Historical Tripos, Part I, Paper 16
Early Modern Europe, 1450-1760

1. Perceptions of Self and Society
2. Demographic, Household and Lifecycle Structures
3. Social Structures
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19. Ottoman Urban and Imperial Culture
20. The Enlightenment

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The following booklists suggest some approaches to key issues in Early Modern European History on which exam questions may be set. Supervisors will often propose their own emphases and alternative readings.

Three textbooks which are particularly useful are:

  A very good textbook to buy at the start of the course and keep reading alongside supervisions to develop a fuller picture of the period.
  This book is lively and broad in vision – another good textbook that you might consider buying.
  An up-to-date narrative that is readable and introduces you to the key issues of the period.

Additional works which will help you to get a sense of the period and may be read in preparation include:


Of particular use for revision, the following collections include thematic chapters, written by leading scholars in the field:


This paper aims to overcome distinctions between political, social, economic or cultural history and help you to understand early modern society from as many perspectives as possible. The reading should enable you to get a grasp of broad questions which we have outlined in the pathways and to illuminate their significance and argue with them through evidence from two or three more detailed case-studies. This will give you independence to get away from stale debates. We hope you will find this stimulating. If you find yourself in need of more information on particular countries or regions we suggest you consult any of the following:


Your supervisor will be able to direct you to textbooks and outlines; we especially recommend the Cambridge University Press Series *New Approaches to European History,*
which has a great range of themes for the early modern period, from gender to the nobility, and ritual to the Habsburgs; and are all reasonably priced so that you or your College Library might consider buying some. Please tell your lecturers or your supervisor any suggestions you want to make.

1. Perceptions of Self and Society

i. Primary Material and General Reading

Castiglione, B., *The Book of the Courtier*
Della Casa, G., *Galateo*, chs 1-3, 5, 7, 10-13, 20-24, 28-30

Groebner, V., *Who are you? Identification, Deception, and Surveillance in Early Modern Europe* (2007), chs 1, 3, 4
Wintle, M., *The Image of Europe* (2009), esp. chs 1, 2, 5

ii. Approaching Early Modern Lives


iii. Modes of Self-fashioning
This essay is designed to help you engage with the people you are going to write about. If you concentrate on sections i and ii, read a source and note which reflections seem strange or familiar, imagine the worlds early modern people inhabited, assess the importance of religion on their lives, or of kinship or any other aspect which comes out of the material. If you concentrate on sections i and iii, reflect on questions such as: How have historians described early modern views of the ‘self’? Does diary-keeping, for example, indicate that the period saw a birth of the ‘individual’? Or do we witness a process of increasingly elaborate ‘self-fashioning’?

Can a focus on identity change our understanding of the early modern period? (2019)

What was the role of print in shaping early modern selfhood? (2018)

Which were more influential in moulding selfhood: criminal courts, or catechisms and conduct books? (2017)

Account for the early modern interest in people who pretended to be what they were not. (2016)

Did different ‘emotional communities’ in early modern Europe shape different ideas of the self? (2015)

Does conduct literature tell us anything about early modern identity?

Was the self discovered in the early modern period?
2. Demographic, Household and Lifecycle Structures

i. Primary Material and General Reading


Brundin, A., D. Howard and M. Laven, *The Sacred Home in Renaissance Italy* (2018), intro. and ch. 2
Le Roy Ladurie, E., *The Peasants of Languedoc* (1979), chs 1, 2

ii. Plague

Calvi, G., *Histories of a Plague Year: The Social and the Imaginary in Baroque Florence* (1993), esp. chs 1, 4

iii. Life-Cycles

Muir, E., *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (1997), chs 1, 2
Wiesner, M., *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (2005), ch. 2
iv. Family and Household

Klapisch-Zuber, C., *Women, Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* (1985), esp. chs 2, 6, 7, 9, 11
O'Reilly, W., 'Movement of People in the Atlantic World, 1450-1850', in Nicholas Canny and Philip Morgan (eds.), *The Oxford History of the Atlantic World* (2011)
Sabean, D. W., *Property, Production, and Family in Neckarhausen, 1700-1870* (1990), chs 1, 3, 5, 6, 11, 12
Sabean, D. W. et al. (eds), *Kinship in Europe: approaches to long-term development (1300-1900)* (2007), esp. chs 1, 5, 8 and 9
Wunder, H., *He is the Sun, She is the Moon: Women in Early Modern Germany*, (1998), chs 3 and 4

If you focus on sections i, ii and iii, get a sense of key demographic patterns in the period, birth and death rates, how rich and poor, men and women were diversely affected by them, how these patterns shaped social structures and how social structures in turn shaped them. Which mentalities were engendered by relatively high infant death rates? How important was ‘youth’ as part of the male or female life-cycle? How was plague explained and what was its impact? If you concentrate on sections i and iv, discuss the importance of the nuclear family, wider kinship and ‘households’ for the social and economic networks early modern people formed. Get a sense of arguments about the changing nature of family ties during the period, and of how notions of social order came to rest on a vision of the ‘holy household’.

*Do demographic factors explain the extent of poverty in this period?* (2019)

*‘The household provides the key to understanding gender relations in the early modern period.’* Discuss (2019)

*What role did love play in shaping relations between the members of early modern European households?* (2018)

*‘Gender in the early modern period needs to be seen in relation to the life cycle.’* Discuss. (2017)
Did fathers rule in the early modern period? (2016)

'The household was the most important unit of early modern society.' Discuss. (2015)

'Experience of the life cycle remained essentially unchanged in Europe during the period 1450 to 1760.' Discuss.

'The conjugal household was the smallest political building block of early modern rule.' Discuss.
3. Social Structures

i. Primary Material and General Reading

For visual representations of different social groups, see:
Schama, S., *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (1987), chs 1, 5

Literary accounts:
*Lazarillo de Tormes* (first published 1554; 2003 edn): a humorous Spanish take on what makes a 'gentleman'
Molière, *Bourgeois Gentleman* (first performed 1670; several English editions): a comic play about social climbing in seventeenth-century France

Herzog, Tamar, *Defining Nations. Immigrants and Citizens in Early Modern Spain* (2003), esp. chs 2, 4, 6-8

ii. Elites

    chs 1, 5
Swann, Julian, *Provincial Power and Absolute Monarchy. The Estates General of Burgundy, 1661-1790* (2003), esp. chs 6-8

iii. Peasants, Artisans

Goubert, P., *The French Peasantry in the Seventeenth Century* (1986), chs 1, 3, 6, 9, 12
MacIntosh, T., *Urban Decline in Early Modern Germany* (1997), ch. 3
Scott, T., ed., *The Peasantries of Early Modern Europe, 1998*, Intro, chs 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 12

**iv. Poverty and the Poor**

Bercé, Yves Marie, *History of peasant revolts: the social origins of rebellion in early modern France* (1990), chs 1-3
Grell, O., Cunningham, A., eds, *Health Care and Poor Relief in Protestant Europe 1500-1700* (1997), chs 2, 3, 4, 6, 8
Jütte, R., *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe* (1994), chs 2, 3, 6, 7
Pullan, B., 'Support and redeem: charity and poor relief in Italian cities from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century', *Continuity & Change* 3 (1988)

Early modern European society was highly polarised: this essay will help you to answer questions on how social hierarchies were legitimised and sustained, but also undermined by social mobility. Changes and differences in among the same social group can be observed through comparing different nobilities and other elites within Europe (section ii). Section iii shows how the distinction between peasants and artisans could become increasingly blurred in these centuries. (See also Essay 9, section ii) It allows you to assess to what extent ‘peasants’ and ‘artisans’ had different mental outlooks and social practices. Section iv is about life in a society of need: what was poverty like and how did responses to and definitions of the ‘poor’ problem change?

