Water in the Rise and Fall of Civilizations

Fall 2007

ERTH 140 (3): MWF 9:00-9:50
ERTH 140L (1): F 14:00-17:00
Professor Robert Bowman

A reliable source of clean water is requisite for the development of stable societies. Disruptions in the water supply due to drought or contamination, or hydrologic extremes such as floods or devastating storms, can lead to the downfall of civilizations. In this course we will examine civilizations from prehistory to the present which have seen their societies collapse due to loss of water supply, water-caused disasters, or environmental change. In each case we will
examine the underlying hydrologic conditions that led to their rise and fall.

The laboratory will develop an understanding of related hydrologic principles through in-class exercises and field trips.