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**Economics 201Y1**

**The Economic History of Later Medieval and Early Modern Europe**

**(European Economic History, 1250 - 1750)**

**FIRST TERM ESSAY TOPICS: FALL TERM 2003**

**Revised version (2 September 2003)**

First-term essays are due on Friday, 28 November 2003, except for part-time students and those who have obtained legitimate extensions.

Please refer to the **Course Outline**, for further information on submitting the term essays and the deadlines. It is available on-line on my Home Page:

<http://www.economics.utoronto.ca/munro5/201out.pdf>

**Be sure also to consult the handout entitled *Instructions on Writing Term Essays***, for instructions on and other information about preparing term essays. It is also available on-line, on my Home Page:

<http://www.economics.utoronto.ca/munro5/ESSINSTR.pdf>

See also Deirdre N. McCloskey, *Economical Writing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Waveland Press, Illinois, 2000).

**Special Instructions: Your essay must meet the following requirements, or else it will be rejected, unread and ungraded.**

1. **Your essay must be based upon one of the following topics, chosen from the three following lists:**
  - A. **The Five Most Recommended Essay Topics:** with prepared bibliographies (long and short versions), which topics will appear, in some form, on the final examination.
  - B. **Other Topics from the Master List of Discussion Topics:** also with prepared bibliographies (long and short versions)
  - C. **Alternative Topics:** If you select a topic from this C list, you should seek my advice and approval for the bibliography; but you must find your own bibliography first.
2. **Your essay must contain footnotes *with pagination* (or endnotes, or citations within the text, similarly with page numbers); and an annotated bibliography, prepared according to the instructions in *Instructions on Writing Term Essays*.** If you submit a second term essay that is lacking in either proper footnotes, etc. and/or an annotated bibliography, you will receive a failing

grade for the essay, unless you submit the essay to me personally first, for approval; and if you do so, submitting an improper or incomplete essay, I will give the opportunity to revise it accordingly. Footnotes are preferable to endnotes, which in turn are preferable to in-text citations; but your grade will not be affected by the choice.

3. **Your essay must not be under the minimum or over the maximum word limits**, i.e., between about 2100 and 4500 words, without my written and signed permission; but I will almost certainly accept legitimate essays of 15 pages or more (i.e., within reason), if its extra length is the result of considerable research. If you use a word processor, use the word-count function and put the number of words on the title page of your essay.
4. **Your essay must be based upon a *minimum* of five published academic sources**, i.e., journal articles, monographs, book-collection of essays, etc. You may also use and cite sources from general textbooks, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, CD-Rom collections, and internet/web cites; but these must be *in addition to the five published academic sources*.
5. **You may not and must not use in your essay any table, graph, map or illustration that I have given you as a hand-out (including those contained within the published lectures)**; nor may you include photo-copies of tables or graphs from secondary sources, not without my express permission. You may, however, include photocopies of maps and illustrations, etc. without such permission.
6. **If you do not submit your essay prepared on a word processor or typewriter**, you must write or hand-print the essay neatly, with double-spacing, writing on one side of the page only.
7. **Please append a title page to your essay, which must contain the following:**
  - Your full name (SURNAME in capitals) and your university registration number
  - Your e-mail address and/or phone number: **most important!**
  - The course number and title of the course
  - The title of the essay and the topic number (in terms of the A, B, and C lists)
8. Otherwise your essay must conform with the other regulations set out in the *Instructions on Writing Term Essays*.

