

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

Mid Year Test: January 2004

Answer **one** of the following **twelve** questions, **except for and excluding any question related to your first term essay**. Your essays should be about 2300 - 2650 words, or about 7-8 pages in typed form, and no more than 10 pages (with about 330 words per page), using double-spacing with 12-point font. Put your **name, student number**, and the **question number** at the top of the first page or on the title page of your paper. **Underline or capitalize your surname (printed)**. **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, 14 January 2004, 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 **2 April 2004**. 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. On the final exam, you would be given one hour to write a question of the type found on this take-home exam.

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 15 pages; and write on ONE side of the page only. Single-spaced or otherwise illegible answers will be returned unread for rewriting.

The answer submitted must be *uniquely* your own work. 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. Explain how feudalism, manorialism, and serfdom evolved in medieval western Europe to adapt to changing economic, social, and political conditions, from the 8th century; and analyse the organic inter-relationships of these **three** socio-economic institutions. To what extent did they impede European economic development, from the 8th to 15th centuries, and to what extent were these institutions changed by European economic development over these centuries (to the 15th century)?
2. Compare and contrast the ways in which economic historians have utilized demographic, market, and institutional models to explain the decline of serfdom in western Europe, from the 12th to 15th centuries. Have historians been consistent in utilizing these models in explaining regional variations in the changing history of western serfdom over these centuries?
3. Discuss the costs and benefits of Open Field or Common Field systems of farming in western Europe, and how they changed, from the 12th to 15th centuries, discussing in particular:
 - a) the economic and social relationships to be found between manorialism, serfdom, and Common Field farming – and their changes over this period
 - b) the flexibility of Common/Open field systems in accommodating changes in agricultural techniques, especially in terms of crop rotations and livestock raising.
4. Why did western Europe fail to experience continued population growth after the end of the thirteenth or early fourteenth century? Was the subsequent population decline primarily due to *endogenous* factors that may be regarded as a genuine Malthusian crisis, or was it due primarily to

exogenous factors? In your answer try to explain why the late-medieval demographic decline was so widespread and so prolonged.

5. Did the western European economy experience, from the early fourteenth to late fifteenth-centuries, a prolonged, sustained decline, one worthy enough of the term ‘depression’? Answer the following questions, or at least two of them:
 - a) In explaining this decline, discuss the role and rank-order of importance that you would assign to the following variables: political (warfare, state economic policies, etc.), demographic, monetary, agrarian, commercial.
 - b) What regional variations in economic performance can be found in western Europe during this so-called ‘Great Depression’ era: which regions lost economic power, and which ones gained?
 - c) Can reasonably consistent economic explanations be offered for rising real incomes, among some social strata, in those regions experiencing decline in aggregate ‘national’ incomes?
6. Did ecclesiastical economic (and social) doctrines impede or promote the development of European financial institutions in particular, and economic development in general? To what extent did ecclesiastical doctrines influence social perceptions (i.e., the social legitimacy or importance) of commerce, financial and commercial capitalism, the operation or functions of a market economy?
7. To what extent did mercantile and craft guilds influence the development of urban commerce and urban industry in later medieval western Europe? In your discussion you may (or may not) wish to discuss their role in achieving or impeding gender equality in urban economic activities.
8. Compare and contrast the nature and consequences of agrarian changes in various regions of western Europe, from the 13th to early 16th centuries, focusing in particular upon at least two of the following: Italy, Spain, France (northern and/or southern), the Low Countries, England. In your answer, discuss the more general economic consequences of the agrarian changes in the regions you selected, in particular the impact of agrarian changes on other sectors of the regional economy.
9. The role of the Italians in medieval commerce and finance: why did the Italians dominate later-medieval European commerce and finance; how did they contribute to the development of European commercial and financial institutions, from the 12th to 15th centuries; and how was their hegemony being challenged by the late 15th, early 16th centuries?
10. Why did wool, and the products manufactured from wool, play such a prominent role in the development of the western Europe economy from the 12th to 16th centuries?
 - a) Discuss the changes in the international production of wool (sheep raising), changes in the international production of wool-based textiles (woollens and worsteds, and mixed fabrics), and changes in the international commerce in both wool and wool-based textiles.
 - b) Thus, explain the inter-relationship of the relevant changes in the agrarian, industrial, commercial-financial sectors.
 - c) In particular, explain how, why, and when England became the predominant producer and exporter of woollen textiles, by the later 15th century.
11. 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.
12. Discuss the role of money and monetary institutions (including financial instruments) in the development of the European economy from the 13th to early 16th centuries: in particular the role of money in influencing changes in price levels, and the influence of those price movements upon changes in the economy – especially in the agrarian and industrial sectors.