**Do demographic factors explain the extent of poverty in this period?** (2019)

**Account for attitudes towards the ‘deserving poor’ in early modern Europe.** (2018)

**What were the growing differences between artisans and artists?** (2017)

(a) **How was artisanal life structured?** (2016)

(b) **What strategies of self-presentation did artisans employ?** (2016)

**How were poverty and wealth moralized during the early modern period?** (2015)

**To what extent was social mobility possible in this period?**
Did the status of nobles and/or peasants change in this period?

How did artisans perceive their place in the social fabric of early modern Europe?

Discuss the relationship between identity and social status in this period.

How closely entwined were material wealth and circumstances on the one hand, and social status on the other, in early modern Europe?
4. The Politics of Communities

i. Primary Material and General Reading

Englander, D., et al. (ed.), *Culture and Belief in Europe 1450-1600. An Anthology of Sources* (1990), section 2 ‘Civic Pride and Patronage: Venice and Antwerp’

Burke, Peter, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (2004), esp. ‘prologue’ and ch. 1
Casey, James, *Family and Community in Early Modern Spain* (2007), esp. chs 1, 7-9, 12
Muir, E. ‘The Idea of Community in Renaissance Italy’ in *Renaissance Quarterly* vol. 55, no. 1 (Spring, 2002), pp. 1-18
Ruff, J.R., *Violence in early modern Europe* (2001), chs 3-6

ii. Politics in the City

Amelang, J., *Honored Citizens of Barcelona: Patrician Culture and Class Relations* (1986), chs 2, 3, 8
Burke, P., ‘The Virgin of the Carmine’ in idem., *Historical Anthropology of Early-Modern Italy* (1987)
iii. Politics in the Country


MacHardy, K. J., *War, Religion and Court Patronage in Habsburg Austria* (2003), esp. chs 1, 2


To the vast majority of early modern people, ‘nationhood’ was an alien concept. Territories were fragmented, political customs varied on a local basis. This essay aims to locate political identity during this period, focusing on towns and villages (sections ii and iii). Investigate the traditions of political autonomy which existed within these communities and sub-communities, and consider how they responded to the challenge of expanding states.

*Was the Holy Roman Empire defeated by its political structure? (2019)*

‘Historians have under-estimated the co-operation and mutual dependence that existed between different religious and ethnic communities in this period.’ Discuss. (2018)

‘Far from being effective organs of state authority, courts of law were theatres in which early modern communities played out their conflicts.’ Discuss. (2018)

*When and in what circumstances were minorities tolerated in the early modern period? (2016)*

‘The community was more powerful than the state in imposing social discipline during this period.’ Discuss. (2015)

*To what extent did the strength of regional traditions contribute to the weakness of early modern monarchies? Answer with reference to one or more countries.*

*How was order maintained in rural communities?*
What forms of political engagement were open to ordinary people in the early modern period?

By what means other than violent revolt could early modern peasants attempt to achieve their political objectives?

By what means, and how successfully, could the mass of the early modern population air their grievances against their rulers?
5. Reformations

i. Primary Material and General Reading

Baylor, Michael ed., The Radical Reformation (1991), To the Assembly of the Common Peasantry
Englander, D., et al., ed., Culture and Belief in Europe 1450-1600 (1990), pt III, docs 3, 6, 7
Johnston, P., & Scribner, B., eds, The Reformation in Germany and Switzerland (1993) – for the 95 theses and the reports on the Wittenberg disturbances
Karant-Nunn, S., M. Wiesner-Hanks ed., Luther on Women: A Sourcebook (2003), 5, 6 (Marriage, Sexuality, Family)

Dixon, S.C. The Reformation in Germany (2002), 1-5
Roper, Lyndal, Martin Luther: Renegade and Prophet (2016), esp. intro. and chs 1, 4, 5, 8, 17
Rublack, Ulinka (ed.), The Oxford Handbook of Protestant Reformations (2017); some chs online – login via University of Cambridge

ii. Diversifying faith: Reformations as movement

Brady, Thomas A., German Histories in the Age of Reformations, 1400-1650 (2009), esp. chs 6-12.
Hsia ed., A Companion to the Reformation World (2004); ch. 3 on the radical reformation
Rublack, U., Reformation Europe (2017), 1, 2, 4
Scribner, R., Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany (1987), esp. chs 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 13, 15

iii. Discipline, piety, and the creation of confessions


This period is renowned as the age of Luther, Calvin, the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, events which had dramatic and far-reaching implications for European society. Section ii focuses on the initial impact of the reformation movements. Who were the authors of the seismic changes that swept through Europe? To what extent did ordinary people participate in the process of reform, embracing, resisting or negotiating the demands for religious uniformity? Section iii takes a longer-term look at the consequences of the Reformations. Are we right to associate the religious changes that took place with secular moves towards enforcing social discipline? How did new communities of belief take form?

(a) How radical was the German Reformation? (2019)
(b) To what extent did Calvinism encourage revolt or resistance in early modern Europe? (2019)

(a) To what extent is it possible to write a global history of the Protestant Reformations?
(b) ‘A religious fundamentalist, Jew-hater, political reactionary.’ Do we need to study Luther’s character to understand the Reformation? (2018)

The link between Calvinist predestination and economic success is a myth. Discuss. (2018)

What was the significance of singing to the Reformation? (2018)

(a) Should Luther and Calvin be characterised as ‘great haters’?
(b) Why did attitudes to the Eucharist split Protestantism and with what effect? (2017)

(a) Is the concept of charismatic leadership more useful in explaining Lutheranism than Calvinism?
(b) ‘Rationalisation was a key effect of Protestantism.’ Discuss. (2016)

(a) Why was music so controversial in the Reformations?
(b) Can cities any longer be regarded as the key to explaining the success of the Reformations? (2015)

To what extent did Lutheranism change early modern church, politics and society? (2014)
‘Calvinism was an exclusive faith and a faith of exclusion.’ Discuss. (2014)

Why did Luther’s reform movement gain such broad support in the Holy Roman Empire?

‘Calvin’s tight control of morals in Geneva was impossible to replicate elsewhere.’ Discuss.

