

EC120 The World Economy in Historical Perspective

Proposed change to the final examination rubric

At present the rubric for the 3-hour final examination in EC120 (a 30-credit module) requires students to answer 4 questions chosen from two sections (A and B), with at least one chosen from each section. The paper comprises 10 questions in total, 5 in each section.

The proposed change is that from 2012, the examination should comprise three sections, A, B, and C. Students will be required to answer the one question in section A, together with three chosen from sections B and C, at least one being chosen from each of the two sections. Sample, 'mock' question papers are attached.

The one question in section A comprises a list of 7 items, each of which identifies a topic with which every student in EC120 should become acquainted in the module. They are central topics, either of immediate historical significance or economic concepts with historical applications. Students will be asked to demonstrate *briefly* their understanding of 5/7 of the topics. The maximum mark for question 1 will be 10%.

The 8 questions in sections B and C (four in each section) are broader, 'essay' questions of the sort currently asked in EC120 examinations. Each answer will contribute a maximum of 30% to the examination mark.

EC120 is offered at two levels, first and second year: EC120-4-FY and EC120-5-FY. The final examinations differ in that a subset of the questions on the second year paper require more explicit 'economic' reasoning (these appear in section B of the existing examination, section C of the revised format). It is proposed that the only difference between the two examinations will remain in the final section (i.e., section C) questions.

Justification for the proposal:

1. In his comments on the 2011 examination, the external examiner argued for questions "requiring the candidate to marshal evidence in favour of a particular point of view, or against some alternative point of view". The current EC120 teachers fully support this view. While they believe that the questions already encourage – if they do not require – students to adopt this approach, it is overly optimistic to expect students to be able to do this with the time constraint of answering four questions in three hours. (Note that in two hour examinations, candidates typically answer just two questions, one per hour.)

If the proposed reduction to three in the number of essay answers is adopted, students should have more time to deliver answers considered appropriate by the examiners.

2. The teachers are mindful that students should be encouraged to cover a broad range of topics in the module, not to engage unduly in tactical 'question spotting' when preparing for the final examination.

To this end, section A (question 1), should provide an incentive for students to gain an appreciation of central topics in the subject. Although the mark is modest (just 10%) it may well make the difference of a 'class' band in the overall mark, e.g., between an overall 2.2 and a 2.1 mark.

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FIRST YEAR EXAMINATIONS 2012 – *MOCK*

THE WORLD ECONOMY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Time allowed: 3 hours.

Candidates must answer FOUR questions:

Answer the ONE question in section A (for a maximum 10 marks)

Answer ONE question from section B (for a maximum 30 marks)

Answer ONE question from section C (for a maximum 30 marks)

Answer ONE question from *either* section B *or* section C (for a maximum 30 marks)

This paper consists of NINE questions in three sections:

Section A contains ONE question

Section B contains FOUR questions

Section C contains FOUR questions

Candidates are allowed to bring into the examination room:

calculators (hand held, containing no textual information).

Please do not leave your seat unless you are given permission by an invigilator.

Do not communicate in any way with any other candidate in the examination room.

Do not open the question paper until told to do so.

All answers must be written in the answer book(s) provided.

All rough work must be written in the answer book(s) provided. A line should be drawn through any rough work to indicate to the examiner that it is not part of the work to be marked.

At the end of the examination, remain seated until your answer book(s) have been collected and you have been told you may leave.

Section A *Answer question 1.*

1. [10 marks] Briefly explain FIVE of the following, with reference to their usage in economic history:
 - (a) The Black Death
 - (b) Real wage rate
 - (c) Currency convertibility
 - (d) Factory system
 - (e) Relative factor prices
 - (f) Hyperinflation in the 1920s
 - (g) Oil price shocks

Section B *Answer at least one question from section B.*

2. [30 marks] Identify the ways in which demographic forces both influenced, and were influenced by, economic conditions in pre-industrial societies. Illustrate your answer with reference to Europe in the three centuries before 1800.
3. [30 marks] Assess the extent to which China enjoyed a technological lead over Europe before the 16th century. Why does China appear to have lost its lead by the late 18th century?
4. [30 marks] Outline the main characteristics of mercantilism as it evolved in the 17th and 18th centuries. Assess whether, on balance, mercantilist policies adopted during this period fostered or hindered economic progress.
5. [30 marks] “The industrious revolution was a process of household-based resource allocation that increased both the supply of marketed commodities and labour, and the demand for market-supplied goods.” (de Vries)
Briefly describe these aspects of the ‘industrious revolution’ and hence assess its significance as a precursor of the Industrial Revolution.

