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

Mid Year Test: Wednesday, 6 January 2010

Answer **ONE and only one** of the following **twelve** (12) questions, **provided that your choice is totally unrelated to your first term essay**. Note that the topic of your first term essay has been recorded, along with your grade. **If in doubt, choose another topic. Answer the entire question, and do so fully, as posed: partial answers will receive low grades.** 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 11 or 12-point font. Please prepare your answer on a word-processor or a typewriter, if possible. 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. **Underline or capitalize your surname (printed). Make sure that you clearly identify the question being answered, providing both the title and the question number.**

The answer submitted must be *uniquely* your own work. Your answer must not be a mere repetition of lecture notes and must show some evidence that you have read not only the lecture notes (imperative!) but also 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, 13 January 2010 (by 5:00 pm), with no extensions permitted.** If you do not submit the exam by this date, you must instead do another and more formal term essay (with footnotes and annotated bibliography), which will be due on **Friday, 26 March 2010**.

**QUESTIONS: note that all of the first-term A list essay topics are included in these questions**

1. What role did the Great Famine and the Black Death play in the European demographic crises and prolonged population decline during the later Middle Ages? Discuss their roles in terms of both the causes and consequences of that prolonged population decline; and discuss also the possible role of other factors that may explain why that population decline was so prolonged.
2. Discuss the role of money and monetary factors in explaining long-term price trends –in terms of both inflations and deflations – in the later-medieval European economy (ca. 1300 - ca. 1520). Did credit and credit instruments compensate for any shortages of coined moneys during the so-called ‘bullion’ famines of the later 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries? How did the ‘bullion famines’ finally come to an end, by the later 15<sup>th</sup> century?
3. Explain the economic and social relationships of feudalism, manorialism, and serfdom in any region of later medieval western Europe (from ca. 1250 - ca. 1500). How, why, and to what extent did these interrelated feudal institutions provide a hindrance or barrier to European economic growth? To what extent, in the region chosen, had these feudal barriers been eroded or removed by ca. 1500?
4. Explain why later-medieval and early-modern eastern Europe (the Germanic and Slavic regions east of the Elbe river) experienced an increase or intensification of serfdom, when serfdom was declining and disappearing from western Europe. How useful are demographic and commercial models, or any other socio-economic models, in explaining these contrary European phenomena involving serfdom?
5. Discuss the evolution of Common Field or Open Field agriculture (‘mixed husbandry’) in medieval

northern Europe; and explain the basic differences between the predominant agricultural systems in northern and southern Europe (Mediterranean basin) during the medieval era. Answer also the following two related questions:

- a) Which of the two proved to be the more productive form of agriculture – and why?
  - b) What came to replace Open or Common Field farming in northern Europe, in England especially – and why?
6. Discuss the impact of warfare and consequent taxation (to finance warfare, defence, and borrowing) upon the later medieval European economy. Did such warfare and taxation contribute to the so-called ‘Great Depression’ of this era?
  7. Did medieval western Europe experience a rise in real wages and real incomes, from the Black Death to the late fifteenth century? Answer all of the following questions.
    - a) If so: when, where, how, and why?
    - b) If so: analyse the influence of demographic, monetary, and institutional factors on real incomes
    - c) If so: analyse as well the role of government economic policies, particularly in the realm of public finance and taxation.
    - d) In general, who gained the most and who suffered from changes in real incomes and in income distributions in late-medieval western Europe?
  8. Discuss the influence of religious economic doctrines upon the evolution of the European economy, and the role of both the Church and secular governments, in enforcing those doctrines, during the later Middle Ages? To what extent were those doctrines a hindrance to economic development and to what extent did they provide incentives for financial innovations (to circumvent those doctrines)?
  9. How and why did the Italians dominate European commerce and finance during the later Middle Ages? Discuss in particular their chief contributions (innovations) to the development of European commercial and financial institutions, up to 1500.
  10. Discuss the importance of textiles, especially wool and wool-based textiles, in the later-medieval western European economy: in terms of changes in the agricultural, commercial-financial, and industrial sectors of the region or regions selected (e.g., England, the Low Countries, Italy).
  11. Compare and contrast the commercial importance of **three** of the following regions, in the development of the later-medieval European economy, up to 1520: (a) the Baltic-Scandinavian trading zones of the German Hanseatic League; (b) South Germany and the Rhineland; (c) the Low Countries (Flanders, Brabant, and Holland); (d) England; and (e) the Iberian peninsula (Portugal and Spain – formerly Castile and Aragon).
  12. Compare and contrast the economic significance (for economic growth) of technological innovations in the following industries, during the later Middle Ages: mining and metallurgy; textile manufacturing; shipbuilding and maritime navigation.