Did state interest or theology play the greater part in the success of the German reformation?
6. Catholic Renewal

i. Primary Material and General Reading

Englander, D., et al., ed., *Culture and Belief in Europe 1450-1600* (1990), pt IV, docs 4, 5, 6
Ignatius Loyola, *Personal Writings* (1996), including his spiritual diary and *The Spiritual Exercises*
Decrees of the Council of Trent: https://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent.html

Bamji, A. et al. (eds) *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation* (2013)

ii. Catholic reform

A. Bamji et al. (eds) *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation* (2013), esp. chs 1, 2, 5, 6
Kamen, Henry, *The Spanish Inquisition* (1998), esp. chs 1, 6-9
Louthan, H., *Converting Bohemia. Force and Persuasion in the Catholic Reformation* (2009), intro. and esp. chs 5-9, conclusion
Michelson, M. *The Pulpit and the Press in Reformation Italy* (2013), intro and chs 3-4

iii. Catholic piety and devotional identities

Bamji, A. et al. (eds) *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation* (2013), esp. chs 3, 4, 9, 15, 18, 21
Fulton, E., *Catholic Belief and Survival in Late Sixteenth-Century Vienna* (2007), esp. ch. 6
Gentilcore, D., *From Bishop to Witch: The System of the Sacred in Early-Modern Terra d’Otranto* (1992), intro, chs 2, 4, 6
Pollmann, J., *Catholic identity and the revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635* (2011), esp. intro., chs 1 and 6
Richardson, C., T. Hamling, D. Gaimster (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Abingdon, 2016); chs 19 and 20
During the early modern period, the ‘universal catholic church’ was shattered by the Protestant Reformations. At the same time, Catholicism became one of Europe’s most significant exports, as missionary orders conveyed the old faith to the furthest reaches of the world. This reading list encourages you to explore how Catholic identities were disrupted and energized in a time of intense change. Section ii focuses on attempts by secular and religious authorities to reform and purify the church in head and members. Section iii investigates how Catholic communities embraced and challenged the age of reform. Finally, section iii invites you to analyse the effect of Catholic renewal as a global phenomenon.

Where did the Counter-Reformation make its greatest impact? (2019)

(a) Counter-Reformation Catholicism was the result of multiple redefinitions of the boundaries between orthodoxy and heterodoxy.’ Discuss.
(b) ‘The most significant consequences of Catholic renewal occurred outside Europe.’ Discuss. (2018)

(a) ‘No one person or group was in effective charge of Catholicism during the Counter-Reformation.’ Discuss.
(b) What was the role of translation in the creation of global Catholicism? (2017)

(a) ‘The renewal of Catholicism was rooted in the landscape.’ Discuss.
(b) ‘By the end of the seventeenth century, Catholicism was a truly global religion.’ Discuss. (2016)

(a) Was the Catholic Reformation more successful in urban or rural areas?
(b) ‘The triumph of global Catholicism rested on the creation of a distinctive Catholic aesthetic.’ Discuss. (2015)

(a) How far did early modern Catholicism’s global missionary endeavours shape its initiatives for reform and renewal in Europe?
(b) ‘The counter-reformation could not have succeeded without the support of political elites.’ Discuss. (2014)
‘Rome, not the regions, directed the Catholic Reformation.’ Discuss.

How did religious orders act as a ‘globalising’ force after the Council of Trent?

How important was locality in defining the experience of the Counter-Reformation?
7. Practices of Government

i. Primary Material and General Reading

Machiavelli, N., *The Prince* (many English editions available)
Ertman, T., *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (1997); chs 1, 5, 6, 7
Snyder, J. R., *Dissimulation and the culture of secrecy in early modern Europe* (2009), esp. chs 3, 4
Spellman, W., *European Political Thought, 1600–1700* (1998), chs 1, 2, 5
Te Brake, W., *Shaping History: Ordinary People in European Politics, 1500-1700* (1998), chs 1, 5

ii. Structures of Government

Elliott, J.H., ‘A Europe of Composite Monarchies’, *Past and Present* (1992; repr. as ch.1 in *Spain, Europe and the Wider World*)
Elliott, J.H., *Spain, Europe and the Wider World 1500-1800* (2009), chs 1, 5, 9
Greengrass, M., ed., *Conquest and coalescence: the shaping of the state in early modern Europe* (1991), chs 1-3, 8-10
Shlapentokh, D., *Societal breakdown and the rise of the early modern state in Europe* (2009), chs 1, 2, 5, 6
Wilson, P., *Absolutism in Central Europe* (2000), intro, chs 1, 3
iii. Practices of Government

Focus on France
Burke, P., The Fabrication of Louis XIV (1992), chs 1, 5, 9, 11
Crawford, Catherine, Perilous performances: gender and regency in early modern France (2004),
chs 3, 4, 6, 8, 9
Dee, Darryl, Expansion and Crisis in Louis XIV’s France (2009), 1, 2, 4, 6-8
Greengrass, M., Governing Passions: Peace and Reform in the French Kingdom, 1576-1585 (2007)
Holt, M., ed., Society and Institutions in Early Modern France (1991), ch. 6
Schneider, Z., The King’s Bench: Bailiwick Magistrates and Local Governance in Normandy, 1670-1740 (2008)
Soll, Jacob, The Information Master: Jean-Baptiste Colbert’s secret state intelligence system (2009), esp. ch.1, ‘Between public and secret spheres’ and ch. 6, ‘Managing the system’.

Comparative Perspectives
Anderson, M., Peter the Great (2nd ed., 1995)
Asch, R., & Birke, A., eds, Princes, Patronage and the Nobility. The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age c.1450-1650 (1991), intro
Duchhardt, H., et al., European Monarchy: Its Evolution and Practice from Roman Antiquity to Modern Times (1992); chs by Flier (Ivan the Terrible) and Bryant (Henri II) on royal ceremonial
Elliott, J.H., & Brockdiss, L.W.B., eds, The World of the Favourite (1999), intro, chs 9, 16, conclusion
Evans, R.J.W., The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1550-1700 (1979)
Jansson, Maija, Realities of representation: state building in early modern Europe and European America (2007), chs 7, 8, 9
Kamen, H., Philip of Spain, Yale U.P., (1997)
Kirshner, J., ed., The Origins of the State in Italy, 1300-1600 (1996), articles by Chittolini and Guarini
Parker, G., Impudent King. A new life of Philip II (2014)
Raef, M., The well-ordered police state: social and institutional change through law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600-1800 (1983), pts II, III
Richardson, G., Renaissance Monarchy (2002)
Roberts, M., The Swedish Imperial Experience 1560-1718 (1979)
Historians have often suggested that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed 'the emergence of the modern state'. In particular, France has been identified as a laboratory for state-formation. Section ii aims to provide you with a more subtle appreciation of the varieties and complexities of government across early modern Europe. Associated with the growth of the state and centralization is the 'rise of absolutism'. Section iii encourages you to explore different styles of monarchy and other forms of government, and to examine the strategies and policies of early modern rulers. Here you may decide to focus on the case of France but you should try to establish some comparisons with other regions of Europe. Was absolutism 'just a myth', or did the 'myth of absolutism' have an important part to play in the practice of government?

