WOMEN’S HISTORY EXAM

Write an essay on one topic from Part I and one from Part II (2 hours per question). Be specific about historical episodes and evidence and include reflections on the relevant historiography of the topic. Take care to avoid overlap in your choice of examples and evidence for your two essays.

Part I. General European Women’s History: Answer ONE of the following:

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

2. 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?

3. Did women have a Renaissance?

4. If women’s history is successful it should change the chronological markers that historians use. Women’s historians should be able to replace the usual political turning points – 1348, 1789, 1914 and 1941 -- with different key dates. What would the important dates be for women’s history? Explain your choice and feel free to designate as many as you like.

5. Reproduction is a human activity rarely included in history mainly because it used to be considered unchanging, a biological “fact.” How has reproduction changed and have these changes produced or reflected changes in women’s status?

Part II. Women/Feminism and Science: Answer ONE of the following:

1. Women are notoriously underrepresented in science today. But has that always been the case? When did women play and important role in science and how were they able to do so? If you would like to pick individual women or particular periods to focus your answer that is fine

2. One of the products of Women’s Liberation has been the emergence of a feminist critique of science. What issues in science have been important to feminists? How as the feminist critique developed and changed since the 1970s?
3. Biology is NOT destiny but biological notions of sexual difference have certain shaped women’s lives. How have the biological “facts” of female sex changed over time? Did these “facts” tend to reflect or challenge prevailing social conditions?