THE NETHERLANDS/LOW COUNTRIES SINCE CA. 1450

Please answer any two questions. 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.

1. In 1987 Dutch historians were asked to reflect on the two hundredth anniversary of the 1787 revolution. Some of them questioned if it had even been a revolution, or just another example of the Republic’s chronic instability. By contrast no one has ever questioned the revolutionary character of the Dutch Revolt against Spain. Discuss those two very different revolutions and assess their historical significance.

2. Discuss how after the Revolt from Spain the Dutch Republic consolidated its overseas power.

3. The Sea Beggars live on in the popular imagination even to this day. Who were they and what role did they play in events after 1560?

4. The House of Orange has had its heroes and its villains. Discuss the historical role played by one of each, from any period up to the present.

5. Discuss the transformation of the Dutch constitution from the 1579 to pillarization.

6. Discuss the concept of the “industrious revolution” (Jan de Vries) and its applicability to the Netherlands in the early modern period.

7. Would you agree that the forms of visual representation espoused in the Dutch Golden Age were profoundly influenced by the mercantile culture of the time? In what ways would this connection have worked?

8. How clear do you believe that the real and perceived distinctions between ‘Dutch’ and ‘German’ identities were before and after the Thirty Years’ War? Would these
distinctions have been clearer when viewed from the eastern or the western perspectives in the Dutch-German continuum?

9. To what extent can one understand Spinoza to be product of a particular Dutch milieu, as opposed to a larger European one? Describe and analyze his networks and the context of his intellectual exchanges as well as his intellectual roots in relation to this question.

10. Analyze the changing role of printers and the book trade in the Netherlands between 1600 and 1750. How important was print in determining the nature of public exchanges in the early modern Netherlands?