How did court rituals and festivals change in this period, and why? (2019)

‘Nobility was increasingly performed rather than inherited in this period.’ Discuss (2019)

Did dynasties define states in early modern Europe? (2018)

Why have historians considered France as the ideal-type early modern absolutist state? (2018)

How important were questions of language to state formation in this period? (2016)

How did early modern states attempt to impose their authority on rural areas? (2016)

(a) Which groups posed the greatest challenge to royal authority in early modern Europe? Answer with reference to one or more monarchies.

(b) How does the history of early modern courts reveal the tension between the ideals of kingship and the lives of rulers? (2017)

‘The nobility played the key role in the formation of the seventeenth-century state.’ Discuss. (2015)

In what ways did the court contribute to the power of the monarch? (2015)

‘Whatever turbulence might have arisen from religious fervour, burgeoning states always trumped the churches in early modern Europe.’ Discuss. (2014)

Has the concept of ‘absolute monarchy’ outlived its utility? (2014)

‘The Spanish Empire can only be understood along with its Italian and Netherlandish possessions.’ Discuss. (2014)

‘A powerful nobility was a precondition of, not a limitation on, a powerful monarchy.’ Discuss with reference to one or more monarchies. (2014)
8. Conflict and Revolt

i. Primary Material and General Reading

‘A Defence of Liberty against Tyrants’, in Hillerbrand, H., ed., The Protestant Reformation (1968), doc. 18

Bonney, R., Society and Government in France under Richelieu and Mazarin, 1626-61 (1988), sections 4 and 5
Bruun, M. and David Cowling (eds), Commonplace culture in western Europe in the early modern period: Reformation, Counter-Reformation and Revolt (2011)
Kaplan, Benjamin J., Divided by Faith. Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early-Modern Europe (2007), esp. chs 2-4, 9-12
Schwartz, Stuart, All can be saved: Religious tolerance and salvation in the Iberian Atlantic world (2008)

Terpstra, N., Religious refugees in the early modern world (2015), esp. chs 1, 3
Zagorin, P., Rebels and Rulers, 1500-1660, 2 vols (1982)
Zagorin, P., How the Idea of Religious Toleration came to the West (2003), esp. chs 3, 5, 8

ii. Revolts and Protests

The German Peasants’ War
Scribner, B., & Benecke, G., eds, The German Peasant War of 1525 (1975)

Revolts against Castile
Burke, P., ‘The Virgin of the Carmine and the revolt of Masaniello’ in his Historical Anthropology of Early-Modern Italy (1987)
Elliott, J.H., The Revolt of the Catalans (1963)
Espinosa, A. The Empire of the Cities: Emperor Charles V, the Comunero Revolt, and the Transformation of the Spanish System (Leiden: Brill, 2009), ch. 1.

Haliczer, S., The Comuneros of Castile: the forging of a revolution 1475-1521 (1981), chs 1, 6-8

French Revolts
Beik, W., Urban Protest in Seventeenth Century France (1997)
Kettering, S., 'Patronage and Politics during the Fronde', *French Historical Studies* (1985-86)

iii. Religious Conflict

*French Wars of Religion*
Davis, N., 'The Rites of Violence', *Past and Present* (1973), repr. in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (1975), ch. 6. See the special issue of *Past and Present* (2012) 214 (suppl 7) for discussion and responses
Gould, Kevin, *Catholic Activism in South-West France 1540-1570* (2006), esp. chs 1, 2, 10
Le Roy Ladurie, E., *Carnival in Romans* (1979)

*Dutch Revolt*
Duke, A., *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries* (1990), esp. chs 8, 11
What caused the conflicts and revolts which regularly punctuated early modern life? If you choose to focus on section ii, think about the interests and allegiances which united and divided social groups. Section iii concerns the violent aftermath of the Reformation and considers the ways in which religious rituals and ideas figured in early modern conflicts. Whichever examples you decide to concentrate on, try to get a more general sense of the social, religious, and political tensions which are revealed through violent conflicts. For example, can the recurrent rebellions that characterized some regions be seen as the consequence of state-building?

**Did most violence in this period relate to warfare?** (2019)

**How was the Peace of Westphalia achieved, and what was its significance?** (2019)

**How significant was the Saint Bartholomew’s Day massacre for the French Wars of Religion?** (2017)

**Which groups posed the greatest challenge to royal authority in early modern Europe?**
*Answer with reference to one or more monarchies.* (2017)

**By what strategies and practices did religious communities in early modern Europe strive to maintain their coherence and identity in exile?** (2016)

**Why did the French monarchy find it so difficult to put an end to the Wars of Religion?** (2016)

‘No matter how hard you look, you will never find genuine religious toleration during this period.’ Discuss. (2015)

‘By 1650, the notion of European Christendom had lost its meaning.’ Discuss. (2015)

**Does the concept of “wars of religion” have any analytical coherence in this period?** (2014)

‘Politics cloaked by religion.’ Are the French Wars of Religion misnamed?

**Why did Philip II not succeed in suppressing the Dutch Revolt?**
In what ways did inflation and demographic growth fuel social unrest among the European peasantry in the sixteenth century?

Do the revolts against Castile reveal the weakness of the Habsburg monarchy or the strength of regional political traditions?

Why did the Spanish monarchy face so many rebellions in the 1640s?

Class conflict is conspicuously absent as a factor in early modern revolts. Discuss.

How did early modern rebels justify resistance to authority?
9. War

i. Primary Material and General Reading

Benecke, G., ed., *Germany in the Thirty Years’ War* (1978), e.g. docs 4, 9, 39 and 59
Helfferich, Tryntje (ed.), *The Thirty Years War. A Documentary History* (2009)

Burckhardt, J., *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, (first published, 1860); section entitled ‘War as a Work of Art’
Carroll, Stuart, *Blood and Violence in early Modern France* (2006), esp. chs 8-10
Glete, J., *War and the State in Early Modern Europe: Spain, the Dutch Republic and Sweden as Fiscal-Military States, 1500-1660* (2002), chs 1-2, 6
Hale, J., *War and Society in Renaissance Europe 1450-1620* (1985)
Raab, Ted, *The Artist and the Warrior* (Yale, 2011),
Tallett, F., *War and Society in Early Modern Europe (1495-1715)* (1992)
Tatlock, L., *Enduring loss in early modern Germany* (2010), chs 1,

ii. Conduct of War

Duffy, C., *Siege Warfare vol. 2. The Fortress in the Age of Vauban and Frederick the Great, 1660-1789* (1985), chs 1-3, 7-8
Mallett, M., *Mercenaries and their Masters* (1974); chs 6-8
Mallett, M., ‘The soldier in Germanic graphic art of the Renaissance’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 17 (1986)
Pepper, S., and Adams, N., *Firearms & Fortifications: military architecture and siege warfare in sixteenth-century Siena* (1986), chs 1, 8

iii. Military Organisation

Asch, R., *The Thirty Years War. The Holy Roman Empire and Europe, 1618-48* (1997), ch. 6
iv. Navies

