

**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS**

Course: ECON 452W-3 D100

Title: Seminar in Economic Prehistory

Semester: Spring 2022

Instructor: G. Dow

Description: This course uses the tools of economics to investigate the behavior and institutions of people in “prehistoric” societies. The concept of prehistory means there are no written historical records. Some "prehistoric" societies existed in the distant past and are known only through evidence from archaeology, but other societies without any written records have been observed by modern social scientists.

Specific topics will include

- I. The pre-agricultural world (human origins; climate, technology, and institutions; population dynamics; foraging equilibrium)
- II. The transition to agriculture (cases from southwest Asia, Africa, east Asia, and the Americas; resource endowments; theories of the transition).
- III. The post-agricultural world (inequality, warfare, the state, social collapse).

While learning about these topics, you will learn some things about economic modeling. You will also find that modern society is a very recent and strange phenomenon.

Grading: There will be two written assignments, each worth 25% of the course grade. Another 25% is based on a midterm exam, and 25% is based on the final exam.

Required Texts:

Jared Diamond, 1997, Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fate of Human Societies, Norton, New York.

Peter Bellwood, 2005, First Farmers: The Origins of Agricultural Societies, Blackwell, Oxford.

A package of custom courseware will be provided for purchase, and a variety of journal articles will be downloadable for free.

Prerequisite: ECON 302. Students who have taken ECON 482 in the summer of 2004 may not take this course for further credit. Writing.

Notes: Students requiring accommodations as a result of a disability must contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities at 778-782-3112 or csdo@sfu.ca

All students are expected to read and understand SFU's policies with regard to academic dishonesty (S 10.02 and S 10.03). These policies are available at the following web address:

www.sfu.ca/policies

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