**A. MOST RECOMMENDED TOPICS: FIRST TERM: September - December 2003**

**Topics drawn from the Master List of Topics:** the numbers in the square brackets following the topic title refer to the numbers on this Master List. See this list on my Home Page, as follows:

<http://www.economics.utoronto.ca/munro5/201TUTOP.pdf>

1. The Great Famine, the 'Black Death', and the Late-Medieval Demographic Crises [1]
2. The Problem of Serfdom in European Economic Development, I: The Decline of Serfdom in Western Europe, ca. 1300 - ca. 1500 [2]

3. The 'Great Depression' of the Late Middle Ages: Economic Slump or Economic Growth? [5]
4. Urban Governments, Guilds, and Gender-Related Occupations in Late-Medieval European Towns, 1200 - 1500: Merchant-guilds, industrial-craft guilds, and the contrasting roles of men and women in West European towns during the later Middle Ages. [9]
5. The Church, the Usury Question, and Late-Medieval Banking: the Foundations of Modern Finance [7]

### **Notes and Explanations:**

- (a) **Please refer to the Topic numbers in the Master List – again, the number in square brackets following the topic title — for fuller information on the nature and scope of these debate topics, and why they should be interesting to both economists and historians (and indeed political scientists as well).**
- (b) For each of these topics there is a two or three page short bibliography, with listings of the more important readings, chiefly recent periodical articles, and major questions. The more important readings are marked by asterisks: \* or \*\*. These short-form bibliographies also contain the major questions to be considered in preparing an essay based on these topics. These short-form bibliographies are posted on my Home Page (web site), as follows: **<http://www.economics.utoronto.ca/munro5/>**
- (c) For each of these topics, and indeed for any of the topics in the Master List of 20 topics, I have supplied a complete and usually very lengthy bibliography, organized by sub-topics within this debate; and most of these bibliography sets also contain statistical tables. They are also available on my Home Page, both in html and pdf formats. You are best advised to select the pdf format, especially for the statistical tables (long-format), which are sometimes unintelligible in the html format (which can eliminate columns or rows).
- (d) A set of readings, consisting of two articles for each of these five topics, will be available for sale, from:
 

Scholar House Productions  
100 Harbord Street (at Spadina: Main Floor)  
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1G6  
phone: (416) 977 - 9641  
fax: (416) 977 - 0147  
e-mail: [lynds@scholar-house.on.ca](mailto:lynds@scholar-house.on.ca) or [sales@scholar-house.on.ca](mailto:sales@scholar-house.on.ca)
- (e) These five lists contain the primary recommended readings for the course this term; and thus you are advised to read one or two of the readings from each of these lists, in addition to or in place of the textbooks.
- (f) **In some form or other, virtually all of these topics will appear on the final examination.** Hence

the strong emphasis on doing at least some readings for each topic.

- (g) **In writing your essay, please do not try to cover the entire topic, since these are all ‘debate’ topics that cover wide-ranging issues, usually involving lengthy time-periods for a wide geographic range.** You should base your essay on one specific sub-topic, or narrow aspect, of the general topic that you have chosen; and you should normally try to confine yourself to one or two regions or countries; and, if possible, in a more restricted time-framework than that covered by the debate topic. But at least be sure that the essay is restricted to one specific and relatively narrow sub-topic, which may be more easily found in the following.

**B. OTHER RECOMMENDED TOPICS FROM THE MASTER LIST: the “B” List: the numbers are those given on the Master List.**

3. The Problem of Serfdom in European Economic Development, II: The Spread of Serfdom in Eastern Europe, ca. 1400 - ca. 1700
4. Feudal Governments, Warfare, Taxation, and Economic Crisis in Late-Medieval Europe, c. 1250 - 1500.
6. Monetary Problems and ‘Economic Conjuncture’ in Late-Medieval Europe, ca. 1290 - ca. 1520: the nature of price changes; and the interrelationships among demographic, agrarian, and monetary changes in the European economy.
8. The Dynamics of Change in Late-Medieval Industry, ca. 1250 - ca. 1460: Textile Manufacturing in Western Europe (Italy, the Low Countries, France, and England).
10. International Trade and The European Economic Recovery, ca. 1450 - 1550: South Germany, Italy, and the Low Countries.
11. The Inauguration of the Age of Overseas Expansion: Maritime Explorations and the Establishment of the Portuguese and Spanish Overseas Empires, c. 1450 - 1600.
12. The Rise and Expansion of The Dutch Commercial Empire: ca. 1360 - ca. 1650.