Bruijn, J., ‘States and their navies from the late sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth centuries’ in Contamine, P., ed., War and Competition between States (2000)
Harding, R., Seapower and Naval Warfare, 1650-1830 (1999)

v. Diplomacy and International Relations

Levin, M.J., Agents of Empire: Spanish Ambassadors in Sixteenth-Century Italy (2005)
Mattingly, G., Renaissance Diplomacy (1955), pts III, IV
Osborne, T., Dynasty and Diplomacy at the Court of Savoy. Political Culture and the Thirty Years’ War (2002)

vi. Thirty Years’ War

Asbach, O., and P. Schröder (eds), The Ashgate research companion to the Thirty Years’ War (2014), Intro. and Part I
Asch, R., The Thirty Years War (1997), intro., ch. 1, conclusion
Benecke, G., ed., Germany in the Thirty Years’ War (1978), e.g. docs 4, 9, 39 and 59
Evans, R.J.W., The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy 1550-1700 (1979), chs 1-3
Langer, H., The Thirty Years’ War (first published, 1978; reprinted, 1990); for visual sources
MacHardy, K., War, Religion and Court Patronage in Habsburg Austria (2002)
Medick, H., Experiencing the Thirty Years War. A Brief History with Documents (2013)
As states developed their administrative and military capabilities, the potential for large-scale war grew ever greater. If you concentrate on sections ii-iv, consider how these developments influenced the nature and experience of war. Do you find the concept of a ‘military revolution’ a useful one? Think about the ways in which military expansion affected relations between different states (section v). In investigating the broader social implications of war, you may choose to use the Thirty Years War as a case-study (section vi).

Did most violence in this period relate to warfare? (2019)

Did most violence in this period relate to warfare? (2019)

Is it possible to write the history of the Thirty Years War from below? (2018)

Did war inhibit or encourage exchange between early modern polities? (2017)

‘Early modern wars were won not on the battlefield but by the bureaucracy.’ Discuss. (2016)

‘War revealed the inadequacy of the state.’ (2015)

To what extent is the ‘Thirty Years War’ merely a historiographical concept? (2014)

In what ways was the relationship between Germany and east-central Europe changed by the Thirty Years’ War?

How did early modern rulers legitimate their foreign policy?

How decisive was the part played by technology in early modern warfare?
10. Economic Structures and Strategies

i. Primary Sources and General Reading


Mandeville, Bernard, *The Fable of the Bees; or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits* (1795)

Smith, Adam, *An Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations* (1776)

Braudel, F., *The perspective of the world* (1985), chs 2-4


O'Reilly, W., 'Movement of People in the Atlantic World, 1450-1850', in Nicholas Canny and Philip Morgan (eds.), *The Oxford History of the Atlantic World* (2011)


Vries, J. de, *The Economy of Europe in an Age of Crisis, 1600-1750* (1976), pp.1-29, 176-209, 236-54


ii. Changing Economies - Diversification, Expansion, Decline


Grantham, G., 'Contra Ricardo: on the macroeconomics of pre-industrial economies'

*European Review of Economic History* (1999)


Inalcik, H., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914* (1994), 44-54, 218-55, 545-636


Ogilvie, S., ed., *Germany: a new social and economic history, 1630-1800* (1996); chs 1-4, 9

iii. Cultures of Consumption


Burke, Peter, ‘Conspicuous consumption in 17th-century Italy’, in id., *The Historical Anthropology of early modern Italy* (Cambridge, 1987).


Burke, Peter, *Venice and Amsterdam* (1994), chs 4, 5, 7, 8

Davis, R., ‘Venetian Shipbuilders and the Fountain of Wine’, *Past & Present* 156 (1997), 55-86


Le Roy Ladurie, E., *The Peasants of Languedoc* (1979), chs 3, 4


de Vries, Jan, The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household 1650 to the Present (2008)

Welch, E., Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer cultures in Italy, 1400-1600 (Yale, 2005), esp. chs 1-3, 9, 10.

iv. Managing the Land and its Products

Abel, W., Agricultural Fluctuations in Europe from the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Centuries (1980), chs 3-6


van Bavel, B. and Thoen, E., Land productivity and Agro-systems (1999), chs 1, 3, 5, 16.

Christiansen, P., A Manorial World (1996), ch.3.

Grigg, D., Population Growth and Agrarian Change (1980); chs 2-5, 9, 12.

Hoppenbrouwers, P., & van Zanden, J.L., Peasants into Farmers? (2001), chs 1-2, 4-5, 12


This topic is about transitions in the economy of early modern Europe, often referred to as a 'transition to capitalism'. What do we know about changes in ordinary people's aspirations to acquire goods (de Vries, Brewer and Porter, Roche)? How did states seek to regulate the economy (Epstein, Israel, Robisheaux)? How did ordinary men and women shape the economy and the environment through their work, the development of expertise and their market strategies? Did some regions undergo a process of 'proto-industrialisation'? How can historians assess the rise and failure of national economies (Kagan, de Vries and van der Woude)? Did this period witness a global shift in the economy, from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic?

'Greater consumption re-shaped ecologies in the early modern period.' Discuss (2019)

Can Rome, Amsterdam and Lisbon around 1600 be compared in any meaningful way? (2019)

'The decades between 1620 and 1650 were a turning point in European economic history.' Discuss. (2018)

To what extent was the European economy a 'world economy' by the early eighteenth century? (2017)

How do we account for the relative success of different economies in this period? (2016)

Did religious belief inhibit or stimulate consumption in the early modern period? (2016)

When and where did a new consumer society arise in Europe? (2015)
What effect did the discovery of the Cape route around Africa have on the European economy? (2015)

How, and to what extent, did the European economy become ‘global’ in the seventeenth century? (2014)

How best can the impact of the Atlantic economy be measured in Europe in this period?

What impact did global trade have on European culture in this period?

Did early modern Europe experience a transition to capitalism?

Why did the Mediterranean experience decline from the end of the sixteenth century?
11. Nature, Culture and Science

i. Primary Material and General Reading

Boyle, R., *Free Enquiry into the Vulgarly Received Notion of Nature* (1996)
Paracelsus, *Selected Writings*, tr. N. Guterman (1951)

Moran, Bruce, *Patronage and institutions: science, technology and information at the European court, 1500-1750* (1991)
Siraisi, N., *Late Medieval and Early Renaissance medicine* (1990)

ii. Uses of nature

Daston, L and K. Park *Wonders and the order of nature, 1150-1750* (1998), ch. 5 on monsters.

Findlen, P., *Possessing nature: museums, collecting, and scientific culture in early modern Italy* (1994), chs, 1, 7 & 8 about how museums became an important part of investigating nature in this period.

Golinski, J. et al., eds *The sciences in enlightened Europe* (1999); intro. & Schaffer on enlightened automata (12665).


Grafton, A., *Commerce with the classics: ancient books and Renaissance readers*, (1997), ch. 5: Johannes Kepler, the new astronomer reads ancient texts.


