Modern European History

April 2011

Directions: Please choose one question from each of the following three categories and answer in essay form. Be sure that your essays have a clear line of argument and engage with both the relevant history and historiography. Discuss specific scholars and texts. The time available for the examination is five hours.

Part I:

A. Discuss the relationship politically and historiographically between the “ideas of 1789” and the “ideas of 1933”?

B. European history has been organized mainly in terms of national histories. In light of the move toward a united Europe in recent decades and the growing interest in transnationalism in contemporary scholarship, it might be time to think about other ways to reconceptualize European history. How would you go about this? Are there movements and processes that transcend national boundaries around which a new history could be written? Write a coherent essay exploring the problems and possibilities of such a project for either the nineteenth or the twentieth century.

Part II:

A. Germany and France have typically been viewed not simply as mortal enemies but as alternative political and historiographical entities. To what extent is this view illuminating and to what extent is it not helpful to understand both countries in either the nineteenth or the twentieth century?

B. Contemporary historians of modern Europe are increasingly focused on the post World War II period. In their analysis, two dates figure strongly: 1968 and 1989. Write an essay in which you discuss the importance of these pivotal moments for the modern era. How have historians come to interpret these events? Were they connected? Should one or both be seen as the product of the Cold War? How were the social movements that propelled the events of both 1968 and 1989 linked to economic, cultural, and political change? Be sure to explain how global developments were inextricable from these histories.

Part III:

A. You are developing the core readings undergraduate course intended to introduce incoming students to the major themes in Modern European History. Write a brief opening lecture for the course. In so doing, articulate the central aims of the course and the major historiographical arguments that will inform your teaching. What topics will you cover? What place does cultural, intellectual, or gender history hold in your approach, if any? Given the current interest in global history, what is the justification for studying the history of Modern Europe at this time?

B. Write a syllabus for an upper-division undergraduate course on the long nineteenth century in Modern European history. Identify at least six main readings and specify the themes that will structure your semester. Be sure to incorporate such issues as imperialism, industrialization, modernity and gender in your course. Describe the assignments and explain how they will function to forward student understanding of the topics under review.