-Term Exam Due
November 18	Assignment Due
November 25	Final Exam Due

E. Reading List and Schedule**AUGUST 19****COURSE INTRODUCTION****August 21-24****WHAT ARE HUNTER-GATHERERS? VARIATION IN HUNTING AND GATHERING SOCIETIES****Required Reading:**

Kelly, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-6)

Prentiss, Anna Marie

2014 Archaeology of Hunter-Gatherers. In *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology*, edited by Claire Smith, pp. 3587-3592. Springer, New York.
Available online via the Mansfield Library:

https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-1-4419-0465-2_957

August 26 – September 2**HISTORY OF HUNTER-GATHERER STUDIES IN ANTHROPOLOGY****Required Reading:**

Kelly, Chapters 1 and 2

**SEPTEMBER 4-14
HUNTER-GATHERER SUBSISTENCE STRATEGIES**

Required Reading:

Bettinger (2009) Chapters 1 and 3

Kelly, Chapter 3

Recommended Reading:

Broughton, Jack M.

1994 Late Holocene Resource Intensification in the Sacramento River Valley: The Vertebrate Evidence. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 21:501-514.

Chatters James C.

1987 Hunter-Gatherer Adaptations and Assemblage Structure. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 6:336-375.

Nagaoka, Lisa

2005 Declining Foraging Efficiency and Moa Carcass Exploitation in Southern New Zealand. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 32, 1328-1338.

Prentiss, Anna Marie, Matthew J. Walsh, Thomas A. Foor, Kathryn Bobolinski, Ashley Hampton, Ethan Ryan, and Haley O'Brien

2020 Malthusian Cycles among Semi-Sedentary Fisher-Hunter-Gatherers: The Socio-economic and Demographic History of Housepit 54, Bridge River Site, British Columbia. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 59 (Issue and page numbers forthcoming).

**SEPTEMBER 7
HOLIDAY**

**SEPTEMBER 16-23
HUNTER-GATHERER MOBILITY AND LAND-USE STRATEGIES**

Required Reading:

Kelly, Chapter 4

Recommended Reading:

Binford, Lewis R.

1980 Willow Smoke and Dog's Tails: Hunter-Gatherer Settlement Systems and Archaeological Site Formation. *American Antiquity* 45:4-20.

Chatters, James C.
1987 Hunter-Gatherer Adaptations and Assemblage Structure. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 6:336-375.

Kelly, Robert L. and Lawrence C. Todd
1988 Coming into the Country: Early Paleoindian Hunting and Mobility. *American Antiquity* 53:231-244.

**SEPTEMBER 23
MID-TERM EXAM DUE**

**SEPTEMBER 23-28
HUNTER-GATHERER TECHNOLOGICAL ORGANIZATION**

Required Reading:

Bettinger (2009) Chapters 4 and 5

Recommended Reading:

Binford, Lewis R.
1979 Organization and Formation Processes: Looking at Curated Technologies. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 35:255-273.

Beck, Charlotte, Taylor, A.K., Jones, G.T., Fadem, C.M., Cook, C.R. and S.A. Millward
2002 Rocks are Heavy: Transport Costs and Paleoarchaic Quarry Behavior in the Great Basin. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 21:481-507.

Kuhn, Steven L.
1994 A Formal Approach to the Design and Assembly of Mobile Toolkits. *American Antiquity* 59:426-442.

**SEPTEMBER 30 – OCTOBER 30
HUNTER-GATHERER SOCIALITY: LAND TENURE, GENDER, AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION**

Required Reading:

Kelly Chapters 5-8

Recommended Reading:

Dyson-Hudson, R. and E.A. Smith
1978 Human Territoriality: An Ecological Reassessment. *American*

Anthropologist 80:21-41.

Mattison, Sioban M., E.A. Smith, M.K. Shenk, and E. Cochrane
2016 The Evolution of Inequality. *Evolutionary Anthropology* 25:184-199.

Prentiss, Anna Marie, Hannah S. Cail, and Lisa M. Smith
2014 At the Malthusian Ceiling: Subsistence and Inequality at Bridge River,
British Columbia. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 33:34-48.

Prentiss, Anna Marie, Thomas A. Foor, Ashley Hampton, Ethan Ryan, and Matthew J.
Walsh
2018 The Evolution of Material Wealth-Based Inequality: The Evidence from
Housepit 54, Bridge River, British Columbia. *American Antiquity*
83(4):598-618.

NOVEMBER 2-6
HUNTER-GATHERERS AND COLONIALISM

Required Reading:

Jones (entire book)

NOVEMBER 3 and 11
HOLIDAYS

NOVEMBER 9-18
PRESENTATIONS (ASSIGNMENT DUE NOV 18)

NOVEMBER 25
FINAL EXAM DUE

ANTY 458 ARCHAEOLOGY OF HUNTER-GATHERERS RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

This assignment asks you to imagine that you are a professional archaeologist who has excavated an important hunter-gatherer site. Your job now is to make sense of your excavated materials. The best archaeological research seeks to explore how the archaeological materials came to be positioned as found and to address wider questions about ancient human organization. Research questions can be developed about subsistence behavior, mobility strategies, technological decisions, and many aspects of social relationships. Once we have our questions in mind we can then develop ideas about what the answers might be. The latter are called hypotheses or statements describing or explaining the actions of past occupants. In order to test hypotheses we then need to develop ideas about how they might be reflected in the archaeological record. To accomplish this we rely upon frames of reference, which consist of a series of statements about patterns of behavior and their implications for patterning in the archaeological record. Thus, in normal archaeological practice we develop alternative hypotheses about ancient cultural behavior followed by test expectations: "if this hypothesis (i.e. cultural behavior) then this pattern expected in the archaeological record."

Your test expectations (frames of reference) should tell you what data are needed from your archaeological site for evaluation of alternative hypotheses. For example, you are studying mobility type (other choices could be subsistence strategies, social status relationships, ritual behavior, etc.). Your frames of reference will take the form of test expectations for archaeological signatures of residential base versus logistical camp or non-camp field location. This will point you towards specific data needed to confirm one or the other. As discussed in class, measures of mobility type might include presence or absence of residential features, diversity in prey items and lithic tools, and formation of midden deposits. Then you just need to collect and evaluate archaeological data. What are the characteristics of the site? Do they match any of your expectations for alternative interpretations? Are there patterns that call for other interpretations than those you were expecting?

Assignment:

1. Pick out an archaeological data set. Ideally, this will be an excavation report of a hunter-gatherer site. There are many choices in the Mansfield Library.
2. Briefly describe the site in terms of context, dating, and basic cultural materials.
3. Develop alternative hypotheses and test expectations (your frames of reference) regarding the specific set of cultural practices you think should be reflected in the site data.
4. Determine which alternative hypothesis gives you the best understanding of your site. Depending upon your site and research focus, this may require that you examine various archaeological data sets: spatial arrangements of features and artifacts, variation in faunal remains, form/function of lithic artifacts, etc.
5. Write a 12-15 page (20-25 pages for grad. students) archaeological study in three parts. (1) Describe your archaeological data set. (2) Describe your hypotheses and test expectations (or frames of reference). (3) Review your

archaeological data to evaluate alternatives for interpretation. How well do your site materials match predictions of your frames of reference? Draw general conclusions regarding your site and the utility of your frames of reference for archaeological use. Did they help you interpret your archaeological site? Explain.

6. Papers should be formatted in *American Antiquity* style (headings and references cited). Students should plan to cite the most relevant primary literature in their paper.