EUROPEAN INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY SINCE CA. 1450

Please answer ONE (1) question from Part I **and** ONE (1) question from Part II. You are allowed a total of four hours to complete this exam (two hours per question.) You are on your honor not to consult any materials, including notes or papers or anything stored in your computer. You are also on your honor not to discuss the exam or its content with any faculty or student until the exam period is over.

**PART I: c.1450-c.1750 (answer one question):**

1. How formative was Renaissance humanism to Protestantism?
2. What debts did early modern political theorists owe to Machiavelli?
3. What kinds of arguments were available to writers wishing to legitimate monarchical absolutism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?
4. What kinds of relationships between the self and the state were envisaged in early modern European thought?
5. How did studies of nature affect early modern politics and commerce?
6. Did early modern science lead to the disenchantment of the world?

**PART II: 1700 to the present (answer one question):**

7. How, in your view, did scientific discovery shape philosophical and social thought during the Enlightenment?
8. In *Stranded in the Present* (2004), Peter Fritzsche argues that the French Revolution gave rise to modern historical consciousness. Moreover, he adds that the feeling the past was bygone and lost gave rise to a widespread feeling of melancholy that shapes early nineteenth-century thought in Europe. This is a bold claim, especially when it is combined with his statement that this was “perhaps the most fundamental outcome of the French Revolution.” How would you respond, and what evidence could you produce in support or rejection of his central thesis?
9. In *From Dawn to Decadence*, Jacques Barzun argues that the nostalgic remembrance of the fifteen years that preceded the outbreak of the First World War – the so-called *belle époque* – was prompted by the high artistic achievements of that period and the outstanding minds that promoted social reform and forced a political turnabout that has shaped the present conception of the state throughout the West. What high artistic achievements and outstanding minds would you suppose that Barzun has in mind? Does the record of those prewar years in Europe justify an attitude of “nostalgic remembrance”?

10. The legacy of Nietzsche expressed itself in a variety of ways in twentieth-century European life. Characterize Nietzsche’s achievement, as you see it, and discuss the way it has been interpreted and used by at least five prominent European intellectuals.

11. Modernism is one of the most elusive concepts in modern European cultural history; yet in recent decades it has imposed itself, despite the reservations expressed by historians who doubt its utility. When and where, in your opinion, did modernist culture first arise and who best exemplified it? What was modernism’s relationship to romanticism? How would you differentiate between modernism and the avant-garde? When does modernism end and how would you characterize its relationship to postmodernism?

12. Empire, both its rise and fall, left its mark on nineteenth and twentieth-century European culture. Give five examples of intellectuals or artists who left behind lasting records of their encounter with empire and discuss their work in the context of their own experience.