

Core VI

RISE OF THE MODERN WEST – I

Course Objectives:

- The focus of the course is on transition from feudalism to capitalism in Europe.
- The paper familiarises the student with important transitions and transformations in the economy, polity, and socio-cultural life from late medieval period to 1600 in various parts of Europe.
- The course shall critically examine the dynamics of economic and political power within Europe, and contact with the New World. The processes by which Europe's economy benefited from colonial expansion and exploitation of indigenous and slave labour will be explained.
- Students shall also engage with continuities and changes in intellectual and artistic realms; the social and economic milieu which influenced developments in religion;
- Will understand the emergence of nation state in the aftermath of 100 year religious War

Course Outcomes

- Upon completion of this course the student shall be able to: Outline important changes that took place in Europe from the medieval period.
- Acquire an integrated approach to the study of economic, social, political and cultural developments in Europe.
- Explain the processes by which major transitions occurred in Europe's economy, state forms, social structure and cultural life. Examine elements of early modernity in these spheres.
- Critically analyse linkages between Europe's state system and trade and empire.
- Understand the historically contingent nature of nation state in history and its locus in the Western Europe

Unit-I: Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism:

1. The problems of Transition: Economic Expansion, Industrial production
2. Trade and Commerce
3. Urban Development, Town Life

Unit-II: Early Colonial Expansion:

1. Motives, Voyages and Explorations.

2. The Conquests of America
3. Mining and Plantation, the African Slaves.

Unit-III: Renaissance and Reformation:

1. Its Social Roots Spread of Humanism in Europe.
2. The Renaissance: Art, Architecture, Sculpture, Painting and Literature
3. Origins and Spread of Reformation Movements.
4. Emergence of European State system: Spain, France, England, Russia

Unit-IV: Economic Developments of the Sixteenth Century:

1. Shift of economic balance from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic.
2. Commercial Revolution- Causes and Nature
3. Growth of Industries and its Impact

Unit I:

The unit makes students acquaint with debates on the decline of Feudalism in order to make students aware of the different perspectives of historians on past. The geographical discovery also brings in the issue of euro-centrism in our syllabus. Long before the European discovery of the New World and India, Arab and Viking traders traded with India in South East Asia. What is novel about geographical discovery was the colonialism of the European and destruction of indigenous people and civilisation in the New World. White Colonialism and Modernity of Europe are conjoint twins of the European project.

Unit II:

Renaissance marked the discovery of man and reason. Renaissance opened up a new world which was different from medieval Europe. The unit also makes students understand the European project of modern nation state was marred by religious wars, persecution and long period of blood which partially ended with the treat of Westphalia of 1648.

Unit III: This unit deals with different avatars of capitalism. Starting with mercantile and commercial capital, Europe slowly went to industrial capital. In the process, new financial institutions such as Bank of England, Shareholding Company, ledger account, etc emerged. The unit also acquaints with mercantilism as a school of thought and how it was challenged by Adam Smith and Ricardo.

Unit IV

As a result of the Atlantic route, theatre of commercial activities shifted from the Mediterranean to Atlantic. Empires such as Portuguese and Spanish empire emerged but later it was French, Dutch and English who controlled the Atlantic route. With the colonisation of the New World, triangular slave trade emerged. Colonialism provided capital and market so crucial for the start of the Industrial Revolution

Suggested Text Books:

1. John Merriman, A History of Modern Europe: From Renaissance to the Present Day, New York, 2010
2. Meenakshi Phukan, Rise of the Modern West: Social and Economic History of Early Modern Europe, Trinity Press
3. Arvind Sinha, Europe in transition: From Feudalism to Industrialisation, Delhi Manohar, 2016.
4. Charles A. Nauert, Humanism and the Culture of the Renaissance (1996).
5. Harry Miskimin, The Economy of Later Renaissance Europe: 1460 -1600.
6. Fernand Braudel, The Wheels of Commerce, London, 1983 (Civilisation and Capitalism 1500-1800)

Internet Video Resources

1. Feudalism to Capitalism Transition Debate:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBgfykmeimw>

2. Renaissance from CEC: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DA519OihJTo&t=142s>

3. Reformation and War of religions:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZKcKZIRMaqY>

4. The Age of Discovery: A Complete Overview:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wG6XBbD8-g>

Activities

1. Visit the British Parliament Website and prepare a report on the important events on the road to Democracy,
2. Group Discussion on European discovery, colonialism and underdevelopment of India
3. Plot on a map areas which were colonized by Europe's different colonial powers