SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

Course: ECON 911-4 G100

Title: ST: Economic Prehistory

Semester: Spring 2017

Instructor: G. Dow

Description: We will use economic methods to study 'prehistoric' societies, that is, societies without written historical records. Many prehistoric societies existed in the distant past and are known only through evidence from archaeology, but a few persisted into recent times and have been observed by modern social scientists.

The course is divided into two main topics:

(a) Technology. In the first half of the course we will explore the evolution of technology among hunter-gatherers, as well as the origins of agriculture. Along the way, we will consider climate, geography, population, and other related issues.

(b) Institutions. In the second half of the course we will shift the focus to the evolution of institutions. Topics will include property rights, warfare, inequality, and the origins of the state. We will also ask whether events in prehistory have had lasting effects on the modern world (the answer is yes!).

As you learn about these topics, you will also learn various things about economic modeling.

Grading: There is a midterm exam worth 25%, a term paper worth 25%, and a final exam worth 50%.

Required Texts:

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

Jamie Woodward, 2014, The Ice Age: A Very Short Introduction, Oxford.

A coursepack will be available for purchase at the bookstore and a variety of journal articles will be downloadable for free.

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

For more information about SFU Economics, please visit our website: www.sfu.ca/economics