

# ANTH 395

## The Archaeology and Anthropology of Hunter-Gatherers

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*INSTRUCTOR:* Dr. Patrick Jolicoeur

### **Course Description and Objectives:**

The dominant subsistence strategy for most of human history is hunting and gathering. Many societies across the world today still rely on foraging (i.e. hunting, fishing, gathering, collecting) for their daily lives. As such, it has been a common topic for both archaeological and anthropological study. Early researchers viewed foraging societies as “time capsule” analogues for the deep human past. However, modern hunter-gatherers, those of the recent and not-so-recent past, and the people who study them come from diverse historical and political contexts. This course will survey the incredible diversity of foraging societies and explore (and challenge) the ways ethnographic and archaeological data can be used for understanding the foraging past and present. Each week focuses on a specific theme within the archaeology and anthropology of hunter-gatherer studies and explores those themes with case studies from around the world.

### **Skills Development:**

This course develops your knowledge of hunter-gatherer societies from both archaeological and anthropological perspectives. We will touch upon subsistence, material culture, kinship, land use and sharing, interaction and exchange, and mobility across past and present foraging societies. Key theoretical debates within the history of hunter-gatherer studies will be considered throughout the course, such as the validity and colonial underpinnings of the concept of “hunter-gatherers”, the utility of ethnographic and contemporary datasets for interpreting the archaeological record, and the challenges of categorizing hunter-gatherers as “complex” or “simple” societies. The assignments in this course develop your skills in research design, written communication (in both academic and non-academic genres), generating actionable peer-feedback, and your ability to apply feedback you receive.