Section C *Answer at least one question from section C.*

6. [30 marks] Would you agree that flawed government economic policies were responsible for the onset of the Great Depression in 1929? Explain, and illustrate your answer with reference to the USA and **one** European country.
7. [30 marks] How did the Bretton-Woods arrangements for international monetary payments adopted in 1944 differ from the classical gold standard as it operated before 1914? Discuss the extent to which these differences can account for the performance of the Bretton-Woods system in the two decades before its disintegration in the early 1970s.

8. [30 marks] What were the main foundations of the 'golden age' of economic growth in western industrialised countries from c.1950 to c.1973? To what extent was a weakening of these foundations responsible for the economic performance of those countries in the decade after 1973?

9. [30 marks] In what ways, and to what extent, did globalisation of the international economy contribute to prosperity in the last two decades 20th century? Would you agree that globalisation also fostered international stability in the early 21st century? Explain.

End of Paper

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SECOND YEAR EXAMINATIONS 2012 – *MOCK*

THE WORLD ECONOMY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Time allowed: 3 hours.

Candidates must answer FOUR questions:

Answer the ONE question in section A (for a maximum 10 marks)

Answer ONE question from section B (for a maximum 30 marks)

Answer ONE question from section C (for a maximum 30 marks)

Answer ONE question from *either* section B *or* section C (for a maximum 30 marks)

This paper consists of NINE questions in three sections:

Section A contains ONE question

Section B contains FOUR questions

Section C contains FOUR questions

Candidates are allowed to bring into the examination room:

calculators (hand held, containing no textual information).

Please do not leave your seat unless you are given permission by an invigilator.

Do not communicate in any way with any other candidate in the examination room.

Do not open the question paper until told to do so.

All answers must be written in the answer book(s) provided.

All rough work must be written in the answer book(s) provided. A line should be drawn through any rough work to indicate to the examiner that it is not part of the work to be marked.

At the end of the examination, remain seated until your answer book(s) have been collected and you have been told you may leave.

Section A *Answer question 1.*

1. [10 marks] Briefly explain FIVE of the following, with reference to their usage in economic history:
 - (a) The Black Death
 - (b) Real wage rate
 - (c) Currency convertibility
 - (d) Factory system
 - (e) Relative factor prices
 - (f) Hyperinflation in the 1920s
 - (g) Oil price shocks

Section B *Answer at least one question from section B.*

2. [30 marks] Assess the extent to which China enjoyed a technological lead over Europe before the 16th century. Why does China appear to have lost its lead by the late 18th century?
3. [30 marks] Outline the main characteristics of mercantilism as it evolved in the 17th and 18th centuries. Assess whether, on balance, mercantilist policies adopted during this period fostered or hindered economic progress.
4. [30 marks] What were the main foundations of the ‘golden age’ of economic growth in western industrialised countries from c.1950 to c.1973? To what extent was a weakening of these foundations responsible for the economic performance of those countries in the decade after 1973?
5. [30 marks] In what ways, and to what extent, did globalisation of the international economy contribute to prosperity in the last two decades 20th century? Would you agree that globalisation also fostered international stability in the early 21st century? Explain.

Section C *Answer at least one question from section C.*

6. [30 marks] Explain, and critically assess, the Malthusian model of population in the context of its application to demographic change in pre-industrial economies. Illustrate your answer with reference to Europe in the three centuries before 1800.
7. [30 marks] “The industrious revolution was a process of household-based resource allocation that increased both the supply of marketed commodities and labour, and the demand for market-supplied goods.” (de Vries)
Apply microeconomic reasoning to interpret the ‘industrious revolution’ as described by de Vries. Hence discuss the extent to which the ‘industrious revolution’ should be understood as a natural precursor of the Industrial Revolution.

8. [30 marks] Use macroeconomic principles to analyse the extent to which monetary and fiscal policies were responsible for the onset of the Great Depression in 1929. Hence assess the effectiveness of government stabilisation policies in the mid and late 1920s, illustrating your answer with reference to the USA and **one** European country.

9. [30 marks] How can the Bretton-Woods agreement of 1944 serve to illustrate the ‘international trilemma’, that national governments cannot simultaneously achieve all three of: (i) a fixed exchange rate; (ii) unrestricted international movement of capital; (iii) monetary independence (i.e. control over the stock of money)? Discuss the extent to which the tensions revealed by this trilemma help to account for the disintegration of the Bretton-Woods system in the early 1970s.

End of Paper
