Ecological Anthropology
The history of human civilization through a biological lens
Biology 829 P80
Summer 2010

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(When in Kearney) Office hours M, W 10-11 am and Th 9-10 pm all Central
other times by appointment

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Required Texts: (purchase from any bookstore, both available for Kindle, possibly other e-formats)
Guns, Germs, and Steel by Jared Diamond referred to as “GGS” in class materials

Collapse by Jared Diamond referred to as “Col” in class materials, 2005 paperback edition

Class Objectives:

1. Learn the role of biogeography and island biogeography in the evolution of human societies,
   including origination of technologies, effects of trade, and importance of agriculture.
2. Investigate circumstances that caused certain human societies to achieve faster technical progress than others.
3. Explore the importance of innovation by humans such as crop domestication, livestock domestication, and writing.
4. Trace the geographic spread of humans, diseases, human knowledge and culture, human language, domesticated plants and animals during the last 15,000 years.

Introduction:

Jared Diamond’s book Guns, Germs, and Steel (GSS) has filled what I see as a critical gap in human history. That period is between the evolutionary origin of our species approximately 100,000 years ago, and the end of the pre-historic (pre-writing) period. This time frame has historically been the realm of anthropologists. While historians have typically dealt with times when written records exit, the “historic” period, Diamond focuses on the “prehistoric”, an area that usually falls to archeologists. One of Diamond’s basic themes is that while trying to explain the current unequal distribution of wealth and technology in the world, one cannot begin at the Roman Empire or even the kingdom of Ur and
trace the history of the world from there. Diamond attempts to make connections between the biology, specifically between the evolution of plants and animals and the biogeography of the Earth, and the trajectories of human civilizations.

While GGS is a stunning book in scope and detail, winning a Pulitzer and becoming a #1 best seller, Diamond, remarkably, does have a second bite at the apple. He turns his mind to the next not-so-obvious question, how and why do some societies disappear from the world, while others do not? In the second book of this course, Diamond’s Collapse, the reasons behind the fall of civilizations are examined. This has particular interest for us as this knowledge may have implications for current and future societies.

This class will examine the hypotheses, evidence, and assertions of Diamond in his books GSS and its sequel Collapse.

Class Structure:

This is a summer class worth 2 credit hours. It is a reading class based on two books. As opposed to the technical nature of two of the other courses I teach, Geographic Information Systems and Biostatistics this class will be a reading and discussion course. I am constantly impressed with the motivation and integrity of the students in the Distance Master’s program. To that end – I do not feel that this course needs a research paper (in the classical sense) requiring outside literature to be read. There will be paper towards the end of course based on the assigned readings. Outside literature is always helpful, but I do not expect the paper required here to involve reading 20 outside papers for example. This paper should be written at the graduate level, that is: original, free of spelling, grammar, and formatting errors, with a clear and logical organization. The paper should have a thesis and contain a progression of logical, and logically supported, steps leading to a concluding argument that pertains to the thesis.

I hope most of your contribution to the course will be discussion of specific passages, data, concepts, and hypotheses given by Diamond. The idea here is to continue to discuss the readings themselves, not wild speculation, but logical discourse. I will provide feedback on this balance as the room continues. This course will have quizzes, just to provide motivation to keep up with the reading, but discussion/participation and a research paper will be the only other graded elements.

The discussion boards will be asynchronous by design. In other words there will not be a ‘meeting time’. I will give you times I will be online to allow for rapid interaction that is more efficient – but it is summer and everyone has travel plans, extra jobs, and time for family. I would recommend spending some time on the reading and class every day however. The schedule is short in the summer, we will be moving rapidly. I expect at least 4 significant posts per week, as well as additional visits to the discussion boards during each week of the class. By significant post, I mean an extended, thoughtful, insight or question of the reading – not a summary, and not a similar statement to those that others have already made.
One important point here, please note that Diamond did not do a lot of the research he pulls together for his books. He is using information from the work of other people. I wish he cited more directly, but see the literature cited sections in the backs of Diamond’s books to get a better idea of whose work is being used in each chapter. Again, Diamond did not do much of the work himself. There is nothing wrong with this, but when discussing Diamond or writing papers understand that a particular fact or hypothesis came not from Diamond, but from someone else who Diamond found.