**Notes:**

- a) If you finally decide that you do not want to do any of the above topics in section A -- i.e., topics nos. 1, 2, 5, 7, and 9, drawn from the Master List, you may indeed choose instead to select another other First-Term topic provided in the Master List, i.e., to choose from the other seven topics not selected as the primary topics for the course this year, which are thus nos. 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, and 12.
- b) Please note carefully that all of the remaining topics, nos. 13 - 25, are strictly reserved for the second term. Similarly, in the second term you will not be allowed to select any topic from nos. 1-12 for a second term topic.

- c) For each of these topics, you can similarly find, on my Home Page (under ‘Bibliographies’), both a short-format bibliography (one or two pages) listing the major readings and question; and a long-format bibliography, often very lengthy, with additional questions, statistical tables, graphs, maps, etc. They are available in both html and pdf formats; and again you are best advised to select the pdf format, especially for the statistical tables (long-format), which are sometimes unintelligible in the html format (which can eliminate columns or rows).
- d) Again, you should base your essay on some sub-topic, or narrow aspect, of the general topic that you have chosen; do not attempt to cover the entire debate topic. For sub-topics, refer to the full bibliography for the topic.
- e) There is no guarantee that the subject matter of these secondary (B category) topics will appear on the final examination.

**C. ALTERNATIVE ESSAY TOPICS:**

You may instead choose or adapt any of the following essay topics; but please note that prepared bibliographies are *not* available for any of these topics, though some related bibliographies may be available. Thus check the Master List for possibly related bibliographies. I should note that very rarely indeed do students choose any of these topics (for obvious reasons); and I see no need to provide a new alternative set, since this one is very inclusive of the topics considered in this course. You must construct your own bibliography, for any of the following topics. If you wish to choose an alternative topic that is not from the following list (and not from the A or B lists) then you must obtain my approval for the topic.

1. The Economics of West European Feudalism, 13<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries.
2. The Economics of Later-medieval Manorialism in Western Europe: changing economic relationships between lords and peasants.
3. The Common Field Systems of northern European agriculture: explain their origins and persistence into early-modern times.
4. Compare and contrast the evolution of field systems and crop rotations in southern and northern European agriculture from the 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.
5. Did the western European economy experience a ‘Malthusian’ crisis by the early 14<sup>th</sup> century?
6. The ‘Great European Famine’ of 1315-1322: causes and consequences.
7. The Evolution of the European ‘Marriage Pattern’: late-medieval or early-modern?
8. Real wages and living standards in late-medieval western Europe: did they rise or fall between the Black Death (1348) and the European Conquest of the Americas in the 1520s? [You may focus your attention on one country, e.g. England]

9. The 'Crisis of the Early Fourteenth Century': Did western Europe experience a combined demographic and economic crisis in the early fourteenth century?
10. The impact of warfare on the European economies: ca. 1290 - 1453 (to the end of the Hundred Years' War)
11. Analyse the growth of a money-economy in western Europe from the 11th to 15th centuries, explaining the role of money in the medieval economy: in terms of coinages and moneys of account systems.
12. From serfs to copyholders: the evolution of English peasant society during the 14th and 15th centuries.
13. Peasant rebellions in 14th century Europe: causes and consequences.  
OR: Wat Tyler and The English Peasants' Revolt of 1381.
14. The Statute of Labourers and Wage-Regulation in Late-Medieval England (to ca. 1520): Did it Work?
15. Agrarian Changes in the late-medieval and early-modern Low Countries: the birthplace of the modern 'Agricultural Revolution'?
16. Late-medieval Italy: the social and economic consequences of agrarian changes. [Or you may choose another late-medieval region or country: northern France, southern France, Spain, the Low Countries, Germany, east or west, Poland, Russia, etc.]
17. Explain the evolution of the *mezzadria* and *metayage* systems of land-tenure in Mediterranean agriculture, focussing on Italy and southern France.
18. What was the Muslim heritage for the agriculture of medieval and early-modern Spain?
19. Wool Production and the Wool Trade in Late-Medieval England: their importance for the agricultural, commercial, and industrial sectors, and for public finance.
20. International competition in the woollen industries and trades: the Low Countries, Italy, and England, ca. 1290 - ca. 1520.
21. The Rise of the English Cloth Industry, ca. 1340 - ca. 1520
22. The changing structure of the textile industries in the Low Countries (or in France, or in Italy, or Spain): responses to international market forces.
23. English taxation and the export economy, 1275 - 1558.

