

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

Mid Year Test: January 2003

Answer **ONE** of the following **twelve** questions, **while avoiding any questions related to your first term essay**. Your essays should be about 1800-2100 words, or about 6 - 7 pages in typed form (with about 300 words per page), and no more than 10 pages, in typed form, using double-spacing with 11- or 12-point fonts. 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**. 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, 15 January 2003, 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 2003. 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. Footnotes and bibliographies are not required (but you may supply in text references).

QUESTIONS:

1. Explain how the institutions of feudalism, manorialism, and serfdom had arisen and evolved in Western Europe, from Carolingian times to the thirteenth century, in order to accommodate the changing economic, social, political, and military conditions of this medieval era; and also explain the economic and social interrelationships of these institutions. To what extent did these three institutions adapt to or resist the subsequent economic, social, political and military changes of the later Middle Ages (from c. 1290 to 1550)? Thus, to what extent did these institutions change or decline during this later medieval period?
2. Explain the economic and social forces involved in the evolution of the Common or Open Field system of communal farming in Western Europe, and why it was predominantly a northern European institution, and one that was evidently related to medieval manorialism and serfdom. Discuss the costs and the benefits of this system for the medieval village and the manorial economy. In particular, why did this socio-agrarian institution persist and prevail for so long in many European, but never emerge or fail to maintain itself in others?
3. How, when, where, and why did serfdom spread into eastern Europe – east of the Elbe – while or after serfdom was declining or disappearing in western Europe? What were the similarities and differences between western and eastern peasant serfdom? In particular, discuss the validity of the various economic and social models that historians have used in attempting to explain these differing phenomena involving serfdom, in eastern and western Europe.
4. Discuss and analyse the possible economic and social interrelationships between demographic and agrarian changes in the European economy, from the 13th to early 16th centuries, making comparisons and contrasts between and among at least two of the following regions during this period: southern-Mediterranean Europe, northwestern Europe, and eastern Europe. In your answer be specific about the agrarian changes in terms of field systems, arable (crop) and livestock production, agricultural technologies, and land tenures (including property rights).

5. Discuss both the causes, endogenous and exogenous, and the economic and social consequences of **demographic** changes in medieval Europe, from the later thirteenth to the early sixteenth century. Taking into account the nature of the forces producing demographic growth and decline, analyse their impact and consequences for one or economic sectors of the European economy during this period, specifying the nature of the consequences, positive or negative.
6. Discuss the economic impact of feudal and national warfare (or military strife), including strife between and among the western Christian, eastern Byzantine, and Muslim worlds, from the 13th to the late 15th centuries, with a focus on western Europe, and its international commercial relations. In your answer, discuss in particular the relationships to or consequences of such warfare for government fiscal (tax), monetary, commercial, and related socio-economic policies; and then the consequences of such government policies for economic change in western Europe.
7. To what extent did the European economy, or various regions within Europe, experience economic contraction, or economic 'crises', or even a 'Great Depression', during the 14th and 15th centuries? Discuss the major forces that produced economic contraction and/or dislocation, while carefully explaining the nature of the economic consequences. In the long run, by the early 16th century, which European regions, economic sectors, and/or social classes gained the most and which lost the most? Did Western Europe as a whole, or only certain regions, experience a rise in the level of real incomes and living standards? If so, how was that achieved?
8. Analyse the role of money, monetary instruments, and monetary forces in the evolution of the west European economy from the 13th century and in particular their role as partial causes of or consequences of the 'crises' of the late-medieval economy (c.1320 - c. 1470). In particular did western Europe experience a 'bullion famine' in this later medieval era; and, if so, was it a cause or consequence of the economic changes of this period? Your answer must clearly delineate the role of monetary forces in influencing or determining long-term changes in the price level, in conjunction with real forces; and must distinguish between changes in relative and absolute prices (price levels); and you must then clearly analyse the role of such price changes for the late-medieval economy.
9. Discuss and analyse the evolution of banking and financial instruments and institutions in the western European economy from the 13th to early 16th centuries, with a particular emphasis on (a) the role of doctrines, policies, and activities of Church and State (governments) in that evolution; and (b) on the role of Italian merchants in developing these financial instruments and institutions. What role did they play in European economic development by the early sixteenth century?
10. Discuss the importance of wool (specifying the types of wool) for the agrarian, industrial, and commercial-financial economies of western Europe, from the 13th to early 16th century, explaining why certain regions came to predominate in wool production, cloth manufacturing, and the textile trades.
11. During the High and Late Middle Ages, the Italian city-states came to predominate in Mediterranean and Atlantic commercial, while the Germans (Hanseatic League) predominated in the Baltic and North Sea trading zones. Explain how they had exercised and maintained that commercial hegemony; but then how, from the mid-fifteenth century, four previously 'peripheral' commercial regions came to challenge their predominance: namely, Holland, England, South Germany, and Portugal.
12. Discuss the role that technological innovations, including changes in economic organization, played in European economic development from the 13th to 16th centuries, in at least two of the leading economic sectors: agriculture, industry, commerce, and finance. Transportation may be included under either industry or trade.