MODERN ECONOMIC HISTORY OF EUROPE SINCE CA. 1450

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

1. Write an essay on the causes of the industrial revolution, which takes as its point of departure the competing views on the question.

2. "Peasant possession of the means of subsistence constitutes a barrier to economic development." Explain the rationale behind this assertion. Evaluate it in terms of the trajectories of the French and English economies--and, if you wish, any other additional west European economies, such as those of the Northern and Southern Netherlands (Flanders)--for the period between 1450 and 1750.

3. For a good part of the twentieth century, Malthusian-Ricardian theory provided the most widely accepted framework for understanding the European economy in the epoch before the industrial revolution. Specify the model and explain how it applied to grasp/explain the long-term economic evolution of medieval and early modern Europe, both in terms of income distribution and economic growth. To what extent, and in what ways, does the theory provide a good account of the historical trajectory it aims to comprehend? To what extent, and in what ways, if at all, does it fall short?

4. The rise of trade and towns, leading to what in the recent historiography is termed "Smithian growth," has long been viewed as the central driving force behind economic development in medieval and early modern Europe. Write an essay in which you lay out the argument and evaluate it in terms of its utility in understanding the economic trajectories of the different European regions during this long epoch—eastern Europe (East Prussia, Poland), and western Europe (say France), and England.

5. Write an essay on the demographic revolution, which takes as its point of departure the arguments of Wrigley and Schofield.

Part II

1. Analyze the Great Depression and its different impact on the Core and Peripheries of Europe.
2. Compare two types of 20th-Century "modernization dictatorships": the regimes of fascist-authoritarian economic dirigisme and the Soviet-type of central planning.


4. Analyze the unique prosperity of Western Europe in the post-World War II period and its main factors, as well the reasons for the ending of that prosperity in 1973.