24. Compare and contrast the changes in sheep-farming, wool production, and the wool-export trades in medieval England and Spain, to ca. 1520.
25. The Decline and Fall of the Champagne Fairs.
26. Compare and contrast the changing roles of overland-continental trade routes and maritime routes in international trade, from the 12th to 15th centuries.
27. Why did the Italians dominate international commerce and banking in late-medieval Europe?  
  
OR: Venetian Hegemony in Mediterranean Trade during the 14th and 15th Centuries: causes and consequences
28. The importance of the Levant and Egypt to the European economy, 1290 - 1520
29. The importance of the Baltic Sea zone to the European economy during the 14th, 15th, and early 16th centuries.
30. The Rise and Fall of the German Hanseatic League during the 14th and 15th centuries: how did they acquire and finally lose commercial hegemony in northern Europe?
31. The role of Lübeck in the maritime economies of the Baltic, the North Sea, and the Atlantic, from the late 13th to early 16th centuries.
32. The Rise of the Dutch Shipbuilding Industry: How did the Dutch acquire European mastery in shipbuilding and shipping?
33. Technological Innovations in European Shipbuilding and Navigation during the 14th and 15th Centuries.
34. Portugal and European Expansion: how and why did the Portuguese inaugurate the age of European exploration and overseas colonization, ca. 1450 - ca. 1520?
35. The South German - Central European silver mining boom, 1460 - 1520: causes and consequences.
36. Rise and Expansion of the South Germany Economy, 1380 - 1520
37. Analyse the changing role of the spice trade in European commerce from the 13th to 16th centuries.
38. The Rise of the Antwerp Market, 1420 - 1520: English woollens, South German metals, and Portuguese spices.  
  
OR: The Shift of International Commerce from Bruges to Antwerp in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century.
39. The Evolution of Antwerp as an International Money Market for Public Loans in the late 15th and 16th centuries.

40. The Evolution of the Bill of Exchange in European Commerce and Finance, ca. 1275 - ca. 1530
41. The Medici and the Fuggers: a Comparison of leading Italian and South German merchant-banking houses in the 15th and 16th centuries.
42. North Africa, West Africa and the European economy, ca. 1300 - ca. 1550.
43. Examine the changes in European military technologies from the 13th to early 16th centuries: with a particular focus upon the emergence of firearms and artillery.

**D. SECOND TERM: MOST RECOMMENDED TOPICS: January to April 2004**

These are also drawn from the Master List of Essay and General Reading Topics (25 Topics). For the second term, you may also choose any other topic from the Master List of Essay and Reading Topics, from nos. 13 - 25 inclusive.]

**Topic Numbers:** those in square brackets refer to the topic numbers of the Master List

6. The Population Problem and the Economic Development of Early-Modern Europe (1500 - 1640): Was there a 'Malthusian Trap'? [13]
7. The Era of the European 'Price Revolution', ca. 1540-1640: Inflation and Economic Growth, and the Hamilton Thesis on the Origins of 'Modern Industrial Capitalism' [14]
8. The 'Rise of the Gentry' Debate: On the Origins of Modern 'Agrarian Capitalism' [17]
9. The 'Rise of Capitalism' and The Protestant Reformations: the Weber-Tawney Theses on the 'Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,' 16th - 18th Centuries [15]
10. The 'General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century,' 1620-1740: The Hobsbawm Thesis on the Transition from 'Feudalism to Modern Capitalism' [20]