Smith, P. H. and P. Findlen, eds, *Merchants and marvels: commerce, science and art in early modern Europe* (2002), ch. 3 (on sea charts and Spanish territorial claims); ch. 7 (on H. J. Fugger and his Wunderkammer); ch. 8 (practical alchemy); ch. 9 (commerce, art and science in cabinets of curiosities); ch. 13 (Tulip as nature and art)


**iii. Advance of science – advance of reason?**

Biagioli, M., *Galileo, courtier: the practice of science in the culture of absolutism* (1993), prologue, chs 2, 4 and 5


Nummedal, T., *Alchemy and Authority in the Holy Roman Empire* (2007), esp. chs 1, 4-6


The seventeenth-century has traditionally been seen as the age of Newton, Descartes and a ‘scientific revolution’. Section iii allows you to investigate what the term has implied and what it should imply, and to analyse, for example, the extent to which the advance of ‘science’ or even of ‘genius’ was conditioned by patronage networks. Another theme is how the image of science as superior, ‘rational’ and ‘true’ began to be constructed during the period, and whether this was set against a view of ‘nature’ as inferior. Section ii focuses on what positive and negative views of ‘nature’ were available to contemporaries.

What was distinctive about early modern investigations into nature and the universe? (2019)

(a) How can objects and images be used as sources for our understanding of early modern science?
(b) In what ways did new institutions contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the early modern period? (2018)

(a) In what ways did educated Europeans change their ideas about nature in the early modern period?
(b) How did artisans contribute to the ‘Scientific Revolution’? (2017)

(a) What did most to change views of nature in early modern Europe between 1450 and 1760?
(b) Is ‘early modern science’ a helpful term to describe developments in the study of nature in this period? (2016)


(a) ‘There was no such thing as the Scientific Revolution.’ Discuss.
(b) What can historians learn from considering the places in which early modern knowledge about nature was constructed and transmitted? (2014)

What made European states interested in the advancement of scientific knowledge in this period?

Assess the role of audience in the development of studies of nature in early modern Europe.

Did the study of nature become more or less ‘enchanted’ in early modern European society?

How useful are either natural or material objects in understanding early modern attitudes towards nature?

In what ways did ‘science’ become more relevant to society in early modern Europe?
12. Supernatural Powers

i. Primary Sources and General Reading


ii. Uses of the Supernatural

Flint, V., *The Rise of Magic in Medieval Europe* (1991); conclusion

iii. Witchcraft

Behringer, W., *Witchcraft Persecutions in Bavaria* (1997), ch. 1
This essay explores the presence of the supernatural in the early modern world, and tries to help you find answers to questions such as: Why did early modern people believe in witches? Why were women prosecuted as witches? Why was there no witch-craze? What were the uses of ‘magic’ or talking to the dead – and how did church and state attitudes towards the supernatural shift? Did Protestantism foster ‘magic’ rather than disenchancing the world (see also Essay 5)? Was the devil an equally important figure in Catholicism and Protestantism?

Were there any common factors which explain the persecution of witches? (2019)

Is it possible to identify a cause for the early modern witch-craze? (2018)

(a) Which fears fed the witch-craze?
(b) Why did demonologists so often write about men? (2017)

How integral were ideas about the sabbath to the witch craze? (2016)


(a) ‘Demonology and communities were equally important in the persecution of witches.’ Discuss.
(b) ‘Early modern witch trials reflected not the strength of the state, but its weakness.’ Discuss. (2014)

Consider the origins and nature of the witchcraft persecutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

What were the functions of magic in early modern society?

How integral was ‘magic’ to the belief system of early modern Europe?

In what circumstances were witchcraft fantasies plausible?
13. Sex and Gender

i. General Reading


ii. What is Woman? Contemporary Debates

Crawford, Katherine, *European Sexualities, 1400-1800* (2007), Introduction, ch.1
D’Aragona, T., *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love* (1547), 55-110
Agrippa, H. C., *Declaration on the Nobility and Pre-eminence of the Female Sex* (1997 ed.)

iii. Meanings of Manhood

Buttigieg, E., *Nobility, Faith and Masculinity* (2011), intro., ch. 4
Hayward, Maria, “’The sign of some degree?’”; The social, financial, and sartorial significance of male headwear at the courts of Henry VIII and Edward VI’, *Costume*, 36 (2002)
Wiesner, M.E., *Gender, Church and State in Early Modern Germany* (1997), chs 9, 10

iv. Authority, Confessional Change and Meanings of Gender

Cohen, E., 'Honor and Gender in Early Modern Rome', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 4 (1992), 597-626
In the early modern period women represented the ‘desirous’ sex. Their political rights were restricted, but even so they enjoyed considerable agency in many spheres of everyday life. Sections i and ii of this essay guide you through contemporary ideas about the status of womankind and opinions which Renaissance humanist men and women voiced in print. Sections iii and iv concentrate in changing constructions of gender roles in this period and on how they shaped the lives of men and women. Section iv in particular
focuses on how homosexuality was lived and regulated and what this tells us about early modern culture.

‘The household provides the key to understanding gender relations in the early modern period.’ Discuss (2019)


‘Gender in the early modern period needs to be seen in relation to the life cycle.’ Discuss. (2017)

Did fathers rule in the early modern period? (2016)

Was the church or the state more influential in defining gender roles? (2015)

(a) To what extent was female honour tied to sexuality?
(b) How did young men in cities shape experiences of gender in particular ways? (2014)

‘In an age of intense change, gender roles remained remarkably static.’ Discuss.

To what extent did early modern religion have different meanings for men and women?

How was sexual deviance defined in the early modern period?

Compare the impact of the Renaissance and Reformation on gender relations.

‘The structures of patriarchy were undermined more profoundly by men than by women.’ Do you agree with this reflection on gender during the early modern period?
14. Crime, Deviance and the Law

i. Primary Sources and General Reading


ii. Prosecution


iii. Practices

Farr, J., *Authority and Sexuality in Early Modern Burgundy (1550-1730)* (1995), chs 1, 4, 5


Wiltenburg, J., *Crime and Culture in Early Modern Germany* (2013), chs 1, 3, 6

iv. Punishment


The growth of ‘state’ activity and influence over people’s lives during the period necessitated a growth in bureaucracies (to tax and administer subjects) and, crucially, penal policies to implement obedience to moral norms. This essay allows you to assess who was defined as ‘criminal’ or ‘deviant’, why ‘crimes’ were committed, and developments in inquisition and prosecution process. Were executions a highly politicised ‘theatre of horror’? Did people experience the law as an instrument of state repression? (See also Essay 5 and the role of the Inquisition). Was the threat of punishment vital to a process of social disciplining? Why were women and men prosecuted for different types of crime and deviance?

‘Far from being effective organs of state authority, courts of law were theatres in which early modern communities played out their conflicts.’ Discuss. (2018)

Which were more influential in moulding selfhood: criminal courts, or catechisms and conduct books? (2017)

How did early modern states attempt to impose their authority on rural areas? (2016)

‘The community was more powerful than the state in imposing social discipline during this period.’ Discuss. (2015)

(a) Account for the rise of law and order in European states in the early modern period.
(b) ‘Crimes against property in early modern Europe were strategies for survival.’ Discuss. (2014)

How successful was the early modern state in controlling crime?