Graded Elements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Type</th>
<th>Points Each</th>
<th>Point Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes, 6 weekly</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion (participation), 8 weeks</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper draft</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper final</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>260</strong></td>
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Class Mechanics:

If this is your first distance course, please read all the distance course material you can. One good resource is the ‘Biology Masters Online’ section of the Blackboard page. Click on this and go to ‘Documents’ section. You will find documents there that give a lot of information about the program, the Blackboard interface, and details on such things as paper formatting for the final paper.

Please read this material and contact me with any questions. There is also material in the UNK Student Handbook on expectations and regulations of being a student. The only parts that really pertain to the class are drop dates and plagiarism. Please cite all sources for the final paper. And use the citation format discussed in the Graduate Guidelines document.

The quizzes will be multiple choice and executed in Blackboard – please allow time to do these, especially the first time, if you are not familiar with these.

Participation will be the backbone of the class. I will read all your postings and evaluate them based on: a) content b) sophistication of understanding concerning the reading material c) use of language to make complete, concise points and d) how well posts build on the discussion in general, that is how a post advances discussion in relation to points made in other posts, and if you are doing more that repeating points made in the reading. Credit will be given on the number of readings and posting you do in the discussion board as well as quality of your posts. You should contribute four(4) original, substantive posts each week as well as view many of the posts on each discussion board. Finally, your
participation will be graded relative to that of others. In other words if you post and view much less than other students, you may get less credit.

Because the class if fairly small, I will not break the class into groups.

I will use the “Assignment” function in Blackboard to allow for submission of papers. This is a function not everyone uses, so learn about this in the tutorials, or ask me or other students.

You will need access to a high-speed internet connection to download the video files, or they can be requested on CD. You need to have Office 2000 or later on your computer. As a UNK student you qualify for very inexpensive academic pricing of Microsoft Office. I think Office 2007 (or 2010) is a good investment.

Withdraw (W) and Incomplete (I) Grades:
Until the conclusion of the 10th week of the semester, you may withdraw from any class and receive a grade of “W.” This grade does not count toward your grade point average and merely indicates that you withdrew from (or "dropped") the class. No instructor can withdraw a student from the roster; that is, if you stop coming to class the instructor cannot withdraw you from the class. The instructor will be forced to assign you a failing ("F") grade for the class. Withdrawing from a class involves filling out a simple form that the instructor and student both sign and returning this form to the registrar's office by the withdraw deadline.

Under very unusual circumstances, a grade of incomplete ("I") may be issued. An incomplete is not a substitute for a "W" (withdraw), and it is not a substitute for a poor or failing grade. An incomplete is issued if circumstances beyond the student’s control prevent the student from completing the required work for the class by the end of the semester (example: student is hospitalized during final exam week). If you qualify for an incomplete grade, it is expected that you will receive this grade in all your classes. An incomplete grade will give you an extension to complete outstanding work only; it is not an opportunity to "start over" in the class. All outstanding work must be completed within one year or the "I" grade automatically converts to a failing ("F") grade. An incomplete grade will be considered only during the final six weeks of the semester, after the deadline for receiving a "W" has passed.

Students with Disabilities

The university is committed to providing support for students with disabilities. If you are a student with physical, learning, emotional, or psychological disabilities you are encouraged to stop by room 163 in the Memorial Student Affairs Building, the Academic Success Office and make an appointment with David Brandt, the Disabilities Coordinator at 308-865-8214 or by email at brandtdl@unk.edu.

