

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
Faculty of Arts and Science

APRIL/MAY EXAMINATIONS 2006

ECO 301Y1 Y

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

**Aids Allowed: one letter-sized sheet, double-sided (21.5 cm by 27.5 cm),  
containing any data or information that the student wishes to supply.**

**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. You may answer questions related to your term essays. **Do not, however, give similar answers to the questions selected; and thus do not select questions with similar themes, since many of the questions have overlapping topics.** I will be grading each examination as an integral unit, and thus I will easily detect any repetitious material in your examination answers.

**Answer every question selected IN FULL, and answer all the questions as posed. Please number your questions properly. Write legibly, on one side of the page only; and double-space your answers.**

1. Discuss the relationships between demographic (population) growth and economic growth, and explain why neither was continuous and linear from the Middle ages to the eve of the modern Industrial Revolution. Was there a 'Malthusian' trap, so that the 'law of diminishing returns' from population growth brought an inevitable halt to economic growth, which resumed only after population had declined? In your answer distinguish between *endogenous* and *exogenous* forces in demographic and economic growth.
2. Compare and contrast the evolution and the decline of serfdom in England, from c.1280 to c. 1550, in England, with the history of serfdom in France and the Low Countries. In particular, explain why the decline of serfdom in late-medieval, early-modern England led to or facilitated the spread of large-scale enclosures there more so than in France and the Low Countries.
3. Did the European economy, and in particular its commercial sector and international trading networks undergo a 'Great Depression', during the later Middle Ages; and if so, did it commence before, during, or after the Black Death? How did the European economy, during the supposed B Phase era of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, differ from the preceding and succeeding A Phases: i.e., of the Commercial Revolution era and of the Price Revolution era? Which regions lost relative economic power during the supposed 'Great Depression' era, and which ones gained?
4. Analyse the role of urban institutions – in particular of town governments, craft guilds, and mercantile guilds – as positive or negative forces in the economic development of western Europe, from the 13th to 16th centuries. In your answer, explain why the role of merchant guilds differed from those of craft guilds; and also why the role of craft guilds varied by occupation. Optional question: discuss the role that women played in such guilds. You may focus your answer on just one or two countries.
5. What role did religion and the Church – both the Catholic Church and later Protestant churches – play in the evolution of the European economy from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries? In particular, how did religious theology and dogma influence the evolution of economic ideas and economic institutions in western Europe over these five centuries?

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6. What are the origins of modern European 'capitalism'? Discuss the historical literature on the contributions that **two** of the following debates made to the development of modern capitalism; and where relevant discuss the debates between Marxist and non-Marxist historians on these issues:
- (a) The 'Price Revolution': the Hamilton Thesis
  - (b) The 'Rise of the Gentry': the Tawney Thesis
  - (c) The Weber-Tawney Thesis on 'Protestantism and the Spirit of Capitalism'
  - (d) The 'General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century': the Hobsbawm Thesis
  - (e) the Nef Thesis on the 'Early Industrial Revolution' in Tudor-Stuart England.
7. Analyse the contributions that the agricultural sector – in terms of changing institutions and technology – made to English economic development from the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries, explaining those contributions in terms of the links between and among the agricultural, industrial and commercial sectors of the English economy. [If you also have selected question no. 2, ensure that you do not repeat anything in answering this question.]
8. Examine and compare the role of demographic and monetary factors in explaining long-term movements of the price level, in terms of inflations and deflations, from the late thirteenth to mid eighteenth centuries. In your answer, distinguish clearly between changes in the price level and changes in particular relative prices.
9. Analyse the role of the financial sector, in particular the role of innovations in monetary, credit, and banking instruments and institutions, in the economic development of Europe from the thirteenth to eighteenth centuries.
10. Analyse the role of industrial innovations and of the evolving industrial sector in the economic development of western Europe from the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries, in terms of at least two of the following industries: (a) textiles; (b) mining and metallurgy; (c) coal-burning industries; (d) shipbuilding. For each industry selected, you may focus on just one country or region.
11. How and why did the Italians – in particular the Venetians – gain mastery in Mediterranean trade during the later Middle Ages; and how and why did they lose such mastery by the later 17<sup>th</sup> century? In your answer, discuss how, why, and with what consequences the Italians responded to challenges to their commercial hegemony from: the Mamluks, Catalans, the Ottoman Turks, the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English? You may choose to focus on just some of these.
12. Why did the heyday of West European 'Mercantilism' occur during the period commonly known as the 'General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century', c. 1640 - c.1740 — even if it also had deep medieval roots? In your answer, while briefly explaining the nature of those medieval roots, discuss the ways in which some West European states used government economic policies to respond to perceived aspects of economic crises, in competition with other national states. In particular compare and contrast the significance of mercantilist policies in the creation of the Dutch and English overseas commercial-colonial empires. Which proved to be the more conducive to modern industrialization – because of or despite Mercantilist policies?