Questions for Written Exam 1 in European History, Fall 2017:

Part I. Write an essay on either topic A or topic B:

A.   Periodization and the "Early Modern." How have historians handled matters of periodization from the late Middle Ages through the eighteenth century? You should think of this as an occasion to discuss historians' use of the terms "medieval," "early modern," and "modern." Be sure to cover scholarship in at least three of the following areas: population, economy, politics, society, religion and culture.

B.   The State and Capitalism. Many historians describe the state and capitalism as the most important forces of change in the early modern period. How would you design a history of those forces since the late Middle Ages? And how would you balance change and continuity? Be sure to address matters of the form of the state, the relationship between state and society, including between state and traditional elites, and the development of capitalism. Write about the broad outlines of these topics, but also refer to particular works of scholarship.

Part II. Write an essay on either topic C or topic D:

C.   Ideas, Contexts, and Levels of Culture. How have historians approached the history of ideas and their contexts from the Renaissance through the Enlightenment? Explore how scholarly literature has conceived of the Renaissance, Reformation, Scientific Revolution, and Enlightenment. How useful are those terms? How have historians placed them in social or cultural context? And how have they treated different levels of culture? Refer to particular historians or studies.

D.   Gender and Society. How would you organize a history of gender and society in early modern Europe? Consider the historical literature on family and household, sex roles, religion and gender, and gender and class. Refer to scholarship that attempts to cover Europe generally, focuses on particular countries, and examines regions or localities. What approaches strike you as particularly fruitful? Provide particular examples.