Monday, September 9, 2013

United States Ph.D. Written Qualifying Examination
Fall 2013

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 appears 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.
• Aim to be concrete and specific rather than comprehensive in your responses.
• Return your completed exam to the History Graduate Office by 5:00 pm in PDF form.

PART I: Broad interpretive synthesis of three centuries.

Answer ONE out of the following two questions. Time: approximately four hours. Worth: 50%.

1. Globalizing American history has become a widely-accepted aim of recent scholarship. If you were to write a global history of the U.S. from the colonial era to the civil rights era of the mid-twentieth century, what themes would you use to organize such a history?

2. Revisions to our conception of American history and greater attention to transnational and global contexts have led scholars away from traditional periodization schemes. Considering the long arc of the history from colonial founding to the 20th century, what periodization scheme would you propose for organizing this history?

PART II: Topics.

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

1. Situating the American Revolution in the larger contexts of colonial, imperial and Atlantic history, do you see it as a radical break or the culmination of previous developments and trends?
2. Considering citizenship in its various dimensions—not only political, but also economic, social and cultural—consider how the concept and its application have changed over time within the context of American history.

3. How have social and political movements responded to the power and the ideology of capital and the market over the course of U.S. history?

**PART III: Historiography.**

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

1. Gender has become a category of analysis that is deeply embedded in recent scholarship, moving beyond the initially concern to recover the history of women to understand how gender has affected U.S. history themes and topics. Discuss recent works that reveal how the inclusion of gender has reframed our thinking about at least two topics in U.S. history.

2. The state has long been a highly contested object of historical analysis. But with the popularity of “history from below” in the 1960s and ’70s, social scientist began complaining that the state had all but disappeared. This criticism generated a new wave of historical analysis promising to “bring the state back in.” Discuss the critical debates over the role of the state in the U.S. during the last two decades. How have developments in labor history, race, gender and sexuality, political economy, and global and transnational approaches influenced recent interpretations of the state?

3. Discuss the utility of the borderlands concept for understanding the interactions of native and European peoples in North America from 1600 to 1870.