

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

Mid Year Test: Wednesday, 11 January 2012

Answer **ONE and only one** of the following **twelve** (12) questions, **but do NOT choose any question that is in any way related to your first term essay. If in doubt, choose another topic.** Note that the topic of your first term essay has been recorded, along with your grade. **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 10-12 pages (with about 330 words per page), using double-spacing with 11 or 12-point font. Please prepare your answer on a word-processor. 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.**

Your take-home exam is due on Wednesday, 18 January 2012 (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 **Thursday, 29 March 2012 (one week before the end of classes)**. There is **no** bonus mark for early submission of the third essay.

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

1. Compare and contrast the role of **exogenous and endogenous factors** in the later-medieval demographic crises and population decline (to the early sixteenth century). In particular, explore any possible relationships between Malthusian factors (of prior population growth) and mortalities from famines and disease.
2. Compare and contrast the ways in which economic historians have utilized **demographic** and/or **market** models to explain **two** of the following socio-economic phenomena in European agriculture:
(a) the decline of serfdom in late-medieval England;
(b) the decline of serfdom in late-medieval continental western Europe;
(c) the rise of serfdom in eastern Europe from the later Middle Ages.
What contradictions are apparent in these models – and how can they be reconciled?
3. Explain how, when, where, and why the medieval institutions of feudalism, manorialism, and serfdom rose, flourished, and then ultimately declined in western Europe, especially in the regions between the Loire and Rhine rivers. In your answer discuss the meanings of each of these three terms, the relationships among and the differences between these socio-economic institutions.
4. Compare and contrast the productivity of the major agricultural systems that prevailed in the northern and southern (Mediterranean) regions of Europe, from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. In which of these regions did **Common or Open Field** agriculture come to prevail– and why: in terms of both climatic-geographic factors and socio-political factors?
5. Did the later-medieval western European economy, from the early fourteenth to late fifteenth-centuries, experience a genuine **‘Great Depression’**: or at least, a prolonged, sustained economic decline? In your answer, consider the **two** following sets of economic issues:
a) What roles did demographic, monetary, agrarian, and socio-political factors (warfare, especially) play in either causing or in aggravating these economic crises – or overall economic decline?
b) Is the concept of a ‘Great Depression’ incompatible with evidence for rising living standards during this era? Discuss the current debate about changes in real incomes and living standards during the later 14th and 15th centuries: the so-called ‘Golden Age of the Labourer’.
6. Compare and contrast the role of **real (demographic) 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). To what extent were inflations and deflations either harmful or beneficial for the growth of the European economy during this era?

7. Analyse the role of religious doctrines – the usury doctrine in particular – in the evolution of western European banking & financial institutions and credit instruments, for both private mercantile finance and public (state) finance, from the 12th to the early 16th centuries. Were the doctrines and practices of the western Christian (Catholic) Church an impediment to the development of the market economy and to economic growth in general during the later-medieval era?
8. Analyse the role of urban guilds and other urban institutions – as positive or negative forces – in the economic development of western Europe, from the 13th to 16th centuries. In particular, consider some or all of the following issues:
 - a) how did merchant guilds differ from craft (industrial guilds)?
 - b) were such guilds inherently monopolistic in their policies and practices: and, if so, did they inhibit or restrict potentially beneficial innovations?
 - c) why were most of these guilds male-dominated: and what role, therefore, did women play in medieval urban crafts and guilds?
9. Compare the roles of coin and credit in the later-medieval economy. Did the evolution of western European banking and financial institutions, and their credit instruments, compensate for any shortages of coined moneys during the so-called ‘bullion’ famines of the later 14th and 15th centuries? How did the European ‘bullion famines’ finally come to an end, by the later 15th century?
10. Analyse the role of wool and woollen textiles in the economic development of one or more of the following countries during later Middle Ages (c.1280 - c.1520): England, France, the Low Countries, Italy, Spain. In your answer, demonstrate the backward and forward linkages of wool and woollen textiles amongst the industrial, agricultural, and commercial-financial sectors of the economy/economies selected.
11. (A) Explain why three particular regions in western Europe that had once been ‘peripheral economic backwaters’ came to achieve remarkable economic progress during the so-called ‘Great Depression’ era of the 14th and 15th centuries: Holland, South Germany, and Portugal. In doing so, compare and contrast their regional economic experiences during this era with the older, more established and wealthier regions of the late-medieval economy. **OR:**

(B) Compare and contrast the leadership role of the Italian towns and Baltic German towns in European international trade during the later Middle Ages (up. to ca. 1500).
12. Compare and contrast the economic significance of technological innovations in two or more the following later-medieval industries: mining and metallurgy; textile manufacturing; shipbuilding (including maritime navigation); any other medieval industry of your choice.