



Course Syllabus | Fall 2024

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Course Description

This online class will introduce you to a surprisingly complex and fascinating topic—why and how humans prey on other species, and the impacts of that predation. Over the last approximately 3 million years, hunting became and remained an essential component of our daily lives. This fundamental fact did not change until we developed an increasing reliance on domesticated plants and animals over the last ca. 10,000 years. Towards the end of the last ice age human predation may have contributed to the demise of numerous species of megafauna. The archaeological record, as well as recent historical accounts offer insights into what ancient hunting practices may have looked like, and perhaps more importantly, how hunting can be conceived in drastically different ways across cultures. Hunting now faces a diversity of challenges in a world characterized by accelerated change and global impacts of industrialization.

In this class, we will take a three-step approach to the topic of hunting, beginning with 1) the archaeological record, 2) the historical/ethnographic record, and 3) exploring the diverse challenges of hunting today. Within each of these three units you will be engaged with short lectures, readings, and small group activities through the online portal. This class relies on the self-motivation of the student, but does not issue monumental tasks such as studying for an exam—the goal is to continually engage, empower, and challenge you, the student with the online material.

Course objectives

After completing this course students will be able to

- Describe the relevance of hunting to human evolution
- Draw from archaeological and historical evidence to create a timeline of hunting technology and tactics
- Identify historical trends in Western thinking about hunting and contrast this with other cultural viewpoints
- Describe the role that contemporary thinking about hunting plays in the creation and mitigation of conservation, ecology, and humanitarian issues

Materials

COURSE SCHEDULE

UNIT 1: An Archaeology of Hunting

Week 1 **INTRODUCTION**

January 20 Introduction to the course and student expectations
Module 1

Week 2 **HUNTING AND HUMAN EVOLUTION**

January 25 When did hunting begin? Stories in stone and bone
Module 2

January 27 Walking, running, throwing, and thinking
Module 3

Week 3 **WHAT THE EVIDENCE CAN TELL US**

February 1 Investigating the “residues” of ancient hunts, Part I
Module 4

February 3 Investigating the “residues” of ancient hunts, Part II
Module 5

Week 4 **SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL IMPACTS**

February 8 Of cave paintings, animism, and social organization
Module 6

February 10 Big questions: Did humans wipe out Pleistocene Mega-Mammals??
Module 7

Week 5 **EXAM 1 & MOVIE**

February 15 Video with quiz: Documentary about hunting archaeology in Wyoming?

February 17 Exam 1

UNIT 2: An Ethnoarchaeology of Hunting

Week 6 **INTERPRETATION THROUGH ANALOGY**

February 22 What is Ethnoarchaeology?
Module 8

February 24 Technological determinism vs reality
Module 9

Week 7 **PRE-INDUSTRIAL HUNTING METHODS**

March 1 Technologies and tactics, Part I
Module

March 3 Technologies and tactics, Part II
Module 10

Week 8 ADAPTATIONS

March 8 Hunting on plains, mountains, woods, and desert
Module 11

March 10 The introduction of firearms
Module 12

Week 9 EXAM 2 & MOVIE

March 15 Video with quiz: Something about Australian Aboriginal Hunting?

March 17 Exam 2

Week 10 SPRING BREAK

March 22 & 24 No class!

UNIT 3: Facing Contemporary Challenges

Week 11 WHY WE HUNT

March 29 The intersection of tradition and efficacy
Module 13

March 31 The origins of our parks
Module 14

Week 12 PRESERVING TRADITION

April 5 The Nature/Culture Dichotomy, origins in the Neolithic?
Module 15

April 7 Case study: Problems facing San hunters
Module 16

Week 13 CONSERVATION IS OUR ENEMY

April 12 Removal of traditional hunters
Module 17

April 14 Intersections of conservation and humanitarian goals
Module

Week 14 ARE HUMANS A KEYSTONE SPECIES?

April 19 Systems theory and ecosystem collapse
Module

April 21 The future of hunting
 Module

Week 15 **EXAM 3 & MOVIE**

April 26 Video with quiz: Inuit Whale Hunters?

April 28 Final Exam