Anthropology: Origins of Civilization

Please answer each question in two paragraphs per answer. Use your class notes, lecture PowerPoints, textbook (Understanding Humans: Introduction to Physical Anthropology and Archaeology, 11th edition, by Lewis, Jurmain, and Kilgore), and class films to answer these questions. DO NOT use any outside sources. Question 1 (50 points) The Origins of Agriculture and the Neolithic Revolution According to what we’ve learned in class from our readings and documentaries, what are some of the reasons humans began domesticating plants and animals beginning around 10,000 years ago? What were some of the positive and negative social and biological consequences of the shift to food production? Hint: the Jared Diamond article, chapter 14 of your textbook, lecture slides 16, and the three First Civilizations documentaries will all be very helpful here. Question 2 (50 points) The Rise of Civilization what are some of the key characteristics that the first ancient civilizations and urban centers all share? Be sure to give some clear examples from Mesoamerica, Mesopotamia, and Ancient Egypt and the Indus valley as you develop your answers. Thinks about everyday life in these first cities – what would they have had in common? Hint: chapter 15 of your textbook, lecture slides 17, and the First Civilizations documentaries will help! Question 3 (50 points) Ancient Mesoamerica What are some of the key features of the ancient Mesoamerican civilizations centered around the cities of Monte Alban (Zapotec culture) and Teotihuacan (Teotihuacan culture) in central Mexico? How did these cultures influence other Mesoamerican civilizations, such as the Maya in southern Mexico? You might discuss the archaeological evidence surrounding architecture, art, trade and exchange, astronomy and science, religion, and warfare. Hint: chapter 15 of your textbook, lecture slides 18, and the First Civilizations documentary on Mesoamerica may help here. Question 4: (50 points) Ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley The ancient civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley all have something in common – they are complex cultures that developed in arid (dry) regions that depended on the annual floodwaters of major river systems to produce large crops of staple grains. Given their similar adaptations, what do these three ancient cultures have in common, and how are they different? You can compare and contrast the archaeological evidence for cultural practices such as art, architecture, religion, trade and exchange, and warfare, among other things. Hint: chapter 15 of your textbook, lecture slides 18, 19, and 20, and the First Civilizations documentaries may help here. Question 5 (50 points) Lessons from the Past: Applying What You Have Learned How has learning about ancient civilizations in Mesoamerica, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley changed the way you think about modern day cities, or about the benefits and drawbacks of life in cities? What can the study of these ancient civilizations tell us about the way people have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of social inequality and civil unrest in many parts of the world, including our own country? There is no “right” answer here, but spend some time reflecting on this before you answer, and support your ideas with evidence from this last part of our course. I really look forward to reading these answers