The following questions are designed to help you review and study for the final examination. It will consist of one section devoted to short essay questions (concentrating on material since the mid-term), one to geographical identifications (25 of them), and one of long (comprehensive) essay questions. Some of the following questions might be included in the final examination. These questions have been formulated in a general way in order to help you review; the actual questions on the exam will be more focused and precise. You will be given terms to incorporate into the essay, as was the case in the mid-term examination.

1. “Revolutions appear to have a consistent logic to them: They begin with a benevolent enthusiasm, veer off into a narrow fanaticism, and end in disillusionment, when the people turn to a dictator.” Considering this quotation critically, discuss the following revolutions: The French Revolution of 1789-99, the revolutions of 1848 (in France but also in central and southern Europe), the Paris Commune of 1871, the Russian Revolution of 1917-28, the revolutions of 1989-1996 (if events in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are indeed to be considered “revolutionary” – if not, explain why not).

2. Compose an essay that discusses the wider implications of changing military technology in the wars of modern times. You should include at least one war in each century (18th, 19th, 20th).

3. Compare and evaluate the peace settlements following the Napoleonic period (Congress of Vienna), the Franco-Prussian War, World War I, and World War II (in this case, include the war-time agreements, such as those made at Yalta). Do you agree that in some of these settlements the statesmen were notably “wiser” than in others? Did “open covenants” and scrutiny by the people ensure better, more lasting settlements? Make clear what were the main or overriding concerns of the statesmen in each case.

4. “Of course, Great Men have been decisive in history but they were only great insofar as they were able to respond to Great Historical Forces.” In the light of this essay consider the accomplishments of the following: Napoleon I, Metternich, Cavour, Bismarck, Woodrow Wilson, Lenin, Hitler, Stalin, Churchill, Gorbachev. In each case, make clear your understanding of the historical forces that these men were responding to. How justifiable in each case is the term “great men”?

5. “Whatever the role of Great Men, the course of modern history might be more revealingly presented in terms of the role of Mediocre Men who failed to understand the Great Historical Forces around them.” In the light of this quotation consider the roles of the following: Louis XVI, Louis Philippe, Lamartine, Napoleon III, Wilhelm II, Nicholas II, Alexander Kerensky, Heinrich Brüning, Gorbachev. In each case, describe as concretely as possible what it was that these men failed to understand.
6. “The socialist ideal has not only evolved remarkably since the early nineteenth century but it has been hugely corrupted.” Consider this quotation critically in terms of the following: Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung, showing how each altered key aspects of the socialist theory that went before them.

7. “The word ‘liberalism’ has come to mean nearly the opposite of what it first meant in the middle of the nineteenth century.” In the light of this quotation, compose an essay that traces the transformation of liberalism from an ideology that advocated a minimum of state intervention and that was inclined to see poverty as the result of personal, moral failures, to the twentieth-century ideology that looks to state regulation of the economy and that is inclined to see poverty as the result of factors beyond the control of individuals.

8. Around the theme of “war as accident vs. war by design” consider the origins of the following wars: Franco-Prussian War, World War I, World War II.

9. “The history of modern Russia is the history of a paranoid power, constantly driven by fear of invasion, above all of invasion by a more advanced west.” How appropriate is this quotation in explaining the following: the reforms of Alexander II, the outbreak of World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution, Collectivization and Five Year Plans, the Stalinist Purges, the Cold War, Perestroika.

10. The midterm asked that the following quotation be critically evaluated for the period up to 1840; how might one deal with it from 1840 to the present, particularly for the major ideologies of the twentieth century, fascism and communism? “The common people, in their present state, are little different from uncomprehending cattle; they are unable even to recognize their own best interests. Left on their own, they turn to vice and self-destructive behavior—declining into chaos and violence. Thus, a responsible leader must make decisions for them.”

11. “Appeasement, which has such negative connotations today, would have been a wonderful thing in the summer of 1914.” In the light of this quotation, compare the origins of WW I and WW II. It has been suggested that the lessons facilely digested in history merely lead to new tragedies – for example, the “lessons” learned about appeasement led to unnecessary tensions in the Cold War and indeed to the pointless tragedies of the Vietnam war. What is your opinion?

12. “Modern history sees relatively few female counterparts to the ‘Great Men’—thank God!—but on the other hand women in the mass or in secondary positions have often enough played decisive roles, and, it must be admitted, sometimes rather unfortunate ones.” Analyze and critique this quotation. Your essay should say something about the women you would consider “Great” (e.g., Catherine the Great, or Rosa Luxemburg) but also consider situations where anonymous women in the mass played decisive roles (e.g., the Women’s March to Versailles, the women in the bread riots that started the revolution in Russia in 1917). Is it fair to conclude that women such as Marie Antoinette or Alexandra (wife of Nicholas II), as powers behind the scenes, were the cause of much suffering or in other regards played a deleterious role? Can you think of other examples, in either European or American history?