

ECON 911

SELECTED TOPICS IN ECONOMIC PREHISTORY

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Schedule and Reading List

Spring 2017

1. There are two required books. In the first week of class we will use two chapters from Jamie Woodward, 2014, The Ice Age: A Very Short Introduction (the book is cheap enough that it made more sense to have you buy it, rather than including the two chapters in the courseware package). Later in the course we will use four chapters from Peter Bellwood, 2005, First Farmers: The Origins of Agricultural Societies, Blackwell, Oxford. These items are marked by (b) on the reading list and will be available at the SFU bookstore.
2. Items marked by (c) on the reading list are in the custom courseware package from the bookstore. Most of the items marked by (d) can be downloaded from <http://www.sfu.ca/~gdow/> In a few cases, I may distribute (d) items by email.
3. Each topic on the reading list should take about one week of the semester. I will try to keep to this schedule as closely as possible.
4. This is not required, but sometime you should read all of Guns, Germs, and Steel by Jared Diamond (1997). It is easy to read and addresses large questions about how the modern world got to be the way it is. Diamond is not an economist and

some of what he says is a little out of date, but this book has been very influential among social scientists, including a significant subset of economists interested in economic growth or development in the very long run.

5. You may also want to read The Evolution of Human Societies: From Foraging Group to Agrarian State by Allen W. Johnson and Timothy Earle (2000). This has many interesting case studies, and it shows how anthropologists think about big questions involving economic, political, and social evolution. As with the 1997 book by Diamond, this is a suggestion but it is not a requirement.
6. I will distribute a bibliography listing many working papers, journal articles, and books by economists on the subject of prehistory. This should help you start on the term paper. The paper is due on **Thursday April 6** and is worth 25% of the course grade.
7. The midterm exam is on **Tuesday Feb 21** and is worth 25% of the course grade.
8. The final exam will cover everything and is worth 50% of the course grade.

1. **Introduction**

- (c) Kenneth L. Feder, 2013, Expanding intellectual horizons, in The Past in Perspective: An Introduction to Human Prehistory, Oxford University Press, New York, 6th ed., chapter 6, 168-197.
- (b) Jamie Woodward, 2014, The Ice Age: A Very Short Introduction, Oxford University Press, New York, chapters 8-9, 100-39.

2. **Population**

- (c) Robert L. Kelly, 2013a, Group size and demography, in The Lifeways of Hunter-Gatherers: The Foraging Spectrum, Cambridge University Press, New York, chapter 7, 166-213.
- (d) Quamrul Ashraf and Oded Galor, 2011, Dynamics and stagnation in the Malthusian epoch, American Economic Review 101(5), August, 2003-41.

3. **Technology**

- (d) Ben Fitzhugh, 2001, Risk and invention in human technological evolution, Journal of Anthropological Archaeology 20(2), June, 125-67.
- (d) Gregory K. Dow and Clyde G. Reed, 2015, The origins of sedentism: Climate, population, and technology, Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization 119, November, 56-71.

4. The Origins of Agriculture (I)

- (c) Jared Diamond, 1997, Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fate of Human Societies, Norton, New York, chapters 8-9, 131-175.
- (d) Jacob L. Weisdorf, 2005, From foraging to farming: Explaining the Neolithic revolution, Journal of Economic Surveys 19(4), September, 561-586.

5. The Origins of Agriculture (II)

- (b) Peter Bellwood, 2005, First Farmers: The Origins of Agricultural Societies, Blackwell, Oxford, chapter 3, 44-66; chapter 5, 97-110; chapter 6, 111-127; chapter 8, 146-179.
- (d) Samuel Bowles and Jung-Kyoo Choi, 2013, Coevolution of farming and private property during the early Holocene, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 110(22), May 28, 8830-8835.

6. The Origins of Agriculture (III)

- (d) Manon Savard, Mark Nesbitt, and Martin K. Jones, 2006, The role of wild grasses in subsistence and sedentism: New evidence from the northern Fertile Crescent, World Archaeology 38(2), June, 179-96.
- (d) Gordon Hillman, Robert Hedges, Andrew Moore, Susan Colledge, and Paul Pettitt, 2001, New evidence of lateglacial cereal cultivation at Abu Hureyra on the Euphrates, The Holocene 11(4), July, 383-93.

- (d) Gregory K. Dow, Clyde G. Reed, and Nancy Olewiler, 2009, Climate reversals and the transition to agriculture, Journal of Economic Growth 14(1), March, 27-53.

MIDTERM EXAM (Tuesday February 21)

7. Territory and Trade

- (c) Jared Diamond, 2012, Friends, enemies, strangers, and traders, in The World Until Yesterday, Viking, New York, chapter 1, 37-76.

8. Warfare

- (c) Robert L. Kelly, 2013b, From the peaceful to the warlike: Ethnographic and archaeological insight into hunter-gatherer warfare and homicide, in Douglas P. Fry, ed., War, Peace, and Human Nature: The Convergence of Evolutionary and Cultural Views, Oxford University Press, New York, chapter 9, 151-167.
- (c) R. Brian Ferguson, 2013, The prehistory of war and peace in Europe and the Near East, in Douglas P. Fry, ed., War, Peace, and Human Nature: The Convergence of Evolutionary and Cultural Views, New York: Oxford University Press, chapter 11, 191-235.
- (d) Gregory K. Dow, Leanna Mitchell, and Clyde G. Reed, 2016, The economics of early warfare over land, Department of Economics, Simon Fraser University.

9. Inequality

- (c) Kenneth M. Ames, 1995, Chiefly power and household production on the northwest coast, in T. Douglas Price and Gary M. Feinman, eds., Foundations of Social Inequality, Plenum Press, New York, chapter 6, 155-187.
- (d) Monique Borgerhoff Mulder et al., 2009, Intergenerational wealth transmission and the dynamics of inequality in small-scale societies, Science 326, October 30, 682-688.
- (d) Gregory K. Dow and Clyde G. Reed, 2013, The origins of inequality: Insiders, outsiders, elites, and commoners, Journal of Political Economy 121(3), June, 609-41.

10. The Origins of the State (I)

- (d) Robert C. Allen, 1997, Agriculture and the origins of the state in ancient Egypt, Explorations in Economic History 34(2), April, 135-154.
- (d) Guillermo Algaze, 2001, Initial social complexity in southwestern Asia: The Mesopotamian advantage, Current Anthropology 42(2), April, 199-215 (main article) and 215-233 (comments, reply, and references).

11. The Origins of the State (II)

- (d) Matthew Baker, Erwin H. Bulte, and Jacob Weisdorf, 2010, The origins of governments: From anarchy to hierarchy, Journal of Institutional Economics 6(2), June, 215-242.
- (d) Joram Mayshar, Omer Moav, and Zvika Neeman, 2013, Geography, transparency and institutions, CEPR Discussion Paper 9625, September.

12. Does Prehistory Still Matter?

- (d) Valerie Bockstette, Areendam Chandra, and Louis Putterman, 2002, States and markets: The advantage of an early start, Journal of Economic Growth 7(4), December, 347-369.
- (d) Louis Putterman, 2008, Agriculture, diffusion, and development: Ripple effects of the Neolithic revolution, Economica 75(300), November, 729-748.