Anthropology 4315/5315 Human Behavioral Ecology

Instructor: Robert L. Kelly; Office: Anthropology 101
Course Hours: T/R 8-9:25 AM
Office Hours: T/R 9:30-10:30 (or call 766-3135 or send e-mail to me). However, my office policy is: if my door is open, come in!
E-Mail: RLKELLY@uwyo.edu

Texts: Kelly, The Foraging Spectrum; Cronk, Chagnon, Irons, Adaptation and Human Behavior, and readings. Purchase texts from Amazon or other on-line dealer.

Note: This course does not fulfill the anthropology department’s upper division cultural requirement for majors.

Course description: This is a course on human behavioral ecology, the study of “evolution and adaptive design in ecological context.” This course begins with a discussion of ecological/evolutionary paradigms, leading to a description of one approach, that of behavioral ecology, and relies almost entirely upon its application to foraging societies. We focus on foragers because that is my area of expertise, and because it is that form of human society to which HBE has been most heavily applied.

The course will begin with the very beginnings of anthropology itself as the concept of evolution played a key role in the early development of the field. Here we consider the work of Darwin and its misapplication by social evolutionists such as Spencer. We’ll then move quickly through some other evolutionary applications, including evolutionary psychology (which focuses on the role of natural selection in the creation of the human mind) and dual inheritance theory, a way to combine the unique elements of cultural and biological (genetic) transmission of information. We then consider the field of human behavioral ecology (HBE), the dominant evolutionary paradigm in anthropology today. As we will see there are variants within HBE, notably those that are more heavily focused on reproductive fitness and those that are less so (full disclosure: I fall in the latter category). I hope to cover a variety of areas: subsistence, mobility, sharing, territoriality, the division of labor, social organization, and political organization.

Requirements: Class participation makes up 1/3 of the grade. I expect students to have done the reading beforehand and come to class with comments and questions. Class proceeds largely in terms of a discussion of the readings. In places, we will give particular attention to the application of HBE in archaeology.

A take home mid-term and final exam together make up 1/3 of the grade (i.e., each is 1/6 of the final grade).

The final term paper makes up the other 1/3. The final paper can be on a topic of your
choice, related to your own research (e.g., for your thesis) or an overview of some aspect of the field (e.g., current research on sharing, demography, etc.) that is of interest to you. In the week of April 10-12, students will give brief reports on their term papers. These are not final presentations of their work, but instead are reports on “progress to date.” This will give both me and the class the opportunity to give each of you feedback and help refine the final paper. (And, of course, each of you are expected to discuss your topics and progress on the paper through the semester with me individually.)

Please note that the course will end a week early as the Society for American Archaeology meetings this year happen to fall in the last week of classes.

**Schedule**

**Jan 9-11**

Introduction: class matters, and discussion of paradigms, hypotheses, theories
Development of Evolutionary Thinking in Anthropology
(1) Kelly, chap 1-2
(2) Cronk et al, chap 1 (Irons and Cronk)
(3) Darwin, C. 1859, *The Origin of Species*, chapter 25 (concluding chapter)

**Jan 16-18**

Evolutionary paradigms in anthropology
Fundamental Principles of HBE
(4) Cronk et al chap 2 (Smith)

**Jan 23-25**

Foraging
(1) Kelly, chap 3 (ignore section on linear programming)

**Jan 30-Feb 1**

Foraging


Feb. 6-8

Mobility and settlement patterns
(1) Kelly, Chap 4.

Feb. 13-15

Territoriality and Sharing
(1) Kelly, chap 5
(2) Cronk, chap 18 (Hames)

Feb. 20-22

Sharing

Mid-Term exam handed out

Mid-Term Exam due Feb. 27

Feb 27-Mar 1

Division of Labor
(1) Kelly, chap 7 (to page 270)
(2) Cronk, chap 12 (Hawkes et al)
Mar. 6-8 Technology

Mar. 13-15 NO CLASSES, spring break

Mar. 20-22 Parenting/mating/reproductive decisions
(1) Kelly, chap 7, (270 – end) and Kelly, chap 6
(2) Cronk, chap 4 (Blurton-Jones et al)
(3) Cronk, chap 6 (Chagnon)

Mar. 27-29 Parenting/mating/reproductive decisions
(1) Cronk, chap 8 (Hewlett et al.)
(2) Cronk, chap 10 (Cronk)
(3) Cronk, chap 11 (Irons)

Apr. 3-5 Evolution of Inequality
(1) Kelly, chap. 8
(3)

Apr. 10-12 Student presentations and discussions of term papers
**April 10: Final exam handed out (covers second half of course)**

Apr. 17 Last Class (Kelly at WAS meeting on April 19) Is HBE the best way to go? **“Final exam” due April 17.**

Apr. 24-26 NO CLASSES (Kelly away at SAA conference)
**ALL TERM PAPERS DUE by April 26**