Reading Schedule: Ecological Anthropology – Summer 2010

Readings from: Guns, Germs, and Steel (GGS) and Collapse (Col) by Jared Diamond

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lectures</th>
<th>Quizzes</th>
<th>Chapters, Inclusive</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 May 10 – May 16</td>
<td>01, 02</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>GGS: Prologue, 1 to 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 May 17 – May 23</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>GGS 9 to 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 May 24 – May 30</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>GGS 14 to 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 May 31 – Jun 6</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>GSS Epilogue, Japanese, and Afterword Col: Prologue, Chp 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Jun 7 – Jun 13</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Col: 2 to 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Jun 14 – Jun 20</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Col: 7 to 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Jun 21 – Jun 27</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>bonus</td>
<td>Col: 12 - 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Jun 28 – Jul 4</td>
<td>09</td>
<td></td>
<td>Col: 16, review, Final due</td>
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Orientation to Albrecht Online Class Delivery
Version 1.3 Fall 2009
UNK Biology Department

Introduction:
The UNK Biology Distance Master’s program has a number of faculty participating in it. Part of the experience and challenge of the program is that different faculty are using different methods to deliver class material. I realize this might be frustrating for people, but hopefully the various methods will demonstrate what works and what does not for you in your own future careers. In the future there may be more standardization of our methods, but for the present each of us follows slightly different paths.

With this in mind I have prepared this document to help indicate how important knowledge of Blackboard is to this class and what parts of it are most important. Please contact me with any questions, note that the UNK e-Campus website does provide both Video Tutorials and Atomic Learning Tutorials on using Blackboard, Lotusnotes, and MS Word see this page.

A note about Expectations:
I approach this program with the goal of providing, as closely as possible, the level of experience I was fortunate enough to experience in my graduate career at some of the best universities in the country. This means that generally my expectations are high. I will do my best to find, present, and interpret material I think is important and appropriate for the subject area of the class. I will also do my best to explain how the process of science works including experimental design, statistical testing, writing, and thought processes. I will also work to be as available as possible, and turn around Blackboard, emails, and graded work as quickly as possible.

There is responsibility on your part as well to meet both the letter and spirit of assignments. It is my hope and expectation that everyone in this program is here because they enjoy biology and wish to become more knowledgeable and proficient at teaching or researching in this area.

Let me provide some examples of what this means to me, based on my experience as a graduate student:

1. **Have I prepared for class?** Have I read the material, not just once but twice? Have I looked up authors, concepts, or words I was not familiar with before attending class? Do I understand how this reading fits into the discipline in general, and why it was assigned? Have I noticed the author, date, and institution of the paper in addition to the data, statistical tests, and concepts supported in the paper?
2. Before asking an entire class what a word means **have I tried to look it up?** Did I try to find the word from appropriate, professional, recognized sources – not just a general dictionary?
3. Is the work I am turning in **reflective of me** as the student I am trying to be? Have I proofread the document for grammatical, factual, spelling, and formatting errors? Do I know what formatting is desired by the professor? Is this paper well-researched? Do I have all the important concepts present in the paper? Is the organization of the paper clear and useful? Have I put in thought and work to figures, tables to make them clear and referenced? Do I have text transitions between sections and paragraphs that are clear, clean, and direct?
**Blackboard:**
The Blackboard Classroom software suite is the main portal for the class work in the UNK Biology Distance Master’s program. Being familiar with this program is essential for success in this program. To be more precise, the following components are the ones I use the most:

1. **Course Documents:**
   a. This is where I place pdf files and wmv files that are the lectures for my classes
      i. You do need to be able to view pdf and wmv files therefore, to see the PowerPoint content and lectures I have prepared
   b. These files should be downloaded for your viewing or printing out at your leisure, repeatedly if needed
   c. These files are large and should be downloaded only on DSL or faster internet connections
   d. I try to make these available a week ahead, but if I am recording new lectures they will only be available as soon as I have them completed
   e. I may post other papers here as well as book sections or links to other sites I think are useful to the class or are class materials themselves - such as resources for scientific writing

