Eco. 301Y1: The Economic History of Later Medieval and Early Modern Europe


Recommended readings: the more important ones are indicated by asterisks *

A. Warfare and its Economic Aspects: Taxation and Public Finance


* 5. B. M. S. Campbell, ed., Before the Black Death: Studies in the ‘Crisis’ of the Early Fourteenth Century (Manchester, 1991). See the following essays:


*10. John Munro, ‘The “New Institutional Economics” and the Changing Fortunes of Fairs in Medieval


B. The Hundred Years’ War, 1337 - 1453: Costs and Benefits


QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss the Maddicott-Miller-Strayer thesis concerning the impact of warfare and war-financing (taxation) on the late-medieval English economy. What segments or strata of English society came to bear the heaviest brunt of taxation in the period 1290 - 1340? Did warfare produce a ‘turning-point’ for subsequent economic crises or a secular economic decline? Discuss the critical response of Bridbury.

2. What impact did government fiscal and monetary policies, in particular those related to warfare (defence and aggression), have upon the late-medieval European economies in general? What were the particular consequences of coinage debasements (in terms of the previous topic).

3. What impact did the European and Mediterranean wars from the 1290s to the 1340s have upon international commerce and shipping, and in particular on the economies of Italy, the Iberian peninsula, France, the Low Countries, and Germany.

4. What were the economic and social consequences of the Hundred Wars for western Europe (1336-1453): for England, France, the Low Countries, the Iberian peninsula, and Italy?

5. Why was Italy so chronically ravaged by warfare during the later 13th and 14th centuries; and what were the consequences for Italy’s role in the Mediterranean and European economies? Discuss in particular the Wars of the Sicilian Vespers (1282-1302) and the Angevin-Aragonese and Guelf-Ghibelline Wars (1314 - 1343).
6. Did the late-medieval European economies undergo a long-term secular decline or contraction of ‘depression’ (or series of depressions). Is such a decline or contraction merely demographic or more than demographic, in its causes and nature? If so, what role did warfare, and war-related fiscal and monetary (coinage) policies play in that decline? In particular, discuss the Van der Wee-Peeters thesis, on the disruption of the continental trade-routes as a factor in the late-medieval economic decline or contraction.