Please answer one question from Part I and one 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: Early Modern

1. Imagine that you are responsible for designing a graduate program that leads to a PhD in early modern British history. What would your goals for the program be? What subjects would you want students to study and why? Be as specific as possible even, if you like, by supplying a list of readings.

2. When, in your evaluation, did the English Reformation begin? When did it end? Defend your answers by offering specific evidence for your argument.

3. As Peter Clark has recently reminded us, “Venetian ambassadors to the Tudor Court hymned the praises of London as one of the principal cities of Europe, but ignored or dismissed almost all the remaining English towns.” Other early modern visitors were equally dismissive of English urban life. How fair a judgment is this, in your estimation? How important were towns in early modern England? In what ways? Did their roles change during that period?

4. If you were invited to give a talk on the most promising work in early modern English history, on what subject(s) would you focus your lecture? Describe it/them in detail. Who are the scholars in this/these fields and what contributions have their work made? Are there additional promising avenues of research in this/these field(s)? If so, what are they?

5. Much of the historiography of the Stuart period has been devoted to the missteps of Stuart monarchs: the failure of the Great Contract, the descent into Civil War, the failure of the Restoration Settlement. Did the Stuart monarchs do anything right? What, if any, were their achievements?

6. One historian has argued that “throughout the Middle Ages, England had generally been regarded as a realm of secondary importance among the nations of Europe, and Scotland, Ireland, and Wales were of even less prominence. Wealth, prestige, and sophistication had increased under the Tudors and Stuarts, and a sort of integration, if not a unified system of government, had been achieved as well. By the end of the Glorious
Revolution the British peoples were poised to assume their role as one of the great powers of the modern world.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?

PART II: Modern

1. Discuss the Plumb thesis, regarding the nature and causes (both direct and underlying) of the “rage of party” which prevailed ca. 1679-1722. Explain how and why this “rage” came to an end, and why it was successfully supplanted by the Walpolean system of “stability”. How accurate it is to stress radical discontinuity between the two periods?

2. Lewis Namier authored two classic works of English political History: the Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III and England in the Age of the American Revolution. Discuss his general thesis and the methodology he employed. How (and how convincingly) has his argument and general approach been criticized in more recent times by historians?

3. Discuss the importance of the Slave Trade to the British economy of the 18th c. and explain how and why it was so suddenly and successfully challenged in a comparatively short and interval of time.

4. Discuss the nature of the English criminal law in the 18th and 19th centuries. Discuss whether (and if so how) a movement toward humanitarian reform triumphed in a seamless linear progression.

5. Discuss the varied aspects by which British women achieved social, economic and political emancipation between 1850 and 1930.

6. Discuss the causes of the rise of the Labour party and the eclipse of Liberalism ca. 1880 to 1945. To what extent were these two developments symbiotically related?