

The Graduate Center
Ph.D. Program in History

Please choose two of the questions from those listed below, one from Section I and one from Section II. Answer with coherent and well-organized essays, using specific historiographical interpretations and historical examples to make your own argument. You may use informal citations for any text on the syllabus. Please indicate which question you are answering. You will have eight hours to complete the exam. Please remove your name from the exam and email it as an attachment to mweber@gc.cuny.edu.

Questions for First Year Examination in Modern European History, Spring 2023

May 18, 2023

Please answer one question from section I and one question from question II. When addressing the questions, make sure to focus on historiography, and to include a discussion of the books by the different historians whose work pertains to the theme under consideration. Your essay should include as many books discussed during the semester as possible, balancing throughout references to specific historical events and a sound analytical approach.

Section I

1. How and why does the study of gender enrich and transform the ways in which we think about modern European history? Make sure to justify your assessment with reference to at least 6 books from the literature assigned for the course.
2. How and why is geography a useful category of historical analysis to approach the study of modern Europe? More specifically, how does the focus on center and periphery enrich and transform the ways in which modern European history is written?

Section II

1. How do historians explain the origin, development, and appeal of fascism and communism in different European countries? Your essay should also include some discussion of how the existing historiography helps us better understand the similarities and differences between Nazism and Bolshevism.
2. Enzo Traverso recently published a book entitled “The Tyranny of the Ego,” in which he discusses the growing tendency among historians to exhibit their voice instead of concealing it when crafting the historical narrative. What are the different perspectives on the writing of history offered by the scholars we have discussed during the semester? In particular, make sure you reference to how some historians have gone about writing the history of the French Revolution, the Holocaust, and the Cold War.