

I started teaching this course in 2007 and have taught it 11 times. This is the last time. I am retiring at the end of April.

The main reason I designed the course is that I was doing research on economic prehistory and wanted to show students what research in the social sciences looks like.

In the 1990s, I read the book by Johnson and Earle called "The Evolution of Human Societies" (first edition was 1988). Some excerpts from the second edition (2000) are used in this course when we talk about warfare and the state. I use the entire book in Econ 354.

This book raised questions in my mind about the origins of agriculture, inequality, warfare, and the state. I started talking about these issues with Clyde Reed around 2003.

This led to our 2009 article in the *Journal of Economic Growth* about the origins of agriculture. After that, we wrote articles on technological change in foraging societies, inequality, warfare, and so on. We have published a total of six journal articles so far, with another one on the way.

We thought this material should be brought together in a book, which we have been working on for about 4 years. We expect it to be published in September 2022. The title will be "Economic Prehistory: Six Transitions That Shaped the World" (Cambridge University Press).

The table of contents for the book looks like this: Prologue (economics meets archaeology, the Malthusian model); Part I (the Upper Paleolithic, origins of sedentism, origins of agriculture); Part II (origins of inequality and warfare); Part III (origins of cities and states); Epilogue (the relation of prehistory to the modern world).

I hope you have gained several things from the course:

- (a) Some factual knowledge about prehistory.
- (b) Awareness that economics can be applied to subjects that don't look like economics.
- (c) Awareness that real social science involves contests between alternative hypotheses.
- (d) Greater skill in reading papers written by economists and writing papers of your own.

Most important: I hope the course has enhanced your ability to think creatively and critically.

I have been a professional economist for 42 years and have enjoyed it a lot. I hope you all find careers that are as enjoyable for you as economics has been for me.

Thanks for taking the course!