
The Economic History of Late-Medieval and Early-Modern Europe
(The Development of the European Economy, 1300 - 1750)

Mid Year Test: January 2000

Answer **one** of the following twelve questions, avoiding any topics related to your term essays, for either term, in about 1500-1800 words, or about 7 pages in typed form, and no more than 10 pages, using double-spacing with 11- or 12-point fonts. Put your **name** (printed), **student number**, and the **question number** at the top of the first page or on the title page of your paper. **Make sure that you clearly identify the question being answered, providing both the title and the question number.** Please note that the topic of your first term essay has been recorded, along with your grade.

Your take-home exam is due on Wednesday, 12 January 2000, with no extensions permitted. If you do not submit the exam by this date, you must instead do another and more formal term essay, which will be due on the last day of classes in April 2000. Nevertheless, you should attempt to do this take-home exam, as a relatively painless rehearsal for the final examination; for all of the questions on this take-home exam use the same format as that on the final exam, and I alone mark this take-home test. Try to compress your answer into one hour's worth of writing.

Please prepare your answer on a word-processor or a typewriter. If you must handwrite your essay, write or print your answer legibly, using double-spacing, in no more than 12 pages; and write on ONE side of the page only. Illegible answers will be returned unread for rewriting.

The answer submitted must be *uniquely* your own work. Similar answers that appear to be the result of collaboration with other students will be returned with a zero grade, which may be appealed only with convincing evidence to the contrary. Beware also the other pitfalls of **plagiarism**: copying or transcribing with minimal changes the work of another.

Your answer should not be a mere repetition of lecture notes and must show some evidence that you have read some of the recommended texts, books, essays, or articles for this course (on the reading lists to the major topics, especially). Footnotes and bibliography are not, however, required, though you may, if you wish, place the names of authors (and publication dates) in parentheses within the text.

QUESTIONS:

1. To what extent did the medieval heritage of feudalism, manorialism, serfdom, and the Church provide impediments to European economic development, and to the growth of a market economy, in particular, from the 13th to early 16th centuries? and to what extent had those barriers or impediments become eroded by the early 16th century?
2. Compare and contrast the changing structures and institutions of serfdom in both western and eastern Europe, from the 12th to early 16th century. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the various economic models, especially demographic and commercial models, that economic historians have used to explain the changes that both western and eastern serfdom underwent over these centuries.
3. Why did the population of western Europe generally cease to grow from the early to mid-14th century? Did western Europe then experience a Malthusian crisis, from endogenous forces; or were the late-medieval demographic crises more exogenous in nature? In your answer explain when, where, and why the era of demographic crises finally ended, to be followed by renewed population growth.
4. Discuss and analyse the major secular swings in price-levels in western Europe, from c.1290 to c.1520 -- i.e. the periodic inflations and deflations -- in terms of both **monetary and real factors**,

analysing their roles as active and/or passive agents. In your answer, discuss both the causes and the economic consequences of those secular price changes, including changes in relative prices.

5. Analyse the role of bullion, coined money, credit, financial institutions, and of monetary forces in general in the development of the European economy, from the late 12th to early 16th centuries. Did credit instruments always succeed in counteracting periodic shortages of coined money and bullion?
6. What crises and disruptions did the European economies, particularly in the sphere of international trade, experience *from* either the late 13th century, the early 14th century, the mid 14th century, or the 15th century (i.e. choose one of these as marking the onset of a prolonged crisis). Did these crises lead to a 'Great Depression' in the later Middle Ages? To the extent that crises did occur in international trade, evaluate the contributory roles of: (a) feudal and international warfare; (b) government commercial, monetary, and fiscal policies to finance warfare; (c) famines, plagues, and other diseases; (d) monetary factors; (e) other factors.
7. Analyse the importance of wool-based textiles for the industrial, agrarian, commercial, and financial sectors of the West European economies (clearly differentiating by regions concerned); and explain the influence of the interactions of those sectoral changes for the economic development of England and the Low Countries, in particular.
8. Explain and discuss the origins and early phases of the Enclosure movement in England (to ca. 1520) in terms of: (a) demographic models; (b) commercial models; (c) institutional models, in particular the changes in English manorialism, serfdom, and peasant tenures. In your answer also explain why 15th and 16th century England experienced much more of an enclosure movement than did France or the Low Countries.
9. Explain why, how, and what manner the Italians -- their maritime republics in particular -- succeeded in dominating European-based international trade during the medieval era, and in developing the major commercial, business, and financial institutions of the western European economy.
10. For the west European economy, from the 13th to early 16th centuries, compare and contrast the nature and economic consequences of technological innovations in at least two of the following: (a) agriculture; (b) mining and metallurgy; (c) textiles or other manufacturing industries; (d) shipping and navigation; (e) business and financial institutions.
11. How did the various regional economies of eastern Europe, east of the Elbe (Pomerania, Brandenburg, Prussia, Poland, Lithuania, Livonia-Courland, Russia, Bohemia, Hungary, etc.) differ from those of western Europe, especially in their agrarian institutions, commercial structures, and demographic histories. In particular explain the importance of those regions bordering on the Baltic Sea for the Western European economy (especially for the Low Countries and England).
12. (a) In the view of some economic historians, Portugal, South Germany, and Holland were merely 'peripheral economic backwaters' during the 13th and much of the 14th centuries; and yet from the later 14th century, during the so-called 'Great Depression', these three regions achieved remarkable economic progress, certainly in comparison with the economic fortunes of more established economic regions in Western Europe. If you agree, explain why and how they did so, comparing and contrasting their regional economic experiences. OR, as an alternative version:

(b) Explain how economic changes in South Germany, England, Portugal, and Holland, and changes in their foreign trade, contributed to the rise of Antwerp, displacing Bruges, to become the primary entrepôt port and financial centre in the northern European economy during the 15th century.