Did the early modern state principally deal with deviance and crime through a “theatre of horror”?
15. The Word, the Image

i. Primary Material and General Reading


Englander, D., et al., ed., *Culture and Belief in Europe 1450-1600. An Anthology of Sources* (1990), section 6


ii. Literacy and Print


Burke, P., ‘The Uses of Literacy in Early-Modern Italy’, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy* (1987)


Nalle, S, ‘Literacy and Culture in Early Modern Castille’, *Past and Present* 125 (1989)


iii. **Oral and Visual Culture**


Carroll, M., 'Peasant festivity and political identity in the 16th century', *Art History* 19 (1987)


Coupe, W., 'Political and Religious Cartoons of the Thirty Years War', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 25 (1962)


Pettegree, Andrew, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (2005), esp. ch. 3.


Scribner, R., *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the Reformation* (1981); chs 1, 7, 8


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The printing press—invented around 1450—made possible the mass distribution of written texts. But, in the context of a largely illiterate population, has the ‘printing revolution’ been exaggerated? (section ii). In this essay you should consider the extent to which the printed word dominated early modern communications and think about the interactions between oral, visual and literate culture (section iii).

*Do broadsheets and newspapers for the period before the Enlightenment prove the existence of a ‘public sphere’?* (2019)

*What was the role of print in shaping early modern selfhood?* (2018)
How useful are images as historical sources for studying early modern European societies? (2017)

In what ways did the printing press promote humanist pedagogical ideals? (2016)

Can a focus on material and visual culture enhance our understanding of change in early modern Europe? (2015)

How did printed texts interact with oral and visual culture in early modern Europe?

What was the impact of print on politics in the early modern period?

How best can the effects of the printing press be measured?
16. Encountering Non-Christian Worlds

i. Primary Material and General Reading

Two excellent anthologies of primary documents on this theme:
Englander, D. et al., *Culture and Belief in Europe, 1450-1600* (1990); section V.

Forster, E.S., (ed.), *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Imperial Ambassador at Constantinople*, 1554-1562 (1927).
(on the American Indians).

Pagden, A., *European Encounters with the New World* (1993), esp. chs 1, 4
Schwartz, S., *All can be saved: Religious tolerance and salvation in the Iberian Atlantic world* (2008)
ii. Encounters with Muslims and Jews

Sugar, P. and D. Treadgold, *South-Eastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354–1804* (1977)

iii. The Americas
Canny, Nicholas, and Philip Morgan (eds), The Oxford Handbook of the Atlantic World, 1450-1850 (2011), esp. chs 1, 6, 8, 18, 19.
Ganson, Barbara, The Guaraní under Spanish Rule (2003), esp. chs 1, 3, 4
MacLachan, C.M., Spain’s Empire in the New World (1988).
Magasich-Airola, Jorge and Jean-Marc de Beer, America Magica. When Renaissance Europe thought it had Conquered Paradise (2007), esp. chs 1, 4, 7
O'Reilly, W., 'Movement of People in the Atlantic World, 1450-1850', in N. Canny and P. Morgan (eds), The Oxford History of the Atlantic World (2011)
Velez, Karin, ‘Catholic Missions to the Americas’, ch. 8 in: A. Bamji et al. (eds) The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation (2013)

iv. Western Encounters with Africa and Asia

Alberts, T., Conflict and Conversion: Catholicism in Southeast Asia, 1500-1700 (2013), intro, chs 6-9
Biedermann, Z. et al., Global Gifts: The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia (2018); chs 3, 5, 8, 9
Cooper, M., ed., They Came to Japan: An Anthology of European Reports on Japan 1543-1640 (1965-81, primary sources of Westerners’ views of Japan)
Cooper, M., ed., The Southern Barbarians (1971); Japanese views of the West
Earle, T. and K. Lowe, Black Africans in Renaissance Europe (2005), esp. chs 1, 6, 7, 9, 12
The early modern period is traditionally seen as an age in which 'new worlds' were discovered, so the question is how this changed the outlook of Europeans, how they made sense of Non-Europeans and 'encountered', missionised, marvelled at and maltreated them. Europe itself was not just 'Christian' either, and you can explore how Jews and Muslims could be part of this society, or the limits of Christian tolerance towards them (section ii).

Can the impact of New World discoveries be overstated? (2019)

(a) ‘In their efforts to counter the ‘clash of civilizations’ model of Christian-Muslim relations, historians have overemphasized harmony and fluidity.’ Discuss (2019)
(b) ‘Early modern Europeans were surprisingly accepting of religious and ethnic difference.’ Discuss (2019)

What role did the world beyond Europe play in shaping notions of European civilization during this period? (2018)

How, and to what extent, was there a ‘darker side’ to early modern European encounters in the Atlantic world? (2017)

Is friendship a helpful category for understanding early modern Jewish-Christian relations? (2017)

To what extent was Europe a meaningful and well-defined unit in the early modern period? (2016)

Did travel have a transformative effect on the mindsets of early modern Europeans? (2016)


Why did Europe turn to the Atlantic in this period? (2014)

‘Avarice, not interest, drove Europeans abroad in the early modern period.’ Discuss. (2014)

How, and to what extent, did travel alter and create early modern identities?

In what ways did European exploration and colonisation affect European concepts of barbarism and civilization?

Did encounters with new worlds foster tolerance among early modern Europeans?
Did educated Europeans revise their perception of the world as a consequence of exploration and discovery between 1450-1760?
17. The Renaissance

i. Primary Material and General Reading


Englander, D., et al., eds, *Culture and Belief in Europe 1450-1600* (1990), pt I, sections 8-12 (Erasmus, Machiavelli, Castiglione, Rabelais)

More, T., *Utopia* (many editions)


Goody, J., *Renaissances: The one or the many?* (2010), intro and ch. 1


ii. Intellectual Culture


Meserve, Margaret, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (2008)


iii. Visual Culture / Material Culture


The concept of the ‘Renaissance’ is a nineteenth-century invention. It has been associated with the celebration of the individual, the prestige of education, learning and the arts, and the ‘rebirth’ of classical antiquity. But did how did people at the time understand, experience and participate in the cultural changes that were taking place? Working through section ii, explore the problems that preoccupied Renaissance men and women, and think about how you would define and delimit the Renaissance. Some of the same problems—for example, the relationship of classical to Christian culture—recur in Renaissance art. Section iii encourages you to think not just about artists but also about consumers of art and other precious objects. How did Renaissance patrons determine the value of their purchases? Did this period witness the first consumer revolution?

‘When’ was the early modern? (2019)

Is ‘the Renaissance’ still a valuable concept? (2019)


Were biblical and classical texts approached differently by Humanist scholars? (2018)

(a) Does thinking about centres and peripheries help us understand the spread of Renaissance culture across Europe?
(b) What was the role of the printing press in the development of humanism? (2017)

How has the study of objects transformed our understanding of the Renaissance? (2016)

Did humanism undermine the old certainties on which European knowledge was founded? (2016)
To what extent did the Renaissance foster cultural exchange? (2015)

What effect did Humanism have on attitudes towards the Bible? (2015)

To what extent did Renaissance humanism reshape European culture in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries? (2014)

What can material culture tell us about the ideas and ideals of the Renaissance?

