HISTORY OF WOMEN

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. Joan Kelly asked “did women have a Renaissance?” What is your opinion?

2. Did the institution of female monasticism enhance women’s autonomy and encourage their self-development or did it frustrate them and deny them power and authority: Were nuns better or worse off than their lay sisters in early modern Europe?

3. Joan Landes argued in Women in the Public Sphere that women enjoyed considerable power in the highly personalized world of the court. Do you agree? Did court women (queens, consorts, daughters, ladies-in-waiting) wield power?

4. Women gained the vote at different times in different places Women’s suffrage came early to Finland and late to France. How can we account for the geography and chronology of women’s suffrage?

5. The fall of the Berlin Wall had enormous consequences for Europeans. How did the end of state socialism and the transition to free-market democracies impact women? Did “the transition” work for or against them?

6. You have been asked to teach a course in European Women’s history (1348 to the present) at an undergraduate institution that has a 15-week semester. Your class will meet either two or three times a week and students must read at least five books during the semester. They will take a mid term and final exam. Prepare the syllabus, giving the titles for each lecture and a brief description of the material covered in each lecture. Also, assign the books and provide questions/study questions for both the mid term and final exam.

7. Pronatalist movements emerged in a number of European countries at different moments from the end of the nineteenth-century onwards. Why, and what impact did they have, if any, on women’s reproductive rights and on childbearing?

8. How was the conflict between the developing ideology of domesticity and, with industrialization, the increasing demand for female labor force participation played out in Europe from the mid nineteenth century onwards? How did the conflict shape feminist and antifeminist movements?
9. Victoria de Grazia has argued that the “perfect fascist woman was a remarkable new hybrid: she served her family’s every need, yet she was zealously responsive to the state’s interest.” How did “fascism rule women” in the interwar period, and how successful was it in doing so? Cite specific examples in your answer.

10. “The two World Wars of the twentieth century dramatically transformed the lives of European women.” Would you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?

11. Joan Scott has argued that the “work identities” of men and women were determined by different forces and that the process of industrialization helped to shape new conceptions of gender difference. How would you assess this claim, and would you agree? If so, why, if not, why not?