Read through the questions carefully and decide how you wish to answer them. Take a deep breath. Relax. Good luck. Enjoy.

**Category 1: Politics, Society, Economy**

1. Traditionally, scholars drew a firm line, separating Russian autocracy out from the common stream of European monarchy. Does more recent scholarship confirm this opinion? Compare and contrast Russian monarchy under Aleksei Mikhailovich and Peter I with some royal contemporaries, “absolutist” monarchs of France, Spain, or anywhere else in Europe, including the Ottoman Empire. What do these monarchies have in common, institutionally, symbolically, and socially, according to more recent studies? What seem to be their enduring differences? Note: this question is not asking you to compare some generic “West” against a Russia, itself taken as a proxy for a generic “East.” Speak rather of specific points of comparison, whenever possible.

2. The sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries were a period of tremendous political extension for Europe, as European sovereigns and subjects laid claim to huge territories in Asia and the Americas. Yet the effect of this imperial expansion on Europe’s political institutions, economy, and social structure remains hotly debated. Some historians see the new colonies as still embryonic and peripheral in importance for Europe’s developing monarchies, while others see imperialism as the main driver of modernizing change. How do you understand the relationship between imperialism and Europe’s early modern political, social and economic development? What seem to you to be the areas of strongest imperial influence? Which the weakest? Be attentive to shifts over time and national differences as necessary, and feel free to discuss the Russian and/or Ottoman Empires, as well.

3. You are charged with the educational mission of teaching an upper-level undergraduate lecture course on the history of early modern Europe broadly conceived, from the early 17th century through the French Revolution. What does your course syllabus look like, and what will you say to students in your opening lecture? Be sure to include the story of ordinary and privileged people, ideas, economic production, and governments in your coverage.
Category 2: Culture, Ideas, Encounter

1. Ever since Robert Darnton famously turned scholarly attention to the “business of Enlightenment” in the late 1960s, historians have been exploring the commercial and social histories of early modern intellectual production. Numerous works have examined the organizational, practical, and material culture that underpinned the idea of a “Republic of Letters” (both in the 17th, and the 18th centuries), including but not limited to works on early modern publishing, and reading publics. What are some of the big lessons learned by this close attention to practice? What are some of its analytical and explanatory limitations?

2. Specialist scholars today often sharply critique the concept of the Enlightenment as old-fashioned, over-generalized, and ideologically invested, and yet books with the word in the title continue to appear in profusion. Survey the past and present historiography of the European Enlightenment and then reflect on what, in your estimation, does and does not remain valid about the Enlightenment as a concept and category in professional historical studies today.

3. Define the term “identity” and discuss its applicability to the early modern period. What types of identity existed; how were they created and transmitted; and how did they relate to each other? How did encounters with non-Europeans impact the production and experience of identity in early modern Europe? Be sure to give concrete empirical examples as well as thematic and historiographic analysis.