UCLA, Department of History
European MA/PhD Written Exam
March 24, 25, 26, 2008

FRANCE CA. 1450

Please answer one question from Part I and one question from Part II. You are allowed a total of 4 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

1. What kinds of people joined the French reformation and why?

2. In mid sixteenth century it seemed that France would become Protestant. But by 1700, France was overwhelmingly Catholic. How did this occur and why?

3. Peasant rebellions were endemic in France from the late sixteenth to the late seventeenth century. Mysteriously they stopped only to resume rather spectacularly in 1789. Why?

4. How absolute was French absolutism? Did Louis XIV face opposition and how did he deal with it?

5. Habermas and his followers argue that in late eighteenth-century France an "oppositional public sphere" had emerged. Do you agree? Assuming you do, where was this "sphere" located? What institutions encouraged its growth?

PART II

6. Walter Benjamin once argued that Paris was the "capital of the nineteenth century." Assess and discuss this characterization. To what extent do you find it accurate and why?

7. Why was France plagued by political instability and regime change for almost a hundred years, beginning in 1789?

8. To what extent can the Vichy regime be seen as a "revenge against the Popular Front"? To what extent was it a home-grown phenomenon or a government imposed on the French by Nazi Germany?

9. What is Gaullism? What were the forces that shaped it and what impact has it had on post World War II French politics?

10. Given France's history of political radicalism, how do you explain the fact that French women did not receive the vote until after World War II?