

Questions for Written Exam II in European History, Spring 2018

Answer one question from Part I and one from Part II.

Be certain that you address the questions as they are posed. The discussion and analysis in each essay should be clearly expressed and coherently organized. Your essays should avoid the use of unsupported generalizations, and should include sufficient historical detail to build a persuasive argument.

Part. I

1. Historian Christopher Bayly argues that war was the single most revolutionary force unleashed in the modern world. To what extent is this true? How have wars – international, global, civil - shaped modern European history? Discuss at least 4 works that examine aspects of modern war's impact on European history. Also: what are the implications of Bayly's argument for our understanding of the other revolutions commonly understood as hallmarks of the modern era?

2. Modernity has become a vexed term in the historiography of modern Europe. Why is this so? What are some of the ways in which the term has been interrogated, complicated or rethought in recent scholarship? How have historians rethought some of the "breaks" conventionally understand to mark European history, and conversely, some of the continuities, and how have they sought to address some of the blind spots of that historiography in relation, for instance, to religion?

Part II.

3. The problem of exceptionalism – of normal and special paths – has been a central theme of the historiography of modern Europe. Discuss the role that special paths or claims to exceptionalism have played, whether in actually shaping the course of Modern European history or in shaping the way that scholars have written about that history. To what extent, if any, does attention to "special paths" remain a useful way of conceptualizing aspects of modern European history?

4. One of the major recent developments in historiography has been the decentering, provincialization or globalization of modern European history. Discuss this development. What strikes you as the most fruitful result of this shift towards global, transnational, or comparative analytic frameworks?