You have eight (8) hours to complete this examination. Answer one question from each section (three questions in all). Each question in Part I and Part II should require about three hours to answer. The question in Part III, dealing with historiography, requires about two hours. You may not use any notes, books, articles or other reference materials during the eight hour period.

Part I: Select one question.

1. Historians have written about the development of consumer culture in eighteenth century, the nineteenth century, and, of course, the twentieth century. Synthesize these period-specific histories into an account of the development of consumer society from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries.

2. In his brand new synthesis of American colonial history (don’t worry, it was not on your reading list!), Alan Taylor claims that the “fundamentally happy story” of Americans escaping from “the rigid customs, social hierarchies, and constrained resources of Europe into an abundant land of challenge and opportunity” has been replaced. He proposes a different “measure of American distinctiveness,” which he describes as the breaking down of “localized identities and cultures” among peoples from several continents and the formation of a “composite culture.” To what extent does your interpretation of the big themes of American history accord with Taylor’s? Defend your argument with reference to examples from three centuries.

3. Marxists argue that the state is an instrument of the oppressor class and that, therefore, the idea of representative government in any broad sense is an oxymoron. With this in mind, discuss the role of government over the course of three centuries.

Part II: Select one question.

1. To what extent did the beliefs associated with American Puritanism anticipate the ideology of the American Revolution?

2. How would you periodize the beginnings of American capitalism? Explain your choice of time period through a description of the major attributes of the American economy both beforehand and afterwards.

3. Write an essay that discusses how the history of American religion might be used as the framework for a synthetic analysis of American political, social, and cultural history during the early nineteenth century.