RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION

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.

1. What is meant by the polyvalent term “humanism”? How does humanism evolve over the two centuries from Petrarch to Guillaume Budé?

2. Jacob Burckhardt in a famous phrase described the Italian Renaissance state as a “work of art.” What did he mean by this, and what part does the state play in his overall concept of the Renaissance?

3. Was there a Renaissance (define what you understand by the term) outside Italy? Or was the Renaissance a purely Italian phenomenon?

4. The Italian Wars of 1494-1559 are often regarded as a watershed in European history? Is this correct?

5. Discuss the impact of the Iberian exploration and colonization on Europe 1400-1600.

6. How united was the Western European church before the Reformation?

7. How distinctive was the Renaissance from the period that went before it? What events or developments—if any—marked a significant break from the Middle Ages?

8. How accurate is it to label developments in the Roman Catholic church in the sixteenth century (particularly the later part) as “the Counter-Reformation”? What steps did the Church take in the direction of reform? Were those steps simply a counteroffensive against Protestantism?

9. Joan Kelly Gadol’s now-classic 1977 essay “Did Women Have a Renaissance” posed a serious challenge to the dominant view of the period that owed a lot to the work of Burckhardt. Later research, especially by social historians, seemed to undermine that view further. Is the older view still worth talking and teaching about? How should the period be approached?

10. Define the Renaissance/Reformation era as a field of study. When did it begin? When did it end? Defend your chronological boundaries. What gives this field its internal coherence?
11. To what extent was the Reformation a theological dispute and to what extent were other factors involved in the fragmentation of the Western European church?