2. **Discussion Board:**
   a. This section of Blackboard is how you will communicate with me and each other
   b. In my classes Discussion Board is an important part of the class experience, there are significant points associated with participation on Discussion Board as I think communication with others is an important part of the learning process
   c. Grading of participation will be done on the basis of the quality and quantity of participation
      i. I am looking for at least three (3) useful postings each week, not on the same day
      ii. *The quality of your contribution.* This is a somewhat subjective category, but the more insightful your comments the better the quality of discussion will be. Your comments should generally consist of at least a short paragraph. Conciseness and clarity are necessary to keep the work load for this class to a reasonable level so page long postings are discouraged. Your comments should be supported with specific details, file attachments or web sites, and should be relevant to the current topic of discussion. Saying “I agree” is supportive, but not really a contribution to the ongoing discussion.
      iii. *How well you interact as classmates.* Your responses should demonstrate that you are aware of the discussion that has been taking place. Go beyond either “agreeing” with someone or “disagreeing” with someone by stating your reasoning. But be polite and constructive in your responses.

3. **Assignments:**
   a. Many, if not all the assignments in the class will appear here, so please find this area of the program
   b. There are two types of assignment functions I use most:
      i. Tests: these are timed tests, typically multiple choice tests that are available for a limited amount of time (typically a few days) and are completed online
      ii. Papers: I use the ‘assignment function’, confusing name unfortunately to create a link through which you can upload your documents. This system has the distinct advantage over ‘digital dropbox’ (another function in Blackboard) or email in that your papers do directly to a space that is yours alone and you will see a red exclamation point in the
Gradebook for the assignment when you have uploaded the documents. This function also can be set to be available for a limited amount of time.

4. Gradebook:
   a. This is the area of Blackboard where grades are recorded and displayed, these are the actual grades I use, so keep an eye on these for any problems
   b. A red exclamation point means different things:
      i. for a test is means either the test failed part way through or there is an essay section I have not graded yet
      ii. for a paper this means the documents have been uploaded (though corruption is possible) but not graded yet

5. Announcements:
   a. These are the text entries you see just below the title for the class when you enter Blackboard
   b. I will post class information here, such as changes to the syllabus or answering a question that is coming up repeatedly
   c. Please check this area several times a week on your way to Discussion Board, Assignments, or Gradebook

6. Other Features:
   a. There are other features of Blackboard that I use from time to time, such as Virtual Classroom, External Links, and Wimba - so please look around at the program and let me know if you have any questions

7. Scientific Writing
   a. I will include documents in Blackboard/Course Documents section to help with scientific writing
Dr. Albrecht Class Policies  
Version 1.3 Fall 2009

**Introduction:**
Every institution has its rules and policies, and UNK and the Biology Department do have them. In these days, and because of the distance education technology, the degree of communication between me and classes is difficult. Therefore I am listing here policies that will be in place for this class.

**Policies:**

1. **Plagiarism:**
   a. Please see and complete [this page](#) - I will assume everyone in the class has visited this site. The reason? So everyone knows exactly what plagiarism is. ALL sources in anything turned in for this class must be cited, including figures and anything taken from class texts every time they should be.
   b. [This site](#) also has good information on plagiarism and scientific writing in general.
   c. Also see the [UNK Student Handbook](#) for UNK policy statement on plagiarism.
   d. I consider plagiarism a scourge and a stain on science and detrimental to the progress of humans. I will treat any plagiarism seriously including giving zeros on questions, or entire tests (which often drops a student one letter grade or more), or failing the class outright in addition to letters in the permanent file here at UNK.
   e. For more information see the Graduate Outline document in the Online Master's Blackboard Group. This group should appear at the lower right of your Blackboard login page; contact UNK Helpdesk if you do not see this group.
   f. Citation information for APA style is given at the UNK eCampus website [here](#).
   g. A quick rule: more than 3 words in a row from any source must be referenced.

