

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
Faculty of Arts and Science

APRIL/MAY EXAMINATIONS 2002

ECO 201Y1 Y

The Economic History of Later Medieval and Early Modern Europe, 1250 - 1750

No Aids Allowed

Duration - 3 Hours

Answer any **THREE** of the following **twelve (12)** questions, spending no more than one hour on each. **All questions are of equal value. Double-space your answers: write legibly on one side of the page only; and number or identify your questions properly.**

You may answer questions related to your term essays. **But do not give similar answers to the questions selected; and thus do not select questions with similar themes.** If you do, you risk getting a low mark.

1. 'The movement of pre-industrial populations cannot be understood except in relation to the law of diminishing returns.' Discuss the validity of this statement in relating the major trends in both demographic movements and the economic development of the Europe, from c. 1250 to c. 1750. In your answer consider the following questions:
 - how closely related are the expansions and contractions in the European population to the phases of economic growth and decline (aggregate and per capita), over these five centuries?
 - to what extent were the phases of demographic growth and decline the result of *endogenous* and/or *exogenous* forces in the economy?
 - in particular, to what extent was European economic and demographic growth subject to Malthusian constraints over these centuries, particularly in terms of living standards?
 - to what extent did the European Marriage pattern and other socio-institutional forces ultimately modify or mitigate Malthusian factors in the European economy?
2. Did the later-medieval European economy – or the economies of western Europe – experience crises and contractions that were severe, prolonged, and widespread enough to justify the term 'Great Depression'? In your answer, consider the following related questions:
 - what were the causes and the consequences of the economic crises and overall economic contraction that did occur, during the 14th and 15th centuries?
 - of the causes in the preceding question, which were relatively the more important: demographic, monetary, commercial-financial (i.e., disruptions/dislocations in international trade and finance), institutional (e.g., feudal and national governments, warfare)?
 - which regions of Europe fared the best, and which the worst, during these two centuries?
 - in what ways did the late-medieval European economy differ from the European economies of the 13th and 16th centuries (in terms of an overall perspective)?
3. Compare and contrast the evolution and the decline of serfdom in England, from c.1280 to c. 1550, in England, with the history of serfdom in France and the Low Countries. In particular, explain why the decline of serfdom in late-medieval, early-modern England led to or facilitated the spread of large-scale enclosures there more so than in France and the Low Countries.
4. How, when, where, and why did the following socio-political institutions provide barriers to the functioning of a market economy and to economic development in western Europe, from the 13th to the 18th centuries: the Church (Catholic and then Protestant as well), feudal principalities, national governments, urban governments, mercantile and craft guilds? You may focus your discussion **on two or three** of these institutions. In your conclusions, state to what extent these barriers or

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hindrances had been removed, reduced, or neutralized by the early 18th century.

5. **For two or more of the following consecutive** periods, analyse and compare the **causes and consequences** of long-term price movements in the west European economy, in terms of both **relative prices and price levels** (as measured by price-indices), assessing and comparing in particular the role of **demographic** and **monetary factors** in these price changes, during the periods chosen: (i) c.1250 - 1348; (ii) 1348 - c. 1460; (iii) c.1460 - c. 1530; (iv) c. 1530 - c. 1640; (v) c.1640 - c.1750).
6. The century 1540 to 1640 has sometimes been called ‘Tawney’s Century;’ but it might also be called Hamilton’s Century or Nef’s Century. Compare, contrast, and critically discuss the contributions that at least **two** of these economic historians made to our understanding of European economic development during this century, particularly in terms of their contribution to the debates about: the ‘Price Revolution and the Birth of Industrial Capitalism,’ the ‘Rise of the Gentry,’ ‘Protestantism and the Rise of Modern Capitalism,’ and the ‘Early-Modern Industrial Revolution,’ exploring the economic interrelationships between and amongst these economic phenomena, particularly the **consequences** of these economic and social changes.
7. Selecting England and at least one country or region in western continental Europe (France, Italy, Spain, the Low Countries), analyse and compare the **causes and consequences**, economic and social, of **agrarian changes** during **two** of the following consecutive periods: (i) 1280 - 1460; (ii) 1460 - 1640; (iii) 1640 - 1750. In your answer, assess the impact (where and when known) of the agrarian changes upon other sectors of economy in these countries or regions.
8. Why did the heyday of West European ‘Mercantilism’ occur during the period commonly known as the ‘General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century’, c. 1640 - c.1740? In your answer discuss the ways in which West European states used government economic policies to respond to perceived aspects of economic crises, in competition with other national states.
9. Compare and contrast the expansion of overseas commerce, and then the establishment of overseas commercial and colonial empires, of Holland and England, from c.1380 to c. 1750. In your answer discuss the validity of Hobsbawm’s ‘General Crisis’ thesis concerning a ‘crisis in Old Colonialism,’ one that resolved itself in the creation of a ‘New Colonialism’. In that context which overseas commercial-colonial empire established from the 1660s proved to be the more conducive to economic growth, leading to an ‘industrial revolution’?
10. How and why did the Italians – in particular the Venetians – gain mastery in Mediterranean trade during the later Middle Ages; and how and why did they lose such mastery by the later 17th century? In your answer, discuss how, why, and with what consequences the Italians responded to challenges to their commercial hegemony from: the Mamluks, Catalans, the Ottoman Turks, the Portuguese, the French, the Dutch, and the English? You may choose to focus on just some of these.
11. Analyse the evolution of banking and financial institutions (with particular credit instruments) in the West European economy from the 13th to 18th centuries, assessing in particular the roles of the Italians, South Germans, Dutch, and English. In your answer discuss how innovations or developments in credit instruments and financial institutions were devised as responses to impediments from both Church and State, during this period. (If you also choose question 4, do not provide similar answers).
12. Analyse, compare, and contrast the role of **technological changes** (including where necessary, changes in organization) in the historical development of at least **two** of the following industries, from the 13th to early 18th centuries: textiles, mining, metallurgy, shipbuilding, wood & coal-burning industries.