This exam is designed to take eight hours to complete and consists of three parts. Answer ONE question from each part (three questions in all). **You may not use any notes, books, articles or other reference materials during the eight hour period.**

**Remember**

- Make sure that all pages are numbered and that your assigned identification number is on each page
- Please include a cover page that indicates which questions you are answering
- You are expected to demonstrate that you have a familiarity with a range of topics and periods. It is important that you keep this in mind as you select your questions and formulate your answers. Avoid answering questions that cover the same material.
- **Print and return your completed exam to the History Graduate Office by 4:45pm on September 13, 2010.**

**PART I: Three Centuries. Broad interpretive synthesis.**

Answer ONE out of the following three questions. Time: approx. four hours. Worth: 50%.

In answering the question please be certain that you draw upon at least one example from each of the three basic periods of American History covered in the 246 series. We are looking for concreteness and specificity, not comprehensiveness.

1. One of the enduring tensions in American History has been the place of markets, capital, and commerce. On the one hand, there is the question of how far commerce, markets, and capital have actually structured American Society. On the other, the place of markets and commerce has given rise to a wide range of social and political movements (both those that sought to strengthen and those that sought to weaken the importance of the market). What have been the limits and extent of capital in organizing American society and politics? How have social and political movements responded to the power and ideology of capital and the market?

2. The American notion of citizenship, of self governance by political equals, has been both a founding principle of the nation and the premise for a complex, unending and shifting history, not just in terms of who is in/excluded but also what is the content and meaning of the concept. As Rogers Smith has written, “The process [of major changes in American citizenship] is political, unending and unpredictable.” Identify the most important of these changes from the late 18th through the 20th century. Do not rely on a simple narrative of progress but attend to contradictions and perhaps even reversals. Consider the many dimensions of citizenship, not only political, but also economic, social and cultural.
3. Historians necessarily privilege time in their explanation of social, political and economic relations. But what happens when we insert space into historical analysis? How does our understanding of American history change when political, economic, and social struggles are viewed as various forms of spatial conflict? Identifying specific historical concepts, processes, and frameworks drawn from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries (including but not limited to “borderlands,” “transatlanticism,” “urbanization,” “frontier” “deindustrialization”), discuss the spatial turn in the writing of American history.

PART II: Topics.

Answer ONE out of the following three questions. Time: approx. two hours. Worth: 25%.

In answering the question please be certain that you draw upon at least one example from each of the three basic periods of American History covered in the 246 series. We are looking for concreteness and specificity, not comprehensiveness.

1. A central question for understanding early American history is one of context: can early America best be understood as a part of early modern imperial history or as the historical origin of the American nation-state? What is gained or lost by either approach?

2. As Eric Foner (among others) has persuasively argued, American understandings of freedom in the nineteenth century became increasingly centered around the concept and politics of “free labor.” Considering both the full chronology of the period – early national, antebellum, postbellum, late nineteenth – and the wide range of ways that people worked and produced and provided for themselves, deconstruct this rallying cry to examine its shifting meanings, changing contexts, and underlying contradictions.

3. Discussing the work of at least four historians, describe the role of social identity in the writing of twentieth century American history. What role can historians play in illustrating the formation, transformation, and expression of social identities, and what methods are most useful to that endeavor? What, in other words, can historians say about the process of identity formation that scholars from other disciplines cannot?

PART III: Historiography.

Answer ONE question out of the following three questions. Time: approx. two hours. Worth: 25%.

In answering the question please be certain that you draw upon at least one example from each of the three basic periods of American History covered in the 246 series. We are looking for concreteness and specificity, not comprehensiveness.

1. One of the most significant historiographical tendencies of the last several decades has been the focus on cultural politics and political culture. Compared to the more traditional distinction between cultural and political histories, what sorts of new questions are opened up
by the effort to think about culture politically and about politics culturally? What questions are lost? Be sure to discuss these issues in light of concrete historiographical examples.

2. How do we situate the American historical profession and its claim to objectivity within its twentieth century context? How have events and processes through the twentieth century influenced changes in the freighted relationship between historians and "that noble dream" of scholarly objectivity?

3. Since the pioneering work of the women’s historians of the 1970s, issues of gender and sexuality have come to play an increasingly important role in understandings of American history. What, in your judgment, are the three most important aspects of the traditional national narrative that have been changed by the introduction of these new concerns and why? Are there crucial subjects and/or debates in American history which remain to be touched by this historiographical development and why is that so?