

## ECO 301Y1: The Economic History of Late-Medieval and Early-Modern Europe

### Mid Year Test: January 2005

Answer **ONE** of the following **twelve (12)** questions, **while avoiding any questions related to your first term essay. If in doubt, choose another topic.** 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** (printed), **student number**, **e-mail address**, 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.** Note that the topic of your first term essay has been recorded, along with your grade. Please prepare your answer on a word-processor or a typewriter. Handwritten papers must be double-spaced and clearly legible.

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. 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 bibliographies are not required (but you may supply in-text references; or a brief list of references at the end).

**Your take-home exam is due on Wednesday, 12 January 2005, with no extensions permitted.** If you do not submit the exam by this date, you must instead do another and more formal term essay (i.e., with footnotes and an annotated bibliography), which will be due on **Friday, 1 April 2005.**

### QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss and explain the organic relationships between and among feudalism, manorialism (seigniorialism), and serfdom, as they evolved from Carolingian times to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, explaining as well the differences to be found in the evolution of these social institutions in northern, southern, and eastern Europe, over these same centuries. To what extent did these institutions outlive the political, military, social, and economic circumstances that had led to their original creation? To what extent did they adapt to changing political, military, social, and economic circumstances, by the 15<sup>th</sup> century? You may focus this part of your answer on north-western Europe.
2. Explain the military, political, social, and especially the economic functions and importance of large domesticated animals in the development of the European economy from the Carolingian era to the early sixteenth century: and explain the advantages that northern Europe gained and exercised in the use of such animals, in comparison with (and over) southern Europe.
3. Explain the evolution of the Common or Open Field system of peasant agriculture:
  - a) why was it found chiefly in northern, and not southern Europe?
  - b) and primarily in those regions in which feudal manorialism and serfdom were practised?
  - c) What were the costs and benefits of this system: for both landlords and peasant tenants?
  - d) To what extent did this system, within the context of feudal manorialism, hinder the growth of agricultural productivity and thus of European economic development (to the 15<sup>th</sup> century)?
  - e) How and why enclosures displace the common field system (confine your answer to England).
4. Explain how and why serfdom declined in later-medieval western Europe; and how and why serfdom expanded and increased its geographic scope in eastern Europe (east of the Elbe river) during the later-medieval and early modern eras. What were the economic and social consequences of these

differences between the western and eastern European historical experiences with serfdom?

5. Why did the population growth of western Europe, during the so-called Commercial Revolution era, from ca. 1180 to ca. 1310, not continue into the later Middle Ages; and why was the subsequent decline in population so severe and so prolonged? Discuss the following:
  - a) Were the primary causes of that population decline, and prolonged demographic stagnation, endogenous, exogenous, or a combination of the two?
  - b) What were the primary economic and social consequences of the demographic crises in late-medieval western Europe?
6. Analyse and discuss the economic consequences of warfare in western Europe from the 1290s to the end of the Hundred Years War (in 1453). More specifically, in your answer, discuss:
  - a) the role, and the consequences, of government policies: fiscal, monetary, commercial, etc.
  - b) the impact of warfare and government related policies on international and regional trading networks and the structures of international commerce.
  - c) the changing role of military technologies in late-medieval warfare.
  - d) the significance of warfare for the debate on the late-medieval 'Great Depression'.
7. What role did money – including credit instruments – play in the evolution and in particular in the long-term or 'secular' dynamics of the European economy, from the 13<sup>th</sup> to early 16<sup>th</sup> century? In particular, did later-medieval Europe experience a 'bullion famine'?
  - a) If so, were those monetary crises at all related to the late-medieval economic slump, known as the late-medieval 'Great Depression'?
  - b) How did late-medieval monetary changes influence changes in the level of prices (i.e., in terms of inflation and deflation); and what were the economic impacts of those changes?
  - c) To what extent was the late-medieval monetary contraction offset or remedied by coinage debasements and the use of credit instruments?
  - d) How was the late-medieval monetary contraction finally resolved?
8. Discuss the role of the Church, especially in terms of its economic and social doctrines, as an impediment to the economic development of late-medieval Europe? Discuss in particular the impact of those doctrines on the evolution of European financial institutions.
9. How and why did the Italians, as the creators and leaders of the Commercial Revolution, continue their dominance of international commerce and finance during the later Middle Ages?
  - a) What commercial and financial institutions did they create and utilise in that dominance?
  - b) Who were their chief rivals, and how did the Italians deal with this competition (to ca. 1520)?
10. How, why, and how successfully did the following four 'peripheral' regions arise in late-medieval Europe to provide a challenge to the Italian and German economic hegemony in western Europe: England, Holland, South Germany, and Portugal?
11. Discuss the extent to which both demographic and monetary changes (i.e., in terms of changes in both relative prices and in price levels) influence changes in medieval European agriculture (to 1500): in terms of technology, land use, land management, and landlord-tenant relationships?
12. Why were sheep, the wool that they produced, and the cloth manufactured from that wool so important in European economic development from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the early 16<sup>th</sup> century? Discuss the and contrast the historical experiences of two of the following, over this long period: England, the Low Countries, Italy, Spain (i.e., Castile and Aragon) -- especially in terms of natural-resource advantages and commercial organizations.