In what ways did the Renaissance in either Italy or Europe revive the classical world?
18. The Dutch Golden Age

i) Primary Material and General Reading

M.Prak, The Dutch republic in the seventeenth century (2005).
H.Rowen, The Low Countries in early modern times (1972), Section IX.

NB: The Fitzwilliam has an excellent collection of early modern Dutch paintings.

ii) Golden Age or decline?

Israel, J., Dutch primacy in world trade 1585-1740 (1989)
van Zanden, J.L. The rise and decline of Holland’s economy (1993)

iii) Dutch society


iv) Dutch art as a historical source

Hochstrasser, J. Berger, Still Life and Trade in the Dutch Golden Age (2007)


The Dutch Republic was celebrated by early modern contemporaries in Europe as a model of modern republicanism, technological innovation, and economic prosperity, during what has become known as the ‘Dutch Golden Age’. The strength of this contemporary characterisation has continued in modern historiography until, more recently, historical research has shown that ‘All that glitters is not gold’ and that the social, economic and political foundations of the Dutch republic were much weaker than suggested by this contemporary rhetoric (Section ii). Historians have been especially interested in the particularity of the republic and Dutch society in comparison to the rest of Europe, and students should attempt to consider and compare these differences over the term (Section iii). The remarkable output of paintings in the period and the extent of the ownership of art in Dutch society in this period certainly mark out the Dutch republic, and early modern historians have studied the paintings as historical evidence which, in turn, has allowed them to reflect more generally on the meaning and function of art in early modern European society (Section iv).

How important was the Dutch Empire to the Dutch Golden Age? (2019)

Do economic or religious histories shed more light on the art of the Low Countries? (2018)

To what extent did people’s experience of the Dutch Golden Age depend on their religious identity? (2016)

How different culturally and socially were the early modern northern and southern Netherlands? (2015)

Account for the popularity of the art of the Low Countries in either the sixteenth or the seventeenth century. (2014)

To what extent do Dutch paintings of the ‘Golden Age’ depict the social realities of the early modern period?

What conditions precipitated the Dutch Golden Age?

What can the art of the seventeenth-century Dutch provinces tell us about their economic history?
19. Ottoman Urban and Imperial Culture

i. Primary Material and General Reading

Michael Kritovoulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror* (trans. Riggs) (1460s)
Evliya Čelebi, *Seyahatname* (trans. Dankoff & Kim in *An Ottoman Traveller*) (1630s-1660s)

Faroqhi, S., *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around it* (2004). [Recommended as a starting-point]
Imber, C., *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650* (2002).
Quataert, D., *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922* (2005) [Recommended as a starting-point]

ii. Ottomans and Europeans

Casale, G., *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (2010), intro., ch. 1
Goffmann, D., *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (2002), intro., chs 5-6
iii. Religion and diversity

Baer, M., *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (2008), chs 3-5
Barkey, K., *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (2008), chs 2-3
Boyar, E., & Fleet, K., *A Social History of Istanbul* (2010), ch 4
Kafesçioglu, C., *Constantinople/Istanbul: Cultural Encounter, Imperial Vision, and the Construction of the Ottoman Capital* (2009), intro., ch. 2
Krstic, T., *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (2011), esp. intro., ch. 4
el-Rouayheb, K., *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World 1500-1800* (2005), intro., ch. 2
Papademetriou, T., *Render unto the Sultan: Power, Authority and the Greek Orthodox Church in the Early Ottoman Centuries* (2015).

This topic encourages you to look beyond the conventional limits of European history in order to engage with a society that was deeply connected to its Christian neighbours through conflict – of course – but also through trade, diplomacy and culture. Section ii focuses on Ottoman interactions with Europe. The memoir of Konstatin Mihailović, a Serb who served in the Ottoman army, offer one intriguing window into this relationship. Section iii treats the role of religion in Ottoman society, considering the experience of not just the Muslim community, but the sizeable Christian population as well. Here, you might start your exploration with Michael Kritovoulos's *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, which tells the story of the capture of Constantinople from the Greek perspective.

In their efforts to counter the ‘clash of civilizations’ model of Christian-Muslim relations, historians have over emphasized harmony and fluidity.’ Discuss (2019)

How useful is the concept of ‘confessionalization’ when applied to the Ottoman empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? (2018)

‘The Ottoman Empire was part of the diplomatic web of early modern Europe.’ Discuss. (2017)

‘Ottoman society was characterized by discipline, not pleasure.’ Discuss. (2016)

‘Early modern Europeans interacted with Ottomans primarily through warfare.’ Discuss. (2015)

Why did the Ottoman Empire reach the limits of its European expansion by the late seventeenth century? (2014)
20. Enlightenment

i. General and primary sources


Siskin, C. and Warner, W., eds, *This is Enlightenment* (2010).
Zwierlein, Cornel (ed.), *The Dark Side of Knowledge. Histories of Ignorance, 1400 to 1800* (2016)

ii. The Republic of Letters


iii. Radicalism


iv. The public sphere


v. Mechanical philosophies

vi. Order and knowledge


Darnton, R., 'Philosophers Trim the Tree of Knowledge', in *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1985)


Many studies of the enlightenment have focused on the importance of key texts written and published in French and their influence across Europe (section ii). While such texts develop key concepts which help define the main contours of the cosmopolitan enlightenment, more recent works have attempted to understand the variety of particular enlightened movements outside of France. Section iv addresses key questions such as 'Was Paris the centre of the enlightenment?' and 'Was the enlightenment a unified movement?' Section v links with earlier topics on the Reformation and the Scientific Revolution by continuing to explore the role of religious change and scientific developments in the intellectual history of early modern Europe. Section vi on 'Printing and the public sphere' looks at the mechanisms for the spread of enlightened culture across geographical and social boundaries as well as the development of centres of intellectual debate outside of royal courts. More generally, students can compare the variety and breadth of cultural exchange among intellectual communities across Europe from the Renaissance to the enlightenment.

Do broadsheets and newspapers for the period before the Enlightenment prove the existence of a 'public sphere'? (2019)


(a) Compare the relative importance of print culture and the sciences in making Europeans more enlightened around 1700.

(b) How important was radicalism to Enlightenment? (2017)
(a) What transformations of learned culture have led historians to argue for an Enlightenment before 1750?
(b) 'The mechanical philosophy was central to the Enlightenment.' Do you agree? (2016)

(a) How was the Enlightenment linked to the Republic of Letters?
(b) Discuss the role of the mechanical philosophy in the Enlightenment. (2015)

How cosmopolitan was the Enlightenment?

Was the Enlightenment in Europe characterised by its national contexts?

Were there limits to the spread of enlightenment culture in the eighteenth century?

Did a 'public sphere' emerge in eighteenth-century Europe?