

Climate and Human History

The effect of climate on historic events of the Holocene Epoch, the last 11,000 years.

Purpose: Participants will explore how climate has affected human history since the beginning of the Holocene Epoch, 11,000 years ago until today. At times, the climate has improved human life and caused societies to flourish. At other times, climate change has led to the collapse of civilizations.

Moderator:	Dottie Rosenthal
Co-moderator:	Larry Ambs
Date and Time:	Thursday morning, 9:30-11:30 10 weeks, starting September 27
Format:	Seminar
Location:	Applewood in Amherst, The Tavern

Description: History has traditionally emphasized understanding political and social forces that have led to historic events. In recent years, there has been greater emphasis on the role of climate in human history, which will be our focus in this seminar.

Some examples of possible topics include: The Collapse of the Maya Culture; The Bantu Migration of West Africa; Climate and Voyages of Exploration in the 1400s; Viking Settlements in Greenland; The Colonization of North America; Winter and Witch Trials; A Tale of Two Cities: Jericho and Uruk; The Year Without a Summer; Volcanic Eruptions of 535 CE.

Role of participants: Participants will select an historical event affected by climate, make a brief presentation about the event to the seminar, and lead participants in a discussion about the role of climate in the event.

Resources: There will not be a textbook for the seminar, but the moderators will provide a list of books that participants may want to consult.

About the Moderators: Dorothy Rosenthal has moderated or co-moderated almost two dozen seminars for 5CLIR, including such topics as biology, evolution, folklore, and books of the Hebrew Bible. Lawrence Ambs has offered seminars every semester since 2007. He has been interested in prehistory, climate and archaeology.

Maximum number of participants: 16

Auditors accepted: yes, up to 2

Course # 18FCH