SYLLABUS

I. Text


II. Aims:

The course provides a basic survey of Pacific prehistory, but its primary purpose is to use the cultures of the Pacific Islands (including Polynesia, Melanesia, Micronesia, and Australia) as a framework for examining problems of general interest to both prehistorians and ethnographers. These may include such issues as the origins of agriculture, the nature and development of social stratification, the interrelationships between people and the natural environment, trade and exchange, the nature of prestige-based economies, etc. These and other issues will be explored through lectures, class discussions, and readings.

III. Course Requirements:

Grading will be based on class discussions, presentations, and reading projects.

IV. Prerequisites:

Core courses in archeology and cultural anthropology.

V. Tentative Schedule:

January 10     Introduction to the course

January 17     Introduction to Pacific Prehistory.
    Readings:
     Kirch: Preface, Introduction and Chapter 1

January 24     The Environment.
    (Attend the undergraduate class on Jan. 22 and 24: Geology and Environment and the video The Navigators)
    Readings: Kirch Chapter 2


Darwin, Charles (1842) excerpt from *The Structure and Distribution of Coral Reefs*.

January 31  Ethnographic Analogy in New Guinea
(Attend the undergraduate class on Jan. 31: Prehistory and Peopling. The class on January 29: The Polynesian Culture Area is also recommended)


February 7  Big Man Models


An ethnographic monograph of your choice.

February 14  Early Agriculture in the New Guinea Highlands
Readings: Kirch Chapter 3


February 21  Lapita, The Austronesian Expansion, and Maritime Adaptations
Readings: Kirch Chapter 4


February 28  Exchange and Prestige Economies  
   Readings: Kirch Chapter 5

March 7  Spring Break

March 14  Monumental Architecture, Micronesian Maritime Adaptations, The Yapese Empire  
   Readings: Kirch Chapter 6

March 21  TBA  

March 28  The Polynesian Chiefdoms  
   Readings: Kirch Chapters 7 & 8

April 4  Rapa Nui, The Tuamotus, and Trans-Pacific contact  
   Readings: Kirch Chapter 9  

April 11  Special Topic

April 18  Special Topic