



Presents

JARED DIAMOND

ALABAMA ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CONSORTIUM SPRING CONFERENCE

April 19, 2008

Samford University Wright Center

9 a.m. – 12:00

Additional information: <http://www.samford.edu/> or email: vnbrown@samford.edu

FREE ADMISSION EVENT

Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed

The ruined cities, temples, and statues of history's great, vanished societies (Easter Island, Anasazi, the Lowland Maya, Angkor Wat, Great Zimbabwe and many more) are the birthplace of endless romantic mysteries. But these disappearances offer more than idle conjecture: the social collapses were due in part to the types of environmental problems that beset us today.

Yet many societies facing similar problems do not collapse. What makes certain societies especially vulnerable? Why didn't their leaders perceive and solve their environmental problems? What can we learn from their fates, and what can we do differently today to help us avoid their fates?

Guns, Germs and Steel

Dr. Jared Diamond's blockbuster bestseller *Guns, Germs, and Steel* won him a Pulitzer Prize and a place as one of the most influential thinkers of our time. His lecture of the same name takes audiences on an intellectual odyssey that challenges our assumptions about the rise and fall of civilizations. Dr. Diamond asks and answers a very simple question: Why did Europeans and Asians conquer the indigenous peoples of Africa, the New World, Australia and the South Pacific, instead of being conquered themselves?

The answer touches on technology, genetics, genocide, zebras, pestilence, weather, geography, and luck. It also unconditionally refutes racist dogma that claims biological superiority for Eurasians. Geographical accidents, not intelligence, seem to be the reasons for Eurasia's success. Audiences will walk away with profound insights into how we got where we are and what this may mean for where we are going. Entering an intellectual maelstrom, they will be discussing and debating these ideas for months to come.

Globalization: For Better or For Worse

Until September 11th of 2001, we equated globalization mostly with 'us' sending 'them' our modern accomplishments: the Internet and Coca-Cola. Now, we are painfully aware of the unpredictable and reciprocal nature of global contact: AIDS, terrorism, unstoppable illegal immigration and diabetes epidemics. What will globalization really bring the world, and how can we minimize its negative impact while continuing to benefit from the advantages of shared cultures and resources?

Globalization means that remote societies can no longer collapse without influencing the rest of the world (as with Easter Island and the Anasazi societies of many centuries ago,) and we are the first society in history with the chance to develop using a comprehensive contemporary *and historical* understanding of our collective path.