

ECO 201Y1: The Economic History of Late-Medieval and Early-Modern Europe

Mid Year Test: January 2002

Answer **one** of the following **twelve** questions, **except for and avoiding any related to your first term essay**. Your essays should be 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, 16 January 2002, 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 2002. 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. Presumably everyone will avoid the temptation to plagiarize the assigned readings and my lecture notes.

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 for 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 social institutions of feudalism, manorialism, serfdom, and the Church provide impediments to European economic development from the 13th to early 16th centuries? How did these institutions change or adapt over this three-century period?
2. Analyse the economic and social forces involved in both the rise and then the decline of serfdom in medieval western Europe. In your answer, discuss the costs and benefits of serfdom, for medieval (agrarian) village communities, while explaining how and why serfdom was related to feudalism, manorialism, and Common Fields.
3. Discuss and explain both the causes and consequences, economic and social, of the late-medieval demographic crises in western Europe. In particular examine their consequences for the agrarian and commercial sectors of the west European economy, and for its major social institutions.
4. Did the west European economy undergo a 'great depression' or 'secular' economic decline during the later Middle Ages (14th and 15th centuries)? Whether or not you agree that the term 'depression' is actually relevant, analyse the major structural changes that the European economy underwent

during this period, in terms of some or all of the following: population (demographic factors), money (stocks and flows), price levels (inflation and deflation), agriculture, international trade. Who gained and who lost as a result of these macroeconomic changes: in terms of regional economies and of social strata, especially in terms of income distributions, real incomes, and living standards?

5. Money and banking: Analyse the role of monetary instruments and monetary forces in the development of the European economy, from the late 13th to early 16th centuries. Your answer should include and focus upon:
 - a) the relative importance of bullion stocks, coined money, and credit instruments
 - b) the relative importance of changes in monetary stocks and flows in determining price levels (inflations, deflations); and the importance of financial institutions for such changes.
 - c) the role of state governments and the Church in promoting or hindering the use and international flow of specie and of these financial instruments.
 - d) the extent to which the use of credit instruments succeeded in counteracting or alleviating periodic shortages of coined money.
6. Discuss the positive and negative roles of governments – of national states or monarchies, principalities, and towns – and of government related institutions (such as merchant and craft guilds) in the development of the west European commercial economy, from the 13th to 16th centuries.
7. Discuss the changing role of women in the later-medieval west European economy, with particular reference to agriculture, industry – urban craft guilds in particular – commerce and finance. Did their relative position change or improve over this period? Why – or why not?
8. Why was the production of wool textiles (woollens, worsteds, mixed fabrics) the most important manufacturing industry (in terms of employment and trade) in later-medieval western Europe. Discuss how changes in the agricultural and commercial sectors of the European economy influenced the rise, international leadership, and then decline of the major textile-producing regions in western Europe: Italy, northern France and the Low Countries, and England (1300-1520)?
9. Compare and contrast the changes in the agricultural systems of southern (Mediterranean) and northern Europe, from the 13th to early 16th century, focusing in particular upon changes in: (a) the structure of landholding (landlords and peasant tenants); and (b) agricultural technology.
10. Analyse the changes in the rural economy and rural societies of late-medieval England, explaining both the causes and consequences, economic and social, of those changes in landholding, land usage, and agricultural techniques. In particular discuss and explain the relationships involved in the decline of serfdom and the emergence of enclosures in 15th-century England, discussing in particular the relative importance of demographic, institutional, and commercial models in explaining those changes.
11. Compare and contrast the major changes in international trade in the Mediterranean and Baltic regions during the 14th and 15th centuries, explaining the reasons for the Venetian supremacy in the former, and the emerging Dutch supremacy in the latter, by 1500. How did the nature of their commercial and financial supremacies differ?
12. In the view of some economic historians, Portugal, South Germany, and Holland were merely ‘peripheral economic backwaters’ during the ‘Commercial Revolution era’ of the 13th and early 14th centuries. Indeed, some would also include England in this ‘peripheral’ regional group. Explain how, why, and with what consequences these ‘peripheral’ regions, the first three in particular, underwent relative economic growth during the later Middle Ages, to achieve considerable success as ‘new leaders’ of the west European by the early 16th century.