

Questions for Written Exam II in European History, Spring 2021

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 unsupported generalizations and should include sufficient historical detail to build a persuasive argument. You have eight hours to complete the exam. Please email your responses as an attachment to mweber@qc.cuny.edu.

Part. I

1. 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. Be sure also to address the implications of Bayly's argument for our understanding of the other revolutions commonly taken as hallmarks of the modern era.

2. Modernity has become a contested term in the historiography of modern Europe. What are some of the ways in which the term has been rethought or interrogated in recent scholarship? How, for instance, have historians reconsidered some of the breaks conventionally understood to mark modern European history, and conversely, some of the continuities? What effect has this reconsideration had on matters of periodization or on the attention paid, to say, the history of 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 shaping the course of modern European history itself or in shaping the way that scholars write about that history. To what extent, if any, does attention to “special paths” remain a useful way of conceptualizing aspects of the modern era both within European history and in relation to global history?

4. One of the key developments in recent historiography has been the globalization or “provincialization” 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? How has this development connected more traditional narratives to processes of both colonialism and decolonization as well as migration? Be sure to refer to at least four books and at least three geographical contexts.