UCLA Department of History
European MA/PhD Written Exam
March 23, 24, 25 2009

EUROPEAN HISTORY OF SCIENCE SINCE CA. 1450

Please answer any two questions. 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 essays should combine historiographical discussion with your own answers to the questions posed. Also, your two essays taken together should include significant discussion of both early modern and modern issues.

1 In the past 20 years a historiographical transformation has occurred in the way we understand the Scientific Revolution. Discuss these changes and some of the historical work that has contributed to them.

2 What role would you assign to the mechanical philosophy in the political ideas of Thomas Hobbes?

3 The Newtonian legacy impacted many areas of work and thought. Discuss at least two of them.

4 What role did French higher education play in the turn toward industrial development?

5 If we look at the two republics of northern Europe at the middle of the seventeenth century, we think of science in relation to English Commonwealth and art in relation to the Dutch republic. What factors would you include when trying to understand the effervescence we see in both places?

6 Discuss the social contours of scientific knowledge in these three European cities during the 18th century: London, Paris and Berlin.

7 In what ways (and to what extent) did Darwin’s work reshape science?

8 How have historians interpreted the significance of quantification for the historical development, including the economic and cultural significance, of the sciences?

9 How should we understand the historical relationship between the social and natural sciences?

10 What new themes and approaches in history of science have been developed as its coverage has extended beyond Western Europe to other parts of the world?
11 How useful is a basic division between early modern and modern as a basis for comprehending scientific change in Europe over the last five centuries?

12 How fundamental have the differences been in the practice and the cultural dynamic of science in liberal vs. authoritarian political regimes?