

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
Faculty of Arts and Science

APRIL EXAMINATIONS 2010

ECO 301Y1 Y

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

Aids Allowed: Time-Chart of European Economic History

Duration - 3 Hours

Answer any **THREE** of the following **twelve (12)** questions, provided that they are **different** questions, spending no more than one hour on each. **All questions are of equal value. DO NOT GIVE SIMILAR ANSWERS to the questions selected; and thus DO NOT SELECT QUESTIONS WITH SIMILAR THEMES, since many of the questions have overlapping topics. ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS AS POSED, and IN FULL. NUMBER your questions; WRITE LEGIBLY, on one side of the page only; and DOUBLE-SPACE YOUR ANSWERS.**

1. Analysing the roles of *endogenous* and *exogenous* factors in the cycles of demographic expansion and decline in the European economy, from the later 13<sup>th</sup> to mid-18th centuries, answer these two related questions (specifying the places and time-periods discussed):
  - (a) Did western Europe experience Malthusian cycles of demographic crises, decline, and then renewed growth, before the modern Industrial Revolution?
  - (b) Was population growth a contributory cause of economic growth and subsequently of economic decline? Or were such demographic cycles of growth and decline the consequences of other, independent forces for economic growth and decline – or of related sociological factors, or even of exogenous factors?

**OR:** Discuss the role of famines and diseases as demographic determinants in western Europe, from the 14th to 18th centuries. How, when, and why did they cease to be such determinants?

2. For later medieval and early-modern Europe, compare the economic, social, and political-institutional factors involved in: (a) the decline of serfdom in western Europe; and (b) the subsequent spread of serfdom into eastern Europe – east of the Elbe river. What were the long-term economic consequences of those changes: i.e., the decline of serfdom in the West and its spread into the East?
3. Analyse the role of monetary changes, their impact on price levels, and their long-term economic consequences in **two** of the following eras: (a) the late-medieval ‘Great Depression’, (b) the ‘Price Revolution’ (c. 1520-1640); (c) the ‘General Crisis’ of the Seventeenth century (1620-1740).

**OR:** Compare and contrast the role of both monetary and demographic factors in producing inflation and/or deflation in **one** (or more) of the following eras: (a) the late-medieval ‘Great Depression’, (b) the ‘Price Revolution’ (c. 1520-1640), (c) the ‘General Crisis’ of the Seventeenth century (1620-1740). Briefly discuss the economic consequences of inflation or deflation in the period chosen.

4. Analyse the role and consequences of warfare in the European economy, from the 14th to the 18th centuries, in terms of **one** (or more) of the following issues:
  - a) the impact of warfare on international trade, especially during the late-medieval ‘Great Depression’ era and the ‘General Crisis’ era of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
  - b) the impact of warfare upon state borrowing, public finance, and taxation
  - c) the impact of warfare on living standards and economic growth over these centuries.

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5. Compare the influence of religious doctrines and religious institutions on the evolution of European 'capitalism' and on European economic development, from the 13th to 18th centuries, comparing in particular those of the traditional Roman Catholic Church and the new churches of the Protestant Reformations. Does the Weber-Tawney thesis have any validity for these issues?
6. Compare and contrast the development of the agrarian economies in England and France, from the 14th to 18th centuries: in terms of both technological changes (including crop rotations) and institutional changes, analysing as well their economic consequences. Why were there more Enclosures to be found in England than in France, during this period? Did such enclosures promote increased agricultural productivity and economic growth: and if so, how, when, where, and why?
7. Why did European Mercantilism – despite its medieval roots – achieve its greatest prominence in the European economy during the so-called 'General Crisis' era of ca. 1620 - ca. 1740? Were Mercantilist practices, policies, and philosophies products of economic crises during this era – or did they contribute to the economic problems of the 'General Crisis' era?
8. Compare and contrast the commercial expansion of England and Holland (Dutch Republic) from the later 14<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, in answering these two related questions:
  - a) how, where, and why did the Dutch obtain commercial hegemony, during the later 16th and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, only to lose that supremacy to the English/British by the 18<sup>th</sup> century?
  - b) how and why did England/Great Britain develop an overseas commercial-colonial empire that proved to be more conducive to modern industrialization than the Dutch colonial empire?
9. Discuss and compare the major contributions that the medieval Italians, the early-modern Dutch, and the English made to the development of banking and financial institutions (both private and public) in western Europe from the 13th to 18th centuries. How and why did the Italians gain financial supremacy, and then lose that supremacy to the Dutch (Holland); and why did the Dutch similarly lose that financial supremacy to the English/British, by the 18<sup>th</sup> century? Do not do both questions 8 and 9.
10. Compare and contrast and relate the changing economic fortunes of at least **two** of the following countries or regions, from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries: the southern Low Countries (Flanders and Brabant), the Baltic Hanseatic towns, South Germany, Portugal, Spain (Catalonia-Aragon and Castile before 1492), the Venetian Republic, the Mamluk(e) Sultanate (Syria and Egypt), and the Ottoman-Turkish Empire.
11. Compare and contrast the role of spices (including sugar) and of textiles (made from wool, silk, cotton) in international trade, from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and answer this question: which set of trades proved to be the more conducive to the long-term growth and development of the European economy? How and why? You may, especially if faced with time constraints, focus on just one set of these commodities, while providing a summary conclusion for the other set of commodities.
12. Analyse the role – discussing both causes and economic consequences – of technological innovations, and consequent changes in industrial organization, in at least **two** of the following European industries between (or from) the 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries: (a) mining and metallurgy; (b) shipbuilding; (c) fuel-burning manufacturing industries; (d) wool-based textile industries.