
GCSC Seminar Series

210 ASB
(Aline Skaggs
Building)

ALL ARE WELCOME

Refreshments &
meet the speaker at
3:45

Tuesday, October 22, 2019
4:00-5:00 PM

Doug Kennett

Professor of Archaeology (Environmental Archaeology and Human Behavioral Ecology), Department of Anthropology, University of California Santa Barbara

“Drought and Long-Term Sociopolitical Dynamics West of the Hundredth Meridian”



Lessons from the archaeological records on California's Northern Channel Islands and Chaco Canyon, New Mexico provide insights into the complexity of sociopolitical responses in the past and to drought west of the hundredth meridian going into the future.

Abstract

Multi-year droughts in the American West have major impacts on water resources and agricultural systems that sustain growing populations. Environmental engineering projects (e.g., California Aqueduct or Hoover Dam) were designed within the context of instrumental climate records and historical knowledge of the last century. Archaeological and climatological records now provide a longer-term perspective on the severity and longevity of droughts and societal responses in California and the American Southwest. Paleoclimatological records for the last 2,000 years indicate that the multi-year droughts of concern today are modest compared to medieval droughts between AD 900 and 1300. Lessons from the archaeological records on California's Northern Channel Islands and Chaco Canyon, New Mexico provide insights into the complexity of sociopolitical responses in the past and to drought west of the hundredth meridian going into the future.

Bio

Dr. Douglas J. Kennett is a professor of Environmental Archaeology and Human Behavioral Ecology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His research specializes in environmental archaeology, climate change, isotope geochemistry, and human behavioral ecology. He has pursued these interests in California's Channel Islands, Oceania, Europe, and in Central America studying the Maya.