



LIFELONG LEARNING MISSISSAUGA

PEOPLE AND PLANET EARTH
Presented by Dr. Anthony Davis

Thursdays, April 6 to May 25, 2017, 10:00 am to 12:00 noon

In a relatively short time, we have transformed our planet. As our numbers and technology have increased, so have the intensity and pace of the changes we have inflicted. This series is essentially a brief history of our impact on environment. It begins with an overview of the natural world and how it works and then traces the evolution and dispersal of humans and our assault on that world. That assault begins in earnest with plant and animal domestication and its consequences, with the effects of globalization beginning with colonization, and the accompanying effects of rapid population increase and burgeoning technology. It manifests itself today in a world that is increasingly more artificial, the Anthropocene, and on the brink of disaster. The lessons are there, but will we heed them in time?

April 6 Natural Environmental Change – Shifting Continents and Changing Climates

Our planet is mobile internally, on its surface and in space. Internal mobility is associated with the changing geographies of land and sea, the location of land masses, the distribution of mountain ranges, volcanic activity and earthquakes – collectively called plate tectonics. These internal processes are the major natural control on the Earth's carbon cycle.

April 13 Natural Environmental Change – Solar Radiation, Our External Heat Engine

Solar radiation drives the biosphere and most surface and atmospheric processes. Its effects are dependent on supply, which changes on long and short time scales, and on how the Earth's atmosphere processes that radiation.

April 20 Human Evolution and the Human Diaspora

We have a short history. Until 1.5 million years ago, that history was exclusively African. Why did we evolve there? When and how did people spread around the world? How was environmental change involved?

April 27 Plant and Animal Domestication and the Rise of Civilization

Plant and animal domestication began at roughly the same time in several widely separated places. Why? What was domesticated? What were the short- and long-term consequences?

Burnhamthorpe Community Centre, 1500 Gulleden Drive, Mississauga, ON L4X 2T7

Registration fee \$40 per person per series

For information or to register, go to www.lifelong-learning-mississauga.com or phone 647-300-4878



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May 4 The Rise of Civilization and the Use and Abuse of Resources

Plant and animal domestication allowed urbanization, the stratification of society, the development of trade, societal rivalries and warfare, and the often rapid degradation of natural resources. The demise of “hydraulic” societies in the Middle East and the Indus Valley, and desertification in central China.

May 11 Globalization – Trade, Colonialism and Disease

Trade was one consequence of civilization. Often this broadened the scope of resource exploitation, first inter-regionally and then globally. Globalization was initially a product of colonialism. The latter brought massive transfers of crops, animals, people and, inevitably, disease.

May 18 The Special Vulnerability of Islands

Islands have suffered disproportionately from human impact. Most documented extinctions have occurred on remote islands. Many have had their natural environments destroyed for economic or strategic reasons.

May 25 The Anthropocene

Global warming is just one way we have modified our world. Some believe that the radical anthropogenic changes to the atmosphere, lithosphere and biosphere warrant recognition as a separate geologic epoch, the Anthropocene. Will that change the way we behave toward our environment? Will it matter?

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