



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS1C

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – January series

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Unit HIS1C

Unit 1C: The Reformation in Europe, c1500–1564

General Comments

There was a marked contrast in this examination between candidates who had effectively prepared for this examination and those who had not. More able candidates showed a keen grasp of relevant material, had been trained to answer (a) questions sharply and succinctly and organised their responses effectively, given the timing constraints. Unfortunately, some candidates were under-prepared. Either they lacked the knowledge to be able to respond effectively to the questions set or they showed little grasp of the techniques needed to succeed in the examination. In particular, candidates should take heed of warnings against over-writing in response to (a) questions; such over-writing often comes at a very high price when later essays, which begin promisingly, are truncated on account of lack of time.

Question 1

- (a) The best answers showed candidates had a good understanding of both the political and religious situation in 1521, with an awareness of the respective positions of Luther, Frederick the Wise and Charles V. However, there were some weaker answers. Some candidates tried to reproduce answers to the equivalent question which had been set in the summer and, consequently, contained much irrelevance. A second limitation was the lack of understanding which many candidates had of the political context. Many assumed, for example, that it was the Pope who had summoned Luther to the Diet of Worms. There was some factual imprecision. Luther was not, as many candidates claimed, excommunicated by the Diet of Worms. (The Diet, as a secular authority, had no such power).
- (b) This question elicited some very well-informed, well-structured evaluations which demonstrated an effective understanding of the weaknesses experienced by Charles V, how these assisted the Lutheran Reformation to make progress and there were skilfully linked to other reasons for the progress made by the Lutheran movement during the 1520s. Some weaker answers showed only a lack of understanding of Charles's situation during the period. Other weaknesses included the narrow range of factors adduced to explain the success of the Lutheran movement and a tendency to range irrelevantly beyond 1529. Reference to the League of Schmalkalden, for example, had to be deemed irrelevant.

Question 2

- (a) There were some sharp and focused answers to this question. These offered succinct sets of reasons with appropriate support for the expulsion of Calvin from Geneva. Weaker answers often had little understanding of the events of 1536–1538 or struggled to link these events to the political context of Geneva at the time. Some candidates tried to use post-1538 material. This was irrelevant.

- (b) The best answers to this question were outstanding, with candidates demonstrating keen conceptual awareness linked to a thorough grasp of the key developments within Calvin's Geneva. Unfortunately, there was a substantial proportion of candidates who showed a complete lack of awareness of the key concept, despite the fact that it appears explicitly in the specification.

Question 3

- (a) This question was often answered poorly. Many candidates had little understanding of the activities of the Jesuits prior to their papal recognition in 1540, though they often wrote extensively but irrelevantly of the Society's activities after 1540.
- (b) Many answers to this question were disappointing. There was often very little precise knowledge of the importance of the Jesuits after 1540. Even more worrying was the high proportion of candidates who, having written irrelevantly about post-1540 material in response to Question 3(a), then failed to use the same material when it would have been relevant in response to this question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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