FRANCE 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.

Your answers should offer a clear thesis statement as well as a balance of historiographical review and specific discussion of events, personalities, and trends.

PART I (answer one question):

1. Is the French Renaissance a distinctive movement or simply an offshoot of its most complex Italian cousins? Write an essay in which you defend one or the other position.

2. How would you characterize the political regimes of eighteenth-century France (after 1715)? Are they a continuation of Louis XIV’s supposedly centralized absolutism or a major departure?

3. The Annales school focused on the long-term developments in demography, economics, social relations, and later mentalités in what we call early modern France. What are the major conclusions about early modern France that can be drawn from their work? Do they constitute a school or just a diverse set of historians working on similar problems?

4. Religion and politics were intimately linked in France from the beginning of the Reformation. Picking three examples, one each from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, write an essay in which you trace the rise of secularism or contest its very existence.

5. Is Louis XIV or his father Louis XIII more influential in building a strong French state?
PART II (answer one question):

6. Alexis de Tocqueville argued in Old Regime and the French Revolution that chief among the causes for the collapse of regimes for sixty years following the French Revolution was administrative centralization and the predominance of Paris. What did he mean by this? To what extent is it an accurate assessment, and what other explanations could you provide to explain the cycles of revolution that plagued much of the 19th century in France?

7. Olwen Hufton, Ralph Gibson and Suzanne Desan, among other historians, have argued that the French Revolution ushered in a long period during which the French Catholic Church became increasingly feminized? What does this mean, why is this so and what consequences did this have for post-Revolutionary political culture?

8. The Boulangist and Dreyfus Affairs were catalysts for the foundation of the “New Right” in France. What was the “New Right”? How can one explain its popularity in urban areas, and how did it evolve from the late nineteenth century into the interwar period? Discuss

9. France has long been considered “backward” in terms of its industrial development. To what extent was it “backward,” and if so why? Discuss.

10. In discussing the impact of the German occupation of France and the Vichy regime, Henry Rousso has identified what he calls the “Vichy Syndrome.” What is this syndrome? To what extent to you accept his view, and what was the postwar impact of this period on French politics and culture?