United States Ph.D. Written Qualifying Examination
Fall Quarter 2005

Wednesday, September 21, 2005, 8:00-5:00 pm

You have eight hours to complete this examination. Answer one question from each of the three sections. Answers in sections I and II should draw from the full sweep of American history, demonstrating your familiarity with all three periods into which the 246 series is divided. The questions in Section I focus on matters of broad interpretive synthesis. The questions in Section II are more historiographical in nature. We recognize that the line between history and historiography is not exact, but we expect the emphases to be somewhat different in your two answers, the first in addressing the themes of historical change itself, the second addressing the history of historical interpretation. The questions in Section III are designed to cover only one of the three periods of the 246 series, although each of these is fairly broad as well.

The answers should not cover similar material or repeat each other to any significant extent. Section I is worth 50 points; Sections II and III are worth 25 points each. You may not use any notes, books, articles or other reference materials during this exam. We suggest you take some time before you begin writing each answer to think through and outline in some detail how you will approach your answer; also, please leave time at the end to read over your answers, to correct errors of fact, egregious grammar and spelling errors, and to sharpen your prose.

Make sure that all pages are numbered and include your identification number and no other indication of your identity. Include a cover page specifying which questions you are answering. Your completed exam must be submitted to the history graduate office by 5:00 PM on Wednesday, September 21, 2005.

Good luck from your 246 teachers.

Section I: History synthesis: CHOOSE ONE 50 points

1) Warfare can be an illuminating way to understand how and why notions of national and regional identities have emerged and changed. Choose a single example of “warfare” from each of three long periods in American history, making sure to specify your selection criteria. Describe and analyze the extent to which warfare shaped and changed national and regional identities in each period. Account for differences in the degree and course of change within and across all three periods of “warfare.”

2) How has the history of slavery and emancipation influenced the experiences and structures of race across the long sweep of American history?

3) Asymmetries of sex and power on the one hand, and inequalities of condition, wealth, and income on the other, have too often been approached as distinct historical phenomenon. Analyze changes in the relationship between gender, structures of power, and material conditions across the broad sweep of American history.
Section II: Historiography: CHOOSE ONE 25 points

4) Take one important event or process in each of the three historical periods under consideration and compare the older exceptionalist approach of American history with the newer vogue in transnational interpretation.

5) Discuss the history of the professionalization of the discipline of history, concentrating on changes in membership, method, content, and purpose. Evaluate the impact that these processes have had on the writing of American history.

6) How has history’s cultural and linguistic turn influenced the interpretation of any three of the following, making sure that your answer covers all three periods: (a) puritanism (b) corporations (c) depressions (d) consumerism (e) social reform (f) American imperialism (g) slavery

Section III: Period specific: CHOOSE ONE 25 points

7) 246A: In the last generation, scholarship on early American history has been transformed by the inclusion of groups in the colonial population that had once been marginalized - principally African Americans, women, and Amerindians. Choose one of these groups and describe the ways in which their inclusion has transformed our understanding of the history of the American colonies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

8) 246B: Assess the degree to which the Civil War marked a turning point in any three of the following: (a) labor (b) gender (c) race and ethnicity (d) politics and government (e) economy (f) social reform (g) intellectual history

9) 246C: The historiography of welfare has customarily focused on the “State” as a provider of welfare, and the poor as the receivers of welfare. Describe the extent to which a broadening of the forms of assistance to include the market, voluntary association, and family/kin relations changes history in twentieth-century America.