2. **Late work/technical difficulties:**
   a. Late work will be subject to the following grade reductions:
      i. 10% reduction of grade for any work submitted after stated deadline until 24 hours after the stated deadline.
      ii. A further 10% grade reduction for each 24 hour period past the stated deadline.
   b. Late work may not be graded until all other assignments are graded. In certain semesters, late work may not be graded until the end of the term. Further, late work may not be attached to Blackboard, so you will not get this work back with internal comments.
   c. I understand that online classes demand attention to deadlines on top of those already present. However, this graduate program is not a self-paced one. This program is structured to academic terms and time frames (such as breaks) as the brick and mortar University of Nebraska system. In general I am impressed at the dedication of students in this program and hope this tradition continues. Habitual late assignments, or emailing instead of posting work to Blackboard will result in grade reductions Habitual lateness will be loosely defined as more than 10% of assignments turned in late.
   d. Technical difficulties are part of the reality of the online world. Given that truism, do NOT wait to submit assignments until the last minute or hour of a deadline. I cannot be responsible for failures of power, computers, computer network, or even Blackboard. I try to push to make sure none of these happen on my end, you have to do the same on your end. Be careful and flexible.
e. **Important**: please do/install and run (not all of them run automatically) the following on your computers, if you do not, please do not claim technical problems with your computers:
   i. Ad-aware by Lavasoft, run weekly
   ii. Spybot by SaferNetworking, run monthly
   iii. AVG (free) or similar anti-virus/malware software, run weekly
   iv. Backup software (built in to Windows Vista), run monthly
   v. Defragment hard drives (built into Windows I know, also available in below packages), run monthly
   vi. (optional): other maintenance software such as System Mechanic (my favorite), Symantec System Works, run monthly

3. **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) statement:**
   a. The University is committed to providing support for students with disabilities. If you are a student with physical, learning, emotional, or psychological disabilities you are encouraged to stop by room 163 in the Memorial Student Affairs Building, the Academic Success Office and make an appointment with David Brandt, the Disabilities Coordinator at 308-865-8214 or by email at brandtddl@unk.edu. If you have an accommodation plan please see me as soon as possible, so we can make any arrangements necessary for your learning. No accommodations can be provided until a Reasonable Accommodation Plan is in place. Please remember, plans are not retroactive and cannot be used for assignments prior to the date of my signature.
   To the greatest extent possible, University Representatives, shall observe confidentiality with respect to any request for accommodation.
   b. Please let me know at the start of the class if there are any accommodations that will help you with the class.

4. **Grading:**
   a. Letter grades will be assigned by the following percentages: A (90-100%), B+ (88-89%), B (82-87%), B- (80-81), C+ (78-79%), C (72-77%), C- (70-71), D+ (68-69%), D (62-67%), D- (60-61), F (Below 60%)
   b. Please keep track of your grades in the Blackboard grade book and contact me, repeatedly if needed, if you see anything that is not correct

5. **Online etiquette:**
   a. Please be respectful of others in the class, and your instructor. It is easy to be more confrontational via electronic post than in person. I understand conversations may become heated, and irony, even sarcasm may at times be used to make a point; however, please try to remain civil at all times.
   b. Posts I deem as offensive or inflammatory will be removed from the discussion boards. If this becomes a continuing problem, grade reductions may result.

6. **Other problems:**
   a. If problems or concerns arise during class, please contact me. Yes, me, I have enough years and classes under my belt at this point I will not be offended - and can be pretty objective I think - about any issues. It does bother me however when people feel they must contact someone else who then has to come talk to me about the problem. We are all adults here, we can talk.
   b. If you do feel you wish talk to someone else about a class issue I would recommend Dr. Hoback or Dr. Hertner as the places to start.
   c. One hint, contact me more than once - I get so many messages and emails more than one reminder may be needed for me to get moving.