DUTCH HISTORY SINCE CA 1450

Answer any two questions. You have a total of four hours. You are on your honor not to consult any other materials including notes or papers stored on your computer. Please return your completed exam paper to the graduate office by 5:00 PM today. Good Luck.

1. The “gouden eeuw” has been called a myth essentially of nineteenth-century origin. Does the myth have anything to do with seventeenth-century realities in the Dutch Republic?

2. What role did the Republic play in the early decades of the international “Verlichting”?

3. By almost any measure found by contemporaries the eighteenth century marked a period of decline. Were they right?

4. 1747-48, 1787, 1795 – that is quite a few revolutions for a small country with many homogeneous qualities. Why was the second half of the eighteenth century so turbulent?

5. Beginning in 1798 the Dutch state has had a series of constitutions and changes to existing constitutions. Discuss at least two of them and relate their principles to the larger international context.

6. It is often said in the literature that Dutch imperialism – although no less ruthless than other forms – displayed certain differences from the pattern found in other European forms of imperial domination. Discuss this statement.

7. It has been claimed that “no aspect of Dutch freedom in the Golden Age struck contemporaries, especially foreigners, more than that enjoyed by women.” On what bases were these contemporary judgments made? How would you evaluate them today?

8. The Dutch East India and West India Companies had vastly different histories and fates. What factors principally account for the profound differences between these two institutional trajectories?

9. Some historians have argued that the significance of Grotius’s Mare Liberum (1609) has been vastly exaggerated. Do you agree? What were the contemporary circumstances that influenced the formulation and reception of this work?

10. The contemporary historian Lieuwe van Aitzema wrote in the 1650s of Amsterdam that “the regents were not merchants, that they did not take risks on the seas but derived their incomes from houses, lands and securities, and so allowed the sea to be lost.” Can one in fact identify such a clear shift from trade to land, and from entrepreneur to rentier in the Amsterdam elite?