

Social History Study Guide

Social history can be harder for students to organize than political history because social history generally lacks dramatic turning points. A thematic and chronological guide like this one can help students orient themselves.

| LATE MIDDLE AGES | SIXTEENTH & SEVENTEETH CENTURIES | EIGHTEENTH CENTURY | NINETEETH CENTURY |
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| Marriage and Family | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuclear family • Divorce is nonexistent • Marriages are arranged for economic reasons • Prostitution in urban areas • Average age for marriage: mid- to late-20s for men and under 20 for women • Church encourages cult of paternal care • Many couples (especially the poor) do not observe church regulations on marriage because if they have no property to inherit it is not as important • Manners shape men to please women in the upper classes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuclear family • Divorce is available in certain cases • More prostitution • Marriages are still based on economics but are increasingly more romantic • Average age for marriage: 27 for men and 25 for women • Increased infanticide • Low rate of illegitimate births • Dramatic population growth until 1650; growth slows until 1750 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuclear family • Marriages are based more on romance • Average age for marriage: late 20s or later because it takes longer for couples to be economically ready for marriage • Many women do not marry (spinsters) • Illegitimate birth explosion, 1750–1850 • Increase in infanticide • Foundling hospitals created • Growth of cottage industry • Young people increasingly work away from home in the city • “Spare the rod and spoil the child” • Rise of humanitarianism (influenced by the Enlightenment) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideal of romantic love is now the most important reason to marry • Many men marry late • Middle class is more apt to consider economic reasons • Fewer children per family; more love toward their children • Lower-class children are less economically dependent on their parents than middle-class children • Women are closely monitored • Sexual double-standard • Rate of illegitimacy in working classes declines after 1850 • Prostitution is sought by middle- and upper-middle-class men • Early childhood is vital (Freud) |

| Status of Women | | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal status of upper-class women is better now than it will be in the next two centuries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of upper-class women declines during the Renaissance • Most women are not affected by the Renaissance • Educated women are allowed involvement but they are to be subservient to men • Sexual double-standard • Woman is to make herself pleasing to the man (Castiglione) • Rape is not considered a serious crime • Protestant Reformation: women's occupation is in the home • Catholic orders for women grow | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protestant women are still expected to manage the home • Upper-class Catholic women have self-development options in religious orders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After 1850 increasingly separate spheres exist: men work in factories while women stay at home • By the late-nineteenth century only women in poor families work outside the home • Middle-class women begin working to organize and expand their rights; poor women do as well, but mostly in the context of socialism |
| Education | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly religious, but universities teach law and medicine as well | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly for the upper classes, but literacy increasingly becomes valued by all classes as a means to reading the Bible • Increased education as a means of social control or social bonding (e.g., <i>The Courtier</i>) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protestantism spurs increased education for boys and girls • Humanitarianism of the Enlightenment leads to improved education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases among the middle class • Increased professionalization in medicine, law, and education |
| Religion | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominated by the Catholic Church • Reform movements: Wycliffe and Hus • Some persecution of witches • Councilliar movement challenges papal authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protestant Reformation • Counter Reformation • Religious wars • "New Monarchs" and "Absolute Monarchs" take control of national churches • Major persecution of alleged witches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protestant pietism in Germany • Rise of Methodism • Catholic piety remains • Decrease in witch-hunts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rerum Novarum</i> • <i>Syllabus of Errors</i> • Kulturkampf • Increased emphasis on morality among the middle class • Decline among urban working classes • Development of fundamentalism in Protestantism • Development of a reform movement in Judaism |

Nutrition and Health

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor harvests create malnutrition • Black Death results in the loss of one-third of the population | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor life expectancy (about 25 years) • Price Revolution = less food consumption due to higher prices (until about 1650) • Bread is staple food for lower classes • Upper classes eat large quantities of meat • Smallpox and famines still ravage parts of Europe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved diet: more vegetables (especially potatoes) • Life expectancy increases from 25 years to 35 years; less war and contained conflicts away from agriculture and civilian population • Major advances in the control of plague and disease (especially smallpox); Jenner • Harvey: circulation of blood • Development of public health; advances in clean water and hygiene in cities limits cholera and tuberculosis • Hospital reform • Reform for mental health institutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased life expectancy • Significant decline in infant mortality after 1890 • Public health movement: Bentham and Chadwick • Bacterial revolution: Pasteur (germ theory), antiseptic (Lister) • Poor living conditions in cities |
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Social Structure

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feudalism dominates most of Europe • Guilds dominate towns • Black Death disrupts social organization and leads to increased mobility and greater pressure for higher wages because the laboring population has contracted; rebellions repressed by nobles and royal authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population growth begins in the sixteenth century until about 1650 • Cities grow faster than rural areas • Two major hierarchies exist: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Countryside: landlords, peasants, landless laborers 2. Urban: merchants, artisans, laborers • Clergy, lawyers, teachers, and civil servants fit awkwardly in both hierarchies • Advancement up the hierarchy is made possible through education • Enclosure movement • Putting-out system • Serfdom in Eastern Europe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cottage industry in rural areas • Growth of cities • Serfdom in Eastern Europe • Guilds on the wane; popular pressure to break their power and increase access to professions • In France middle classes buy into nobility; in England middle classes marry into nobility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased standard of living for the average person; higher wages • Society is more diverse and less unified • Increased migration out of Europe in search of better economic and social opportunity as well as religious freedom <p>Middle Classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversified middle-class groups: moderately successful industrialists, merchants, professionals (e.g., doctors, lawyers) • Upper middle class: banking, industry, large-scale commerce • Lower-middle class: shopkeepers, small traders |
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| | | | <p>Lower Classes: (80 percent of the population)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly skilled: foremen, handicraft trades • Semi skilled: craftspeople • Low skilled: day laborers, domestic servants |
| Slavery | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few Africans live in Europe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African slavery introduced • Dramatic increase in slave trade in the New World • Slave trade makes Liverpool a thriving port city | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still exists in Portuguese, Spanish, and British empires | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ends in Latin America as Spanish and Portuguese leaders are overthrown and Latin American countries become independent • Britain ends slavery in 1833; strong anti-slavery movement led by Wilberforce • France ends slavery in 1848 • Remains in U.S. until 1865 |

| TWENTIETH CENTURY | | | |
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| Marriage and Family | Status of Women | Education | Religion |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby boom after WWII • Women have children earlier and have fewer children (about 2.0) • Middle-class children are less economically dependent on their parents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality in communist Russia • Female suffrage after WWI in most of Western and Central Europe • Traditional and oppressed roles in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany • Women work in war industries during WWI and especially during WWII • Women's rights movement in the 1960s • Increasing proportion of women in the workforce | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education is key to social advancement after WWII • After WWII access to college education is widely available in Western and Central Europe • Emphasis on science and math • "Big Science" • Student revolts in France in 1968 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian existentialism after WWI • Lateran Pact (1920) between Mussolini and the Papacy • Religion is far less prominent than in any previous century • Catholic Ecumenical Council of 1963 (end of Latin in Mass) • "God Is Dead" movement • Growth of Islam |
| | Nutrition and Health | Social Structure | |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased life expectancy after WWII• Leaner, healthier lifestyle after 1970• Increased women's control over reproductive rights | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in the welfare state throughout the century• Aristocracy loses ground economically after WWI• Fewer class distinctions after WWII• Large increase in the middle class after WWII• Increase in white-collar jobs• Post-WWII strength of unions gives way to economic pressures of the global economy; less opportunity for uneducated people to have a good livelihood |
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