EUROPEAN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC 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 (answer one question):

1. What were the most important features of the debate on “proto-industrialization” in early modern Western Europe? In your opinion did this debate shift the terms of the narrative concerning the transition to capitalism in a significant manner?

2. Is it useful to view states of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as pursuing “mercantilist” policies with regard to foreign trade? What if any are the distinctions between “mercantilism” and “bullionism”? Further, are there appreciable differences in the applicability of such a concept to states in southern and northern Europe?

3. Is the view often associated with Fernand Braudel, that the late sixteenth century witnessed a “structural turn” in which a European economy centered on the Mediterranean gave way to one centered on the Atlantic, a justified one? Can this be linked to debates regarding the “Price Revolution” of the sixteenth century?

4. Would you agree that Ottoman rule contributed in a major way to the economic trajectory of central and eastern Europe in the early modern period? Can the view that the Ottoman state created the conditions for the underdevelopment of the region through its fiscal and social policies be sustained?

5. How does one account for the differences between the demographic trajectories of England and France between 1600 and 1800? Can we adequately do so using any form of Malthusian framework?

6. Discuss the central ideas in Robert Brenner’s discussion of the agrarian transformations of early modern Europe. Also describe and evaluate the main critiques of his thesis.
PART II (answer one question):

7. Would you agree that the “gold standard” of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was essentially a “sterling standard” underwritten by British imperial power? How would you account for the eventual collapse of the gold standard?

8. What were the main social and economic factors behind the 1861 Emancipation of Serfs Reform by Czar Alexander II? Evaluate its real impact over the next half century on peasant mobility and the rise of peasant commercial agriculture.

9. Discuss the principal causes and structural consequences of the depression of the 1870s from the perspective of European economies.

10. What were the major differences between the eastern European socialist planning systems and that of the Soviet Union between 1950 and 1985?

11. How would you account for the variations in terms of the extent of trade unionism and working-class militancy between England, France and Germany between 1850 and 1930?

12. Do you agree that in the final analysis the “contribution of the periphery” to European industrialization was relatively negligible? How would you set about defining this contribution?