

Written Exam, December 18, 2024. Literature of European History I.

Write two of the following essays. Be sure that your second essay doesn't repeat significant material from your first. You will want to demonstrate both breadth and depth of knowledge. Please identify the number of each question you are answering.

1. Periodization. Write on the problem of periodization in the practice of early modern European history. What is modern about the period? What is early modern? Discuss transitions from the Late Middle Ages into the period, the ways in which historians have sub-divided the period 1400-1800, and the ways in which eighteenth-century developments belong in the early modern era or announce something new. Refer to scholarly works that address those questions directly as well as works that illustrate for you how best to conceptualize the period.

2. Themes and Eras. It is convenient for historians to deploy such terms as Renaissance, Reformation, Scientific Revolution, General Crisis, and Enlightenment to demarcate discrete periods and to identify key themes in early modern European history. Are these terms useful? If so, how? If not, why not? Do they describe forms of unity or disunity (e.g. singular or plural Reformation or Enlightenment). Refer to scholarly works that elucidate the scholarship on three of those eras or themes.

3. Continuity and Change. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie wrote of "*l'histoire immobile*" (history that stands still) to talk about key elements of a very long early modern era. Judging by your knowledge of the historiography, to what extent is that characterization valid? What characteristics of early modern Europe tended to limit change? What characteristics would tend to mitigate against that idea? What did drive change? Provide examples from your reading in at least three areas chosen from among social history (including historical demography and gender history), cultural history (including the history of religion as well as the relationship between elite and popular culture), political history (including both state and empire), and intellectual history (including either the history of science or the history of mentalities).

4. Historiographical Turns and Scales of Analysis. Historians of early modern Europe have discussed various historiographical "turns." One involves a shift from social history to cultural history; others involve innovations in political and intellectual history. At the same time, historians have been exploring different scales of analysis, from microhistory to something bigger or broader. What do you see as the most compelling works elucidating these developments? Feel free to refer to such topics as print and reading, religious practices and identities, state-making, science and technology, labor and the economy, and family and community.