GENERAL FIELD EXAM

Write on two of the following topics. Your exam as a whole (i.e. both essays taken together) should demonstrate competence across a broad geographical and temporal range, so choose your examples accordingly.

1. Since World War II the historiography on the period known commonly as the Scientific Revolution has shifted dramatically. Beginning with Sarton and Kuhn and ending with the present discuss the many changes that have occurred in our understanding of the origins of modern science.

2. For a long time, and often still, practitioners of the natural sciences have wanted to distinguish science from more mundane, commercial, or practical activities by referring to it as "pure" or "fundamental." In the last few decades, however, historians have worked to attach science more integrally to practical or mundane human activities such as technology and industry, medicine, war, imperialism, or social science and the management of society. Pick one of these (or something similar) and discuss how historical writing about it has tended to alter our sense of the place of science in history.

3. Many world or transnational histories of science, technology, and medicine concentrate on the development of ideas and practices in Europe and their diffusion/expansion around the world. Give two important examples of knowledge formation and circulation that do not fit the diffusion/expansion theories and explain why.

4. The history of science, technology and medicine field has paid more and more attention to practice in the last three decades. How can we explain that shift and what are the historiographical issues involved in a practice approach to history?

5. Laboratory studies have formed an important part of recent scholarship in the history of science, technology and medicine. Describe various studies in this tradition and explain the gains, challenges and open questions of such an approach.

6. Discuss the place of natural history with respect to other sciences and in the history of science, from the Renaissance to the 20th century. Possible themes include practices (material, visual, observational, classificatory, etc.), sociality, gender, empire, and political economy.