Bulgarian State Exam in History

I. World History (survey sequences)

- 1. Discuss the influence of environmental circumstances on some of the leading features of early civilization in ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece.
- 2. Compare the regions of the 'East' to those of the 'West', using Christianity and Islam as the western models and Hinduism and Buddhism as the eastern. Please include brief histories of each as well as outlines of their basic belief systems and rituals. Discuss to what extent one is justified in separating these religions into eastern and western.
- 3. Explain why Europe enjoyed significant advantages in terms of economic, political and military development over other global civilizations. Summarize this thesis, and explain your own thoughts on the subject.
- 4. Global decolonization following the Second World War came with both bangs and whimpers, but came all the same. Why was decolonization so rapid, what furthered it, and why were the Imperial powers unable to hold on to their empires?

II. Greco-Roman (Classical)

- 1. Development of classical Greek civilization both as an autochthonous development and as a series of cultural borrowings earlier civilizations (particularly the Cretan and Mycenaean).
- 2. Development of classical Roman civilization both as an autochthonous development and as a series of cultural and technical borrowings from neighboring areas and earlier civilizations, particularly the Greek and Etruscan.
- 3. Evolution of Greek culture, including philosophy and political structures, from the 'dark' or 'heroic' age to the 'Hellenic.'

III. Methodology and philosophy of history

- 1. Post-modernism was one of the challenges to "objectivity" in history. What is the key post-modern critique of "subjectivity" in history?
- 2. Is it possible to construct history without invoking "myth"? There are powerful proponents on both sides of this argument. Be sure to define the terms.

- 3. Anglo-Saxon schools of history consider it a "craft" of the humanities, while Continental European schools often define it as a "science." Explain the philosophical differences between these two approaches.
- 4. Give an overview on the history of historiography since the Age of the Enlightenment.

IV. Early Modern (Renaissance and Reformation)

- 1. Discuss the concept of the Territorial State as a new phenomenon in the Early Modern Period and its impact on the political, social and economic developments in Europe.
- 2. Explain the interdependence of Absolutism, Enlightenment, Science and early industrialization.
- 3. Explain the impact the religious conflicts between 1517 and 1648 had on the development of the modern international system of states.
- 4. Explain the impact of the Renaissance and Reformation on European societies.
- 5. Discuss the outbreak of the French Revolution as a combination of political, social and economic factors.
- 6. Explain the decline of religion as a political factor by discussing the major developments of the Thirty Years War.
- 7. Discuss the downfall of the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania within the context of the age of Absolutism.

V. Modern European History

- 1. The concept of the "Concert of Europe".
- 2. International stability in Europe between 1815 and 1866.
- 3. Political backgrounds of the so-called "Age of the World Wars" (1914-1945).
- 4. The 19th and 20th centuries as an "Age of the Masses".
- 5. The Soviet Union as a defensive power in the Cold War.
- 6. Explain the idea of Totalitarianism.
- 7. Discuss the development of the European power system prior to the outbreak of World War I.

- 8. Discuss the relevance of the Treaty of Versailles as a factor that contributed to the outbreak of World War II.
- 9. Give an overview on the main developments of the Cold War.

VI. Ottoman Empire

- 1. Some historians have called the sultan 'the principal cement of the Ottoman system, the common focus of rulers and ruled alike', master of the Ruling class, safeguard of the reaya; while others believe that it was 'more as a symbol than as an active and all powerful administrator that the sultan brought together the various elements of Ottoman society'. Which view is correct? How important was the sultan in fact? And how absolute was he as a ruler?
- 2. Discuss the role of the 'kul' system in the rise and decline of the Ottoman Empire.
- 3. How much protected were the 'protected non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire (15th-early 20th centuries)? What did it mean to be a non-Muslim there?
- 4. The Ottoman Reform Period, late 18th-beg. of 20th cc.: Discuss its causes, achievements, and failures.
- 5. The Ottoman Empire in the Eastern Question.

VII. Russian and East European

- 1. "Gathering of the Russian Lands" beginning in the 16th century.
- 2. The reforms initiated by Peter the Great and Catherine the Great as a "Europeanization" program for Russia.
- 3. "Social Engineering" in the Soviet Union under Stalin.
- 4. The concept of Eastern Europe as a "backward" region.
- 5. Explain the importance of the "Time of Troubles" for the further course of the history of Russia.
- 6. Discuss the relevance of the two concepts "Nation State" and "Empire" within the context of East European history during the 19th and 20th centuries.
- 7. Characterize and political and economic situation of the small states of East Central Europe between the two World Wars.
- 8. Characterize Stalin's rule in the Soviet Union

VIII. Bulgarian and Balkan

- 1. Independence movements in the Balkans during the period 1804-1878.
- 2. The role of the Orthodox Church in the Balkan societies.
- 3. Russian policy in the Balkans of the 19th and early 20th (until World War One).
- 4. Building of the state institutions in the independent Balkan sates 19-20 century.

IX. American

- 1. "Federalism" and "Anti-Federalism" were opposing parties during the formation of the American Constitution. What were the positions of these two parties? How did they envision the government of the new United States?
- 2. "At root, the Civil War was about slavery." Access the veracity of this statement; what role did slavery play in the origins of the Civil War? Alternate theories include industrialization, states' rights and cultural differences between the North and the South; address these theories, explaining strengths and weaknesses as an alternate narrative of the origins of the war.
- 3. How did the events of 1939-1953 change American foreign policy? Describe both American policy in the pre-war period, then discuss how wartime and postwar events changed American policies.

X. Nationalism

- 9. How do each explain the origin of nationalism? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each theory?
- 10. Discuss the role of "political mythography" in the construction of national identity. 11.
- 12. How has the growth of the modern bureaucratic state affected the formulation (or construction) of national identity?