

An Exciting Preview
The Final Exam™ | HIST447

The Final Exam™ will build on the knowledge that we have acquired over the course the semester, which means that past papers and quizzes, as well as handouts provided in class, represent useful resources for your preparation. The exam itself consists of factual and interpretive sections. While the first section (parts one and two of the exam) compels us to focus on particular facts, for the interpretative section (part three) I encourage you to take a step back and think about the proverbial “big picture”—that is, the larger meaning of what we have encountered in the course. The three parts of the exam are outlined below, with point values being mere approximations at this point.

PART ONE: Basic Chronologies (5 items @ 4 points each = 20 points). Each chronology will consist of 4-5 items, and your job will be to put those events in chronological order using the letters provided. There will be a small element of choice in this section. An example:

- A. Students submit their final papers in HIST447
- B. Students take the final exam in HIST447 (and sigh in relief)
- C. Students submit their first papers in HIST447
- D. Dr Werth enters final grades for HIST447 (and sighs in relief)
- E. Students arrive at HIST447 for the first day of class, unaware of what they are in for

ANSWER: E, C, A, B, D

PART TWO: Short Answers (15 items @ 2 points = 30 points). You are familiar with this kind of question already. There will be an element of choice in this section.

PART THREE: Essay (50 points). Below you will see three questions. Two will appear on the exam itself. Be prepared to write an essay on one of them. Think hard about how to organize your response, and be sure to provide concrete details and evidence to support the claims that you make. You should attempt to be analytical, rather than providing a narrative—which is to say that you should seek to answer the question. The best essays, I imagine, will be those that at least try to articulate an argument—a thesis that can serve to unify the text. I have no particular length in mind for the essay, but I encourage you to think of it as an opportunity to demonstrate the scope of your knowledge and the depth of your engagement with the material of the course. Essays should be written exclusively in the third person.

1) REVOLUTION & WAR: Looking at Russia from 1905 to 1921, it is hard not to notice that war, as well as revolution, was a prominent feature. Indeed, war is an explicit theme for S. A. Smith in *Russia in Revolution*. Write an essay on the relationship between revolution and war in this period. Be sure to consider—and name—the specific military struggles that count as “war.” Consider the ways in which war proved to be a catalyst for revolution and vice versa. Consider the ways in which the failure of political actors to appreciate the implications of war had profound consequences for them and others. Consider the ways in which experiences in war shaped political and social actors—their priorities, their mentalities, and their behavior. What, in short, were the consequences and implications for Russia of the connections between revolution and war?

2) THE SOCIAL & THE POLITICAL: One historian has written, “Although the initial spark came from the political sphere ... the main force of the revolution in 1917 was social. In this way, after February it was not primarily a political revolution with social consequences but a social revolution with political consequences.” Write an essay indicating whether you agree with this assertion or whether you would wish to modify it or reject it. What relative weight should be given to social and political forces in explaining the events of 1917 and those in 1917-21? Did the balance between social and political causes and forces change over the course of the revolutionary years? Part of your answer should presumably include indicating what you consider to be “political” and what you regard as “social.”

3) KEY MOMENTS: Unless one subscribes to the proposition that all of human history is preordained (and if so, then please don't choose this question), one may identify distinct key moments in the historical process. These are instances when particular individuals or groups make fateful decisions that alter the course of history (although not always in the ways intended). Consider the revolutionary process in Russia across the years 1905-1921 and identify several such key moments. At what points did historical actors make decisions or take actions that opened up new possibilities and closed down other ones? What were the circumstances that led these actors to do as they did? The precise number of key moments to discuss is for you to decide, but it should presumably be a comparatively small number, so that you can discuss the import of each in some detail. Avoid the tendency merely to recount “what happened